



BEST PRACTICES CLEARINGHOUSE

- Lessons from the Field -

Part 1: Knowing the Facts About Fentanyl

Tuesday, January 17, 2022 | 3:00 – 4:30 PM ET

SPEAKER BIOS

Elyse Robertson

Federal Program Officer, Office of Safe and Supportive Schools, U.S. Department of Education



Ms. Elyse Robertson serves in the Office of Safe and Supportive Schools in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education at the U.S. Department of Education. She focuses on school climate, school safety and health, well-rounded education, and youth and young adult drug prevention. Since 2016, she has worked on a variety of grant programs within the Department, including the Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program, the Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk Program, and the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Program. Ms. Robertson began her career as an elementary school teacher in Florida and served as a Peace Corps Volunteer. She holds a Masters in Teacher Leadership with a focus in Global, Comparative and International Education, and a Bachelors in Exceptional Student Education from the University of Central Florida.

Dr. Emily Einstein

Chief, Science Policy Branch, National Institute on Drug Abuse, Science Policy Branch, National Institutes of Health



Emily Einstein, PhD is Chief of Science Policy at the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), where she leads a team that: develops materials to communicate the science of addictive drugs and substance use disorders to members of the public, the scientific community, the media, and the government; provides technical advising on legislation, regulation, and federal guideline development; conducts epidemiological research; and coordinates NIDA strategic planning. Prior to joining NIDA, Dr. Einstein was an American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Science and Technology Policy Fellow in the Office of Autism Research Coordination at National Institute of Mental Health. She completed her Ph.D. in neuroscience at Yale University, where her research was focused on the molecular and cellular mechanisms of opioid reward.

Dr. Cecelia Spitznas

Senior Science Policy Advisor, Office for National Drug Control Policy



Cecelia McNamara Spitznas, Ph.D. is Senior Science Policy Analyst in the Director's Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), a component of the Executive Office of the President and Acting Assistant Director of Translational Research/U.S. Emerging and Continuing Threats Coordinator. As Senior Science Policy Advisor she provides policy analysis and scientific advice for the ONDCP Director, Chief of Staff, and the Senior Policy Advisor for Public Health on special matters of concern. She has been a career federal employee for 22 years including 12 years at the National Institutes of Health's National Institute on Drug Abuse (one on detail to ONDCP) and at ONDCP for 9 additional years as an employee. While at NIDA Dr. Spitznas oversaw extramural research on addiction treatment development and provider training, especially provision of these by computerized and mobile platforms. Prior to her federal experience she worked as an Assistant Professor in the UAB School of Medicine conducting NIH funded research with people who used crack cocaine and were homeless. She completed an American Psychological Association internship at U.A.B. and a two-year post-doctoral fellowship in addiction treatment research at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. In 1998 Dr. Spitznas graduated with her Ph.D. in experimental psychology (major clinical, minor psychobiology) from the University of New Mexico. She holds a BA in psychology from Wake Forest University in North Carolina. Dr. Spitznas' hobbies are dog training, reading, and gardening. She has survived cancer twice. She is a binge eating disorder expert who considers herself in recovery from obesity and food addiction. Her father, who battled alcohol

addiction his entire life but cycled into recovery many times with the aid of 12-Step Fellowship and residential treatment taught her that people can and do recover.

Dr. Marci Hertz

Lead Health Scientist, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Ms. Hertz has worked for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) since 2003 in the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC) and in the Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH). Her work focuses on researching, implementing, and evaluating systems to prevent violence and injuries. She is currently a Senior Health Scientist in DASH, leading their efforts to promote mental health and prevent substance abuse. Most recently, she was the Evaluation and Integration team (EIT) lead in NCIPC, where she provided leadership for the Medication Assisted Treatment study, and several evaluation projects, including the evaluation of the SAMHSA Naloxone Distribution and Education program, two CDC prescription drug overdose prevention state program efforts, the Core State Violence and Injury Prevention Program, and the Injury Control Research Centers. Prior to her work at CDC, Ms. Hertz was the Associate Director of Violence Prevention Programs at the Harvard School Public Health. Ms. Hertz received her B.A. in Psychology from Emory University and a Master's Degree in Psychology from the University of Pennsylvania.

Cathleen Drew

Senior Prevention Program Manager, Community Outreach & Prevention Support Section, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)



Ms. Cathleen (Catie) Drew joined the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in 2006 as the Education Coordinator for the DEA Museum. She is currently a Senior Prevention Program Manager in DEA's Community Outreach and Prevention Support Section. In this capacity, she helps educate the public and communicate the Administration's drug prevention messages. She is responsible for the oversight of the Operation Prevention drug prevention curriculum (in collaboration with Discovery Education) and the numerous drug prevention publications provided by DEA's Community Outreach Section. Ms. Drew previously worked as an Interpretive Science Park Ranger for the National Park Service, an Environmental Education Specialist for the Smithsonian Institution and a Marine Biologist for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Ms. Drew has an undergraduate degree in Environmental Biology from the University of Colorado, and a Master's Degree in Museum Education from the George Washington University. She lives with her family in Northern Virginia.

Jennifer Epstein

Director, Outreach and Education, Song for Charlie, OR



Ms. Jennifer Epstein joined Song for Charlie after losing her dear 18-year-old son Cal to a fake pill in December 2020. Ms. Epstein worked with Beaverton School District to develop their Fake & Fatal campaign, the first known fake pill awareness campaign by a school district in the country. Ms. Epstein is now SFC's Director of Outreach and Education, and is responsible for developing resources to help spread awareness and reaching out to organizations who work with kids. Ms. Epstein brings with her 20 years of both Fortune 100 and start-up operations experience, and over 12 years of working with schools and youth.

Kristen Gustafson

Educator Health/PE TOSA, Beaverton School District, OR



Mrs. Gustafson was a secondary Health & PE teacher for 18 years before transitioning into her new role. She now serves as a Curriculum Specialist for the Beaverton School District. Beaverton is the third largest school district in the state of Oregon and is a suburb of Portland.

Mrs. Gustafson provides support, training and PD for Health & Physical Educators in Standards implementation, assessment, and curriculum mapping. Mrs. Gustafson is currently on the council for PEEK (Physical Education for Every Kid) and helps facilitate a partnership with Nike and the Portland Trailblazers to provide professional development for BSD physical education teachers. In addition, Mrs. Gustafson runs the PTP, which stands for Pack the Pack, which sends home weekend meals for elementary students in Beaverton School District. In 2015 and 2022-2023 she is also working on the standards and curriculum adoption for health and PE standards for Oregon Department of Education.

Chris J. Didier

Parent Advocate, Family Impacted by Fentanyl



Mr. Didier is a father of 3 incredible children, a retired Air Force officer, current pilot for United Airlines and former head coach for the Rocklin youth soccer club. Mr. Didier discovered his youngest child, Zachary, no longer alive in the privacy of his room after he consumed what was thought to be a legitimate pharmaceutical grade pill. Instead, Zach had ingested a counterfeit pill made of a lethal amount of fentanyl and died at the age of 17 as a high school senior. Zach was a self-taught musician, straight-A student, multi-sport athlete, lead role in a HS Musical and was active with Scouting and community service. Since his passing, Zach was accepted into five UCs, including UCLA.

Mr. Didier is working tirelessly in his advocacy to help bring needed awareness and education of the dangers of counterfeit pills in an effort to save lives. He has worked with several school districts throughout out the US about this danger and volunteers with several non-profit organizations related to this cause. Mr. Didier serves as an executive board member for Victims of Illicit Drugs (V.O.I.D.). He has spoken at numerous school assemblies, parent info nights, town halls and has assisted with co-organizing multiple rallies at the California state capital.