- Lessons from the Field -

Transforming Youth Together: Understanding the Connection between Substance Use, Mental Health, and Student Learning

Part 2: Implementing Evidence-Based Prevention Programs

Wednesday, September 7, 2022 | 3:00 – 4:30 PM ET

SPEAKER BIOS

Adam Schott
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Programs, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, U.S. Department of Education

Prior to joining the Department of Education, Mr. Adam Schott served as Special Assistant to Pennsylvania's Secretary of Education, where he led efforts to redesign the state’s accountability system, strengthen oversight of the state’s virtual school sector, and implement the nation’s first commissioned research on school reopening to include modeling on disease transmission. He previously led the policy research arm of Philadelphia-based Research for Action and served as Executive Director of the PA State Board of Education. He is a graduate of Penn State and Harvard.
Karen Voetsch  
Division of Overdose Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Ms. Karen Voetsch is the Branch Chief for the Drug-Free Communities Program at the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control at CDC. She provides strategic direction and oversight for CDC’s day-day management of the DFC program. She joined CDC as a Presidential Management Fellow in 2003, starting her career in the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. In her 19 years at CDC, she has helped to create new programmatic initiatives for several community-based programs, such as the Steps Program, Communities Putting Prevention to Work, and the Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health program. She has also led a number of partnership and strategic development initiatives for the Prevention Research Centers, the Alcohol Team, the Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention, and the Healthy Schools Program. Ms. Voetsch also has an international health background having served in the Peace Corps in West Africa and as a CDC-assignee on non-communicable diseases and road safety issues in Botswana. Ms. Voetsch received her Masters’ in Public Health in Health Behavior and Health Education from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and her Bachelor of Science from Cornell University. She lives in Decatur, GA with her husband and two children.

Robert Vincent  
Associate Administrator, Alcohol Prevention and Treatment Policy, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

Mr. Rob Vincent serves as the Associate Administrator for Alcohol Prevention and Treatment Policy for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, Division of Systems Development. Prior to coming to SAMHSA Rob served as the Administrator for True North-Student Assistance & Treatment Services at the Educational Service District 113’s Department of Educational Support in Olympia, Washington. He was responsible for the development, implementation, and management of a (45) forty-five school district consortium addressing School Safety and Substance Abuse Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment programs within the five-county region.

Mr. Vincent has worked in the area of substance abuse prevention, intervention, and Treatment for more than 34 years, as a nationally certified clinician, and has served as the Director for Counseling and
Assistance Programs for the U.S. Navy during Desert Storm. Mr. Vincent served as the principal investigator of the Olympia Effective Adolescent Grant, and as a consultant specializing in the implementation of schools-based prevention and treatment programs for several states. He received his Master of Science in Education Degree from Southern Illinois University.

**Emily Eckert**
Assistant Director of Prevention, Behavioral Health, School Climate and Safety, Office of Whole Child Supports, OH

Ms. Emily M. Eckert is an Assistant Director in the Office of Whole Child Supports at the Ohio Department of Education. Her work includes mental health, prevention education, school climate, safety and positive behavioral intervention and supports in Ohio’s schools and districts. Ms. Eckert is a licensed professional clinical counselor with experience in community mental health and education settings with children experiencing social, emotional and behavioral needs and their families.

**Deb Robison**
Project Administrator, Center for School-Based Health Programs, Miami University, OH

Ms. Deb Robison is the Project Administrator at the Center for School-Based Mental Health Programs with Miami University. Formerly, Ms. Robison was the Supervisor for Family and Student Services with the Norwood City Schools. She led multiple community collaborations including the Norwood Community Coalition, Norwood Drug and Alcohol Coalition, and Norwood Ready Kids. She has launched and managed school-based mental health and social emotional learning programs for pre-school through 12 grades.

Ms. Robison has worked with the Hamilton County Family and Children First Council as the Program Coordinator for the Norwood Schools Children First Plan, a school based social service program aimed at reducing barriers to learning. Her prior experience includes work with children in foster care, wraparound, residential treatment and with families in family preservation initiatives. Ms. Robison is a licensed social worker in the state of Ohio. She received her BA in psychology and sociology from Mt. Vernon Nazarene University and her MA in Pastoral Family Studies from The College of Mt. St. Joseph in Cincinnati, Ohio.
Yvette Highsmith-Francis  
Vice-President, Community Health Center, Inc. Eastern Region, CT

Ms. Yvette Highsmith-Francis has worked in the health care/social services field since 1990. She is currently a Regional Vice President at Community Health Center, Inc. (CHCI), a statewide federally qualified health center in Connecticut. Ms. Highsmith-Francis has a 28-year career with CHCI and currently has executive level operational oversight for eight comprehensive primary care locations in eastern CT and CHCI’s school based health services ensuring children have access to health services in 180 schools across the state.

Committed to racial and ethnic health equity; Ms. Highsmith-Francis works diligently to ensure that the community’s most vulnerable residents continue to have access to quality medical, dental, mental health and school-based services and that those services are delivered with dignity and respect. She has received recognition on the local, state and national level for her work with individuals living with HIV and AIDS and most recently for her work in CHCI’s response to the Covid 19 pandemic.

Ms. Highsmith-Francis is a graduate of the UCLA/Johnson & Johnson Health Care Executive program as well as the Connecticut Health Foundation’s 2009 Health Leadership Fellows Program.

Ms. Highsmith-Francis was a Martin Luther King Scholar at Long Island University and received her Master’s Degree in Management from Cambridge College. Ms. Highsmith-Francis serves as Associate Faculty for the Weitzman Institute.

Sharlene Johnson  
Executive Director, Upriver Youth Leadership Council, ID

Ms. Sharlene Johnson is a lifelong Kamiah resident passionate about her community. Her professional roots are in prevention and include coalition leadership and development, public health regional prevention programs, and state prevention program management.

“I’ve gotten involved in many activities in my community, and it has been an extremely enjoyable and fulfilling experience. We’re all busy with the things we decide are priorities. If you commit, it instantly becomes a priority, which is the best way to get something started.”
Ms. Andrea Wells is the Senior Advisor in the Office of Policy and Program Development in the Health Resources and Services Administration’s Bureau of Primary Health Care (BPHC). Ms. Wells supports leadership and oversight of the strategic development and expansion of access to primary care services and Health Center Program policy. She is also responsible for consultation and coordination within HHS and with other federal agencies, State and local governments, and other public and private organizations on issues affecting BPHC programs and policies. Ms. Wells has completed assignments at the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the Department of Justice, and the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Prior to joining BPHC, Ms. Wells provided community-based direct services to adults with co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders in Montgomery County, Maryland. Ms. Wells received her Bachelor of Science at the University of Maryland and her dual Master’s in Public Health and Social Work from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and the University of Maryland School of Social Work.

When she’s not working, she’s volunteering in the community, outside gardening, or playing with her young daughters.