








Headshot	Bio	Session
<h2>Speakers</h2>		
<p>Natalie Burke</p>  <p>Keynote Speaker</p>	<p>Natalie Burke, President & CEO of CommonHealth ACTION, is a respected figure in public health. Since 2004, she has focused on fostering equitable health outcomes by addressing the root causes of ill health. Natalie collaborates across sectors to transform systems, prioritizing health, well-being, and quality of life. She emphasizes the complex societal factors influencing health and works with various leaders to drive systemic change.</p>	<p><u>"Believe It or Not, You Have What You Need. The Real Question is, What's in Your Way?"</u></p> <p>This session emphasizes transforming systems, policies, and mindsets to create health opportunities. It highlights the power of narrative, political will, networks, and values in overcoming challenges. Rather than dwelling on limitations, it encourages leveraging available tools to drive change. Participants are urged to engage actively and commit to taking tangible steps forward.</p>
<p>Dr. Joshua Hearne</p>  <p>Keynote Speaker</p>	<p>Dr. Joshua Hearne is a Senior Program Officer at the Danville Regional Foundation in Virginia, specializing in grassroots community development, nonprofit capacity building, and community engagement. With degrees from Georgetown College, Duke University, and Mercer University, his research focuses on asset-based community development and housing-related decision-making. Before joining the foundation, Joshua was involved in grassroots and faith-based community organizing, addressing issues like housing, homelessness, and poverty. Originally from Eastern Kentucky, Joshua resides in Virginia with his wife, Jessica, and their daughter.</p>	<p><u>"Empowering Communities: Strategies for Sustainable Change and Equitable Development"</u></p> <p>In this session, Dr. Hearne will introduce participants to asset-based community development and its relevance to their communities and work. Building on this foundation, the session will explore strategies for fostering meaningful and equitable change through deep community engagement and empowering grassroots leaders. Topics covered include safely integrating institutions into grassroots initiatives, utilizing storytelling for community formation, and navigating grants and external funding for community development.</p>
<p>Chris Cain</p>  <p>Speaker</p>	<p>With over 15 years of experience, Chris Cain empowers entrepreneurs in business planning, securing loans, and fostering entrepreneurial ecosystems. Her background in nonprofit management and economic development uniquely positions her to enhance organizations' impact. As the Chief Lending Officer for People's</p>	<p><u>"Fostering Thriving Communities: Unveiling the Power of Collaborative Entrepreneurial Ecosystems"</u></p> <p>This conversation explores the vital role of collaborations and partnerships in building vibrant local economies. It introduces the concept of Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Building,</p>

	<p>Advantage Federal Credit Union and a board member of several organizations, including the Virginia CDFI Coalition and Startup Champions Network, Chris is committed to social justice. Through storytelling, she aims to inspire collective improvement and inclusivity.</p>	<p>highlighting the importance of leveraging local ecosystem builders. By fostering a culture of trust and collaboration, these ecosystems facilitate the seamless exchange of talent, information, and resources, ultimately enhancing entrepreneurial growth. The session aims to equip participants with the knowledge and tools to initiate Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Building within their communities.</p>
<p>Sarah Armour-Jones</p>  <p>Speaker</p>	<p>Sarah Armour-Jones is the Deputy Director of the Housing Narrative Lab, focusing on strategic partnerships, communications, and organizational growth. Previously, she was the Director of Communications and Media Strategy at the Melville Charitable Trust. Sarah has extensive experience consulting for philanthropies, nonprofits, and academic institutions and has held roles at the Pew Charitable Trusts and the British Film Institute. Throughout her career, she has emphasized the importance of storytelling and media in fostering a more just world. Sarah resides in Vermont with her family and pets.</p>	<p><u>“Stories need coalitions: Coalitions need stories.”</u></p> <p>This session explores the importance of coalitions in uniting diverse individuals for social change. Highlighting their potential for creativity and success, it also addresses challenges in sustaining and focusing them. The emphasis is on leveraging the power of storytelling to ensure coalition success and the dissemination of ideas. Participants will learn about the impact of storytelling, particularly in the context of housing issues, through presentations and interactive exercises. They will develop their own stories and identify narratives that can be shared widely to enhance coalition impact and sustainability.</p>
<p>Samantha Wood</p>  <p>Speaker</p>	<p>Samantha Wood serves as the National Field Organizer at the National Alliance to End Homelessness. In this role, she leads efforts to engage homeless and housing organizations nationwide, strengthening relationships on policy matters. Samantha is dedicated to advocating for housing equity and justice by bringing people together. Before joining the Alliance, she worked at The Haven in Charlottesville, Virginia, accumulating over 14 years of direct service and case management experience with homeless and housing-insecure households. Additionally, Samantha is a local stand-up comedian.</p>	<p><u>“Main Points for Besties: Housing First and Mobile Medicine Presentation”</u></p> <p>This presentation highlights the success of Housing First and Mobile Medicine in tackling homelessness and enhancing healthcare access. Housing First adopts a person-centered, trauma-informed approach, prioritizing housing without prerequisites. HUD-funded initiatives like Rapid Re-housing and Permanent Supportive Housing support it. The role of Community Health Workers and street medicine providers is emphasized in connecting homeless individuals with services. Policy and advocacy are vital to sustain the</p>

		Housing First model and uphold housing as a fundamental human right.
<p style="text-align: center;">Len M. Nichols</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Speaker</p>	<p>Len M. Nichols is a distinguished Non-Resident Fellow at the Urban Institute's Health Policy Center. With nearly three decades of experience, including roles at George Mason University and as President of NS Ideas, LLC, he's been influential in health reform and policy development. Len's career includes positions at the Office of Management and Budget, the Center for Studying Health System Change, and the New America Foundation. His current research focuses on collaborative financing of social determinants of health, blending moral arguments with technical health policy debates. With a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Illinois and teaching experience at Wellesley College, Len's expertise drives his commitment to advancing equitable health policy solutions.</p>	<p><u>“Collaborative Financing of CHW Activities”</u></p> <p>This session focuses on the collaborative financing of Community Health Worker (CHW) activities. CHWs are vital in facilitating access to complex health and social services. However, sustainable financing can be challenging due to reluctance from some organizations to invest in perceived free benefits. The session will introduce an innovative economic model to overcome this challenge and ensure long-term CHWs financing.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Shanteny Jackson</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Speaker and Panelist</p>	<p>Shanteny Jackson, an Afro-Latina mother and community advocate, was inspired to advocate for others after navigating the US healthcare system as an immigrant and mother. Now serving as the Executive Director of the Virginia Community Health Worker Association, she utilizes her educational background—a B.A. in International Studies and a master's in counseling—to empower her community. Shanteny's work has been recognized with awards such as the "Persona de Poder" from Radio 1380 Poder and the "Civic Engagement" award from the Virginia Latino Advisory Board. She remains dedicated to highlighting the importance of identity and representation, particularly within communities of color like the Latino and Afro-Latino diaspora.</p>	<p><u>“Cultural Sensitivity for the 21st Century Generation”</u></p> <p>This workshop addresses the importance of cultural sensitivity for Community Health Workers (CHWs) in the modern era. Recognizing the diverse demographics of the population, it emphasizes the need for CHWs to build strong, respectful relationships with their communities.</p> <p>The workshop aims to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define culture and dispel common misconceptions. 2. Discuss frameworks and strategies for creating culturally sensitive environments. 3. Identify strategies to mitigate the impact of biases, prejudice, and power dynamics. <p>Participants will gain insights and practical approaches to enhance</p>

cultural sensitivity in their work as frontline public health workers.

Tonya Triplett



Welcome Speaker

Tonya Triplett, Director of Economic Development and Tourism for the Town of Abingdon, Virginia. Tonya grew up in Sparta, NC, moved to Virginia in 1987, and has worked in local government for 22 years. She is a graduate of King University, Bristol, TN.

Tonya is passionate about her community, the hospitality industry, and the many organizations she is fortunate to work with that improve the quality of life for the citizens of Abingdon and enhance the visitor experience in Southwest Virginia. She is married and has two children and two grandchildren with whom she enjoys spending time.

Panelist

Mark Cruise



Panelist

Mark Cruise, appointed as the inaugural Director of the STRONG Accountable Care Community (STRONG ACC) in March 2021, leads a coalition of over 400 organizations dedicated to improving health in Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia. With 30 years of experience in health and human services, Mark has been a pioneering leader for vulnerable populations. He previously led the Free Clinic of the New River Valley and was the nationally renowned Executive Director of the Virginia Association of Free Clinics. Mark holds a Bachelor of Arts from Hampden-Sydney College and a Master of Divinity from Boston University. He resides in Jonesborough, Tennessee, with his wife Kelly and has five adult children and two grandchildren.

Sierra Elston



Panelist

Sierra Elston, a Health Equity Trainer, and Technical Assistance Coordinator with the Institute for Public Health Innovation. She is dedicated to improving health outcomes for vulnerable communities through community-based initiatives, focusing on health literacy and chronic illness support. She champions community-led approaches, employing technology to enhance program development and creating training programs to boost health literacy. Sierra brings extensive experience from health programs at universities in Alabama and Mississippi. She has contributed significantly to national and community-based coalitions addressing issues like cancer prevention, food equity, and mental health. Sierra holds degrees in Therapeutic Nutrition and Health Promotion from the University of North Alabama.

Conveners

Brea Burke



Convener

Brea Burke is a dedicated advocate for community health workers (CHWs), focusing on enhancing the well-being of uninsured individuals in Bristol, Tennessee. With experience as both a founding CHW and a Community Health Manager, she addresses social determinants of health. Brea's expertise, gained through leading CHW programs in Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia, positions her as a prominent voice in the field. She actively promotes CHWs at various platforms, including webinars, conferences, and the White House. Additionally, Brea founded the CHW United Group and contributes to CHW councils in Tennessee and Virginia, including CHAMPP. Beyond her professional role, Brea is deeply involved in family life, particularly as a foster care advocate, with aspirations to establish a comprehensive family program.

Danielle Montague

Danielle Montague is pursuing her doctoral degree in Strategic Leadership focusing on Healthcare Leadership at Regent University. She started her career at Danville Parks and Recreation, rising to the position of Health and Wellness Program Coordinator, where she focused on health equity in the region. Currently, Danielle works with the Virginia Rural Health Association as a Coalition Convener for



Convener

Southern VA CHWs and as a Project Director for rural public health workforce initiatives. Additionally, she teaches yoga at a meditation center in southside Virginia, where she resides.

Danielle Taylor



Convener

Danielle Taylor, with a Bachelor of Science in Health Services Management and a master's in public health specializing in Health Promotion, brings a wealth of experience to her role as program coordinator at Norfolk State University Center for Public Health Initiatives. Previously, she served as a Health Educator for Duke University Health System's employee wellness program. Danielle has applied her expertise in the health department, military, and higher education sectors. She is deeply committed to serving underserved communities, striving to educate and promote healthy behaviors and lifestyles within her community.

Marco Thomas



Convener

Marco S. Thomas, a graduate of Northside RVA and Richmond Public Schools, holds a BA in Sociology from Virginia State University and a Masters in Nonprofit Studies from the University of Richmond. He currently serves as the Regional CHW Coalition Convener for Richmond Henrico Health Districts, leveraging his roles as a Certified Community Health Worker and CHW Ambassador with Va. Community Health Worker Association. Additionally, Marco is actively involved in education and advocacy, serving as a CHW instructor and Chair of CHW Strength Foundation's Board of Directors. He also contributes to Side by Side, supporting LGBTQ youth as a Board member. Trained in conflict resolution and trauma healing due to his experiences with gun violence and police injustice, Marco leads The Bible Book Club, promoting literacy and understanding of the Bible outside of his professional pursuits.

IPHI Staff

Kelly Evans



IPHI Program Manager

Kelly is a program manager at the Institute for Public Health Innovation, which is dedicated to supporting community health workers (CHWs). With over 25 years of professional public service experience and a master's in health care administration, she excels in creating connections and championing social change. Kelly is known for her exceptional interpersonal skills, serving as a master networker who cultivates partnerships to achieve collaboration and desired outcomes. Additionally, she is a trained facilitator, reflective listener, and supportive encourager. A proud native of Richmond, Virginia, Kelly enjoys spending time with family and friends, traveling, and savoring delicious food.

Helen Kariuki



IPHI Program Manager

Helen Kariuki serves as the Program Manager for the CDC CHW Healthy Virginia program. She is deeply passionate about global health and aims to make a tangible impact, particularly for vulnerable community members. Helen joined IPHI with a strong desire to ensure everyone has equal access to the social determinants of health, focusing specifically on community health worker programs.

Mike Royster



IPHI Senior Vice President

Dr. Royster's career has spanned clinical medicine, environmental epidemiology, community health, health policy, health equity, and racial justice. He is currently the Senior Vice President of the Institute for Public Health Innovation (IPHI), a member of the National Network of Public Health Institutes. Prior to IPHI, he served in various public health positions: Director of the VDH Office of Health Equity, Director of the Crater Health District, President of the Virginia Public Health Association, epidemiologist for the Environmental Protection Agency, and post-doctoral fellow in the W.K. Kellogg Community Health Scholars Program at UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health. He completed undergraduate training at the University of Virginia, medical school at Duke University, public health training, and residency at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, and he is a fellow of the American College of Preventive Medicine.

Valerie McAllister



IPHI Senior Program Manager

Valerie McAllister is currently the Senior Program Manager for CHW Workforce Strategy and Innovation at the Institute for Public Health Innovation (IPHI). In this position, she oversees the implementation of CHWs for a Healthy Virginia, a CDC-funded initiative aimed at increasing CHW presence in vulnerable communities to address COVID-19 response and recovery efforts while enhancing community resilience. Valerie played a key role in developing guidelines and standards for Virginia's first CHW accreditation program, facilitated the formation of the Virginia CHW Council, ensured consistency in CHW training delivery, and advocated for legislation granting the state health department authority to regulate CHW certification and training.

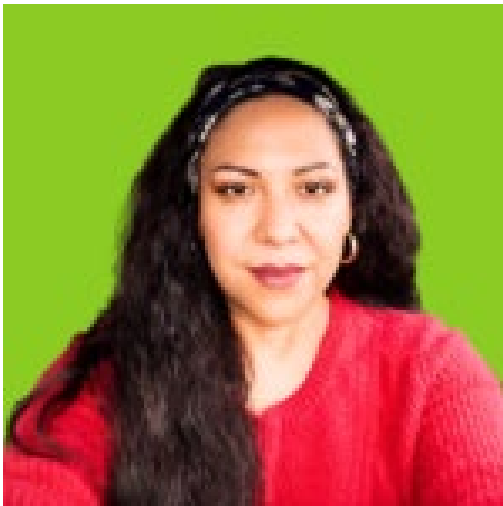
Ronnette Moton



IPHI Program Associate

Valerie McAllister is the Senior Program Manager for CHW Workforce Strategy and Innovation at the Institute for Public Health Innovation (IPHI). In this role, she oversees CHWs for a Healthy Virginia, a CDC-funded initiative focused on increasing CHW presence in vulnerable communities for COVID-19 response and recovery while bolstering community resilience. Valerie has been instrumental in developing guidelines for Virginia's inaugural CHW accreditation program, forming the Virginia CHW Council, ensuring uniformity in CHW training, and advocating for legislation granting state health department oversight of CHW certification and training.

Claudia Artero



IPHI Program Assistant

Claudia Artero is the Program Assistant for the CDC's CHW for a Healthy VA program at the Institute for Public Health Innovation (IPHI). She manages administrative tasks, supports the Community Health Worker workforce, and collaborates with VCU and VDH to educate families about asthma. During the pandemic, Claudia assisted around 830 affected families in Central Virginia, initially as a case investigator and later as part of the Resources Navigation Team. Originally from Cochabamba, Bolivia, Claudia previously oversaw logistical needs for farmers at the Department of Agriculture. Since moving to the US, she has focused on government and community outreach, including work in Fairfax, Henrico, and Richmond City. In her free time, Claudia enjoys spending time with her twins.