

# Health Equity: Recipes for Success

5th Annual MA Healthy Communities Conference

June 21, 2011

## Speaker Bios



**Keynote Speaker: Shani Dowd** currently serves as Director of Culture InSight, an operating program of the Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation, the charitable foundation of the Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, Inc. Ms. Dowd is also Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, Department of Psychiatry at the Boston University School of Medicine. She is a member of the faculty of the Center for Multicultural Training in Psychology at Boston University. A clinician with extensive experience with a wide variety of cultural groups, she has practiced in both community health and mental health and in commercial health plan settings and is

knowledgeable about systems issues that influence the delivery of health and behavioral health services. She is a contributing author, *Therapists on the Front Line: Psychotherapy with Gay Men in the Age of AIDS*. Ms. Dowd is a member of the Board of Directors of the Fields, Walters & Hannagan Charitable Foundation, and a member of the Board of Trustees of the Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology. She confesses to a lively curiosity and a constant willingness to apologize for mistakes that she is about to make.

**Miki Akimoto** is the VP, Senior Foundation Officer for Bank of America Merrill Lynch's Philanthropic Solutions, Foundation Advisory Services team. She was previously the Vice President and then Acting President of Associated Grant Makers, the regional association of grantmakers in Massachusetts. Prior to that she was the Director of Grant Management at the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and also worked at the Corporation for National Service, AmeriCorps. She serves on several boards and national advisory bodies, including the boards of directors of the Full Frame Initiative, Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy, the Boston Foundation for Architecture, and the Council on Foundations' Professional Development Committee.

**Cheryl Bartlett** has over 30 years experience as a health and human service professional. Her career began as a Cardiac Intensive Care Unit nurse at Yale New Haven Hospital. It was there that she recognized the impact of relationships and social conditions on health status. She and several colleagues developed a comprehensive and holistic cardiac rehab program, one of the firsts of its kind in the country. In 1978 Cheryl began a long affiliation with Nantucket Cottage Hospital and after several nursing clinical specialist positions she left as the Director of Clinical Services, to become the founding Executive Director/Clinical Nurse Specialist at the Nantucket AIDS Network. In addition to her professional positions Cheryl has a long record of community service. She served on the Nantucket Council for Human Services for ten years serving as Chairman. While serving on the Council Cheryl was elected to serve on the Nantucket Board of Selectmen/County Commissioners. As a Council member and Selectman, Cheryl was responsible for the creation of the Human Service Grant Review Committee that was instrumental in dedicating approximately 2% of Nantucket's annual town budget to address the critical unmet needs of the community. During her Chairmanship of the Council for Human Services Cheryl mobilized community support, and received a grant for a community team to attend the inaugural Healthy Communities Institute. In 2000 Cheryl was appointed as Executive Director of Community Action Committee of the Cape & Islands, an anti-poverty agency to advocate for effective public policies to promote self-sufficiency for low-income families. There she facilitated the development of new services, including an innovative homeless shelter for

individuals suffering from an assortment of mental health and chronic disease conditions. For ten years Cheryl served as the President of Family & Children's Service of Nantucket bringing badly needed resources to serve mental health and substance use needs in the community. In December of 2003 Cheryl was asked by the State Department of Transitional Assistance to take over the Plymouth Area Coalition for the Homeless in an attempt to salvage them from bankruptcy and closure. Over the last eight years Cheryl has been a leader in advocating for the comprehensive needs of homeless individuals and families throughout the greater Plymouth region. In May 2008 Ms. Bartlett was appointed as Deputy Director for the Bureau of Community Health and Prevention for the Massachusetts State Department of Public Health, and most recently Bureau Director in January 2011.

**Ray Considine** joined Health Resources in Action (HRiA) as president and CEO in 1989. Since his arrival the organization has grown from a Boston-based agency to an internationally focused public health and research organization. HRiA today supports over 200 scientists annually through privately-funded research grants, while its public health programs span thirty-eight states and eight countries. Previously, Ray served as executive director of Cambridge Family and Children's Service, directed a Mental Health and Drug Abuse Treatment facility for adolescents, worked in youth services in Vermont, and worked as a special education teacher in a psychiatric hospital in Connecticut. He has extensive experience in non-profit management, administration and public health, with a professional background in institutional resource development, personnel administration, budgeting and non-profit finance.

Ray has served as president of the Massachusetts Public Health Association, president of the Massachusetts Health Council, Chair of the Board of Directors of Associated Grant Makers of Massachusetts, vice president of The Massachusetts Council of Human Service Providers, and a member of the Steering Committee of the MetroWest Community Health Care Foundation. He currently serves on the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute Community Benefits Advisory Board, the Shriver Center LEND Program Advisory Board, and various other non-profit organization Boards. He holds a master's degree in Social Work in Administration and Planning.

**Amanda M. Navarro** is an Associate Director at PolicyLink in New York, NY. Dr. Navarro currently leads efforts within the national Convergence Partnership—a collaboration of funders aimed at achieving healthy people living in health places through environmental and policy change. She provides research, technical assistance, and training on collaborative, multi-field strategies to improve community environments particularly in low income communities and communities of color. Prior to joining PolicyLink, she worked in the Division of Adult and Community Health within the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, coordinating several programmatic and research activities related to health disparities, social determinants of health, community health promotion, and the impact of acculturation and mental health on chronic disease. She holds a Master in Public Health (MPH) from Boston University and a Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) from the University of Texas School of Public Health-Houston. Dr. Navarro has published on various health issues impacting poor communities and communities of color, including HIV/AIDS prevention, substance abuse treatment, community health promotion, access to health services among Medicaid and SCHIP families, racial and ethnic health disparities, and social determinants of health.

**Georgia M. Simpson May** is the Director of the Office of Health Equity for the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. In this capacity she oversees efforts of MDPH to address health disparities across all bureaus in the Department and provides leadership for the Department's work with other Executive Office of Health & Human Service initiatives. From 1999 – 2008, Ms. Simpson May served as the Deputy Director of the Multicultural AIDS Coalition, the largest minority-operated, minority-serving HIV/AIDS service organization in New England, where she oversaw the agency's federally funded initiatives. Georgia received her undergraduate degree in Biology from Brandeis University, a Masters in Management of Human Services from the Heller

Graduate School for Social Policy Research at Brandeis, and a Graduate Certificate in Epidemiology and Biostatistics from Drexel University's School of Public Health. She has 18 years experience in health and human service management and development and is the recipient of the National Council of Negro Women, Inc – Boston Section's "2001 Women of Courage and Conviction Award" for her work in Public Health.

**Lauren A. Smith** is the Medical Director and Chief Medical Officer of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, where she provides senior clinical leadership for programs, planning and policy. She was responsible for key aspects of the Department's response to the H1N1 influenza outbreak and more recently lead the development of regulations related to new legislation on sports head injuries and school nutrition standards. She has been the senior team leader designated to oversee the Department's initiatives focusing on community level obesity prevention through system and policy changes. An Associate Professor at the Boston University School of Medicine, she served as the Medical Director of the Pediatric Inpatient Unit at Boston Medical Center and was a pediatric hospitalist for over 10 years. Dr. Smith's research career focused on child health disparities and the implication of public policies for child health and wellbeing. She has focused particularly on children with chronic illness, such as asthma and sickle cell disease, as well as issues related to barriers to the rapid and sustained diffusion of effective health interventions, including appropriate asthma treatment and infant sleep position recommendations. In addition to numerous peer reviewed papers, she has authored reports on the health impact of affordable housing and energy costs as examples of the effects of public policy on health. Her experience in federal and state government includes roles as a policy analyst for the Department of Health and Human Services and as a W. T. Grant Health Policy Fellow in the office of the Massachusetts Speaker of the House. She completed her education and training at Harvard College, the University of California, San Francisco School of Medicine and the University of California, Berkeley School of Public Health. She completed her residency and chief residency at Children's Hospital, Boston and her fellowship in General Pediatrics at Boston Medical Center.

**Ramani Sripada** has 15 years of professional experience in public health program development, implementation, capacity building and evaluation. She has led and participated on a variety of boards, coalitions/partnerships and advisory committees on local, regional and national levels. Ramani received her Bachelor's Degree in Social Thought and Political Economy from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and her Master's Degree in Applied Urban Anthropology at City College, NYC. She currently works as a program officer at MetroWest Community Health Care Foundation where she oversees Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities and Childhood Obesity Initiatives.