

# BOSTON PUBLIC POLICY FORUM

## Event Speakers



**Deirdre Calvert, MSW, LICSW**

Director, Bureau of Substance Addiction Services (BSAS)

Deirdre Calvert has been the Director of the MA Bureau of Substance Addiction Services since April of 2019. Previously, Director Calvert worked for more than 20 years as a clinical director and social worker in the MA substance use disorder system. Her stated focus is on cutting edge and inclusive care for individuals contending with substance use and co-occurring mental disorders. Director Calvert holds a MSW from Boston University and is a licensed independent clinical social worker.



**Dr. Bisola Ojikutu**

Executive Director, Boston Public Health Commission

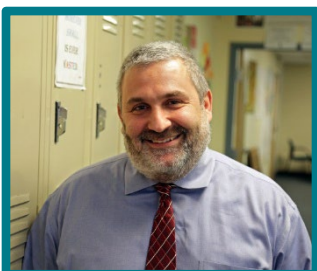
Bisola Ojikutu MD, MPH is a nationally recognized physician leader, health equity researcher, community advocate and expert in the prevention, care, and treatment of infectious diseases. Dr. Ojikutu was appointed Executive Director of the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) in September 2021. As Executive Director of the BPHC, Dr. Ojikutu manages a budget of \$162M and leads 1,200 employees to protect, preserve, and promote the health and well-being of all Boston residents, particularly the most vulnerable. Among other public health priorities, she is committed to addressing racism as a public health crisis and advancing health equity.



**Kevin McCarthy, LICSW, MAPGS**

**MOAR** Board President

Kevin McCarthy is a person in long term recovery that after 20 years in sales management and training found his passion as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and recovery advocate. He specializes in the treatment of clients with co-occurring disorders, focusing their challenges with housing and the stigma of being in recovery. He uses his expertise to facilitate systemic change in recovery treatment, through legislation change advocacy and non-profit board service.



**Roger Oser**

Principal, Ostiguy Recovery High School

Roger Oser is an education and youth development leader focused on providing and developing the best possible service for at-risk youth as well as serving as a strong advocate and voice for policy and systems change. Roger is the founding principal of first recovery high school in Boston, Massachusetts. He oversees daily operations, fundraising, and development of a new educational model.

# BOSTON PUBLIC POLICY FORUM



**Representative Ruth Balsler**  
Democrat - 12th Middlesex

Ruth B. Balsler is the State Representative for the 12th Middlesex District, which includes parts of Newton and Brookline. Now serving her thirteenth term in the House of Representatives, Representative Balsler continues to be an independent progressive voice, fighting for the values and priorities of her community.

As the first psychologist to serve in the Massachusetts legislature, Representative Balsler brings a unique perspective. She has made mental health public policy a top priority. She has championed many bills and budget amendments with the goal of expanding access to and quality of mental health and addiction services and reducing the stigma associated with these illnesses. She is credited with expanding mental health parity in Massachusetts, enactment of an omnibus children's mental health bill, and protecting behavioral health in health care reform legislation.



**Jennifer Tracey, MSW**  
Director, Boston's Office for Recovery Services

Jennifer Tracey is the Director of the Mayor's Office of Recovery Services, the first and only municipal substance use recovery office in the United States. The Mayor's Office of Recovery Services leads all substance use recovery policy and initiatives for the City of Boston. Jen holds a Master of Social Work from Salem State College and a bachelor's degree from Providence college.



**Julie Burns**  
President & CEO, RIZE

Julie is the founding executive of RIZE Massachusetts and leads the foundation's work researching, investing in, and expanding evidence-based treatment solutions as well as building coalitions across the nonprofit, public, and private sectors to end the opioid overdose epidemic in Massachusetts.

# BOSTON PUBLIC POLICY FORUM



## **Keri McCallum & Kirsten Puccio**

Miracle Mama's

Keri McCallum and Kirsten Puccio are the founders of M.I.R.A.C.L.E. (Mothers In Recovery Advocating for Change, Leadership, and Empowerment) Mama's, a support group for mothers in recovery. They aim to advocate for themselves and their children as they navigate their own pathway of recovery and everything that comes along with it.



## **Father Joe White**

Pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Boston and Director of Archdiocesan Addiction Recovery Pastoral Support Services

Pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Boston's West End, Director of the Archdiocesan Addiction Recovery Pastoral Support Services, and serves as the **MOAR** Board Vice President. Father Joe is well known for his dedication to ministering to those in recovery and is recognized as a leader in the field of addiction.



## **Danielle O'Brien**

Recovery Community Support Coordinator, BSAS

Danielle O'Brien is the Recovery Community Support Coordinator at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Bureau of Substance Addiction Services. She oversees and supports the growing statewide system of BSAS Peer Recovery Support Centers and other statewide RSS initiatives throughout the Commonwealth, building provider capacity, statewide recovery networks and promoting recovery-oriented systems of care (ROSC).



## **Recovery Education Collaborative**

The REC mission is to promote lifelong learning enhanced by sustainable recovery for individuals with lived experience in addiction and recovery throughout Massachusetts, by providing culturally responsive educational training programs. We strive to create a community that values and uplifts all its members. We are dedicated to working in partnership with individuals and families to promote recovery, healing, and wellness. Brother Jeffery Lewis (Torilight Recovery) is here tonight representing the REC.



# BOSTON PUBLIC POLICY FORUM



**Omar Olazabal**

Lead Recovery Coach Supervisor, Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Omar Olazabal is a Certified Addiction and Recovery Coach. He has many years of experience coaching individuals and families and supporting their recovery journey from the effects of addiction and mental health challenges. Omar previously worked at MCDHH as a Case Manager and in the CATTs Department, as well as supporting the youth summer intern program in collaboration with Mass Rehabilitation Commission (MRC). Omar is passionate about advocacy and ensuring that deaf and hard of hearing have equitable access to treatment through multiple recovery pathways.



**Lisa Newman-Polk, Esq. LCSW**

Lawyer & Social Worker

Lisa Newman-Polk is a lawyer and social worker. She previously worked as a CPCS staff attorney in the district, superior, and drug courts. As a clinician, Lisa worked as an outpatient therapist providing addiction treatment to people on probation and parole, and then as a mental health clinician. Today her law practice focuses on representing people on life sentences at parole hearings and advocating for the decriminalization of addiction. Based on her experiences as a clinician and public defender, Lisa is an outspoken advocate for criminal justice reform as it relates to the “war on drugs” and prison conditions, and for reentry services that focus on holistic wellness, including healing from trauma and addiction. She has a B.A. from Columbia University, a J.D. from the University of Montana School of Law, and an M.S.W. from Boston College.



**Brita Loftus, MPH, MSW, LCSW**

Access to Recovery (ATR) Project Director, Advocates for Human Potential, Inc.

Brita Loftus serves as the Director of the MA Access to Recovery (ATR) Program, in which she oversees the administration of ATR across the state and leads a team of talented people who run the program behind the scenes. She works closely with ATR’s funder, the Bureau of Substance Addiction Services (BSAS), as well as our community partners, to ensure that ATR participants are receiving robust and high-quality recovery support services. She has over 10 years of experience working across the continuum of substance use disorder services and has a deep knowledge of and experience with the challenges facing people who are navigating substance use disorder and recovery. Prior to working with ATR, Brita managed a harm reduction program in Western, MA.

# BOSTON PUBLIC POLICY FORUM



**Daniel Rivera**  
Gavin Foundation

Daniel Rivera is a person in long-term recovery. Danny has been in recovery since December 31st, 2022. He is a graduate of a Gavin Foundation program (Hamilton House). While at the house, he was enrolled and helped immensely by the ATR (Access To Recovery) program. He is also a proud member of the Devine Recovery Center in South Boston.



**Carl Nilsson**  
Field First, Founder & President

Carl Nilsson is the President and founder of Field First. With 20-years experience in community organizing, Carl founded Field First to support organizations and candidates looking to achieve bold, progressive wins. Carl has coordinated the Raise Up Massachusetts coalition for the past 5-years where he has been instrumental in crafting the strategy and driving the execution of winning campaign plans. Most recently, Carl ran a three-pronged legislative and electoral campaign program to raise the minimum wage, provide paid leave to working families, and pass a proposed constitutional amendment in Massachusetts that would create an additional tax on annual income over one million dollars to generate new revenue for transportation and education. The legislature passed a \$15 minimum wage and paid leave in 2018.



**Lynn Wencus**  
Advocate

Lynn is an active member of Team Sharing, Inc., an organization of parents who have lost a child to substance use disorder. She chose to use her voice and began advocating in 2017 after losing her son, Jeff. She marched with more than 500 others in front of Purdue's headquarters in August 2018 as well as at the Arthur M. Sackler museum in Washington, DC, demanding the Sackler name be removed from all buildings associated with the Sackler's. In January and again in August of 2019, Lynn rallied with others at the Suffolk Superior Courthouse in Boston supporting then Attorney General Maura Healey, in the Massachusetts vs Purdue hearings. She supports Overdose Prevention Centers and has shared her personal story many times in front of legislatures at the State House as part of the MA4OPC group.

# BOSTON PUBLIC POLICY FORUM



## **Mike Griswold**

Peer Leader, St. Francis House

Mike is a man in long term recovery. For much of his younger life, he was homeless, was in prison or was trying to get sober. In December of 2005, he reached a breaking point. It was an emotional time not only because that's when detox finally stuck, but also because that's when he learned he had become a father. The doubt from others and the love of his new son were his motivation to stay sober. About a year and a half later, after exceeding every expectation and fulfilling each requirement from the state, Griswold was awarded full custody of his son. Griswold has now devoted his life to showing up for others. He is a peer leader at the St. Francis House in Boston.



## **Pauline Quirion**

Director, CORI & Re-Entry Project, Greater Boston Legal Services

Pauline is a Senior Attorney and directs the CORI and Re-entry project for the Greater Boston Legal Services. She is the author and editor of two MCLE books (Massachusetts Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) Law and Paternity and the Law of Parentage). She is a graduate of Northeastern University School of Law.



## **Marco Rivas**

Recovery Coach Program Coordinator, Casa Esperanza

Marco has been working as the Recovery Coach Program Coordinator at Casa Esperanza for 1 year. He hopes to continue to use his life experience to help others in their recovery path and achieve their goals.



## **Katie O'Leary**

Director of Recovery Support Services, North Suffolk Mental Health Association

Katie is the Director of Recovery Support Services for North Suffolk Mental Health Association (NSMHA). O'Leary notes that advocating and expanding the Drug Court system has been a legacy she feels most proud of. She is a member of the New England Regional Recovery Court Advisory Board.

# BOSTON PUBLIC POLICY FORUM



**Kevin Mortimer**

Volunteer Coordinator, Recovery on the Harbor

Kevin is a man in long term recovery and is the Volunteer Coordinator for Recovery on the Harbor, a recovery center under North Suffolk Mental Health Association. He is a strong advocate for overdose prevention centers.



**Andrew Maier**

Boston Healthcare for the Homeless, Consumer Advisory Board

Andrew is a man in long term recovery and is a member of the Consumer Advisory Board at BHCHP. He will be sharing information on the SPOT program.



**Representative Adrian Madaro**

Democrat - 1st Suffolk

Adrian Madaro is a State Representative who represents the 1st Suffolk District in the Massachusetts House of Representatives. He represents the East Boston section of the City of Boston. Chairperson, Joint Committee on Mental Health, Substance Use and Recovery. He has been a strong ally to the recovery community.