

## 2025 Virtual Health Equity Forum

Sponsored by

The Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership (MBHP)/Carelon

# From Barriers to Bridges: Integrating Vulnerable Populations into Health Services

## Keynote Speaker

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Dr. Renee Crichlow, MD, FAAFP (she/her)  
*Chief Medical Officer, Codman Square Health Center, and Vice-Chair,  
Boston University Medical School Department of Family Medicine*

Renee Crichlow, MD, FAAFP, practiced full-spectrum Family Medicine with Obstetrics for more than 20 years and is now the Chief Medical Officer of Codman Square Health Center in Boston, a Vice-Chair at the Boston University Medical School Department of Family Medicine, and she is also a Lecturer at the Harvard University Chan School of Public Health.

Dr. Crichlow has lived and worked in both rural and urban environments. She and her family lived for six years in Red Lodge, Montana, when Dr. Crichlow was seeing patients and teaching Family Medicine at a federally qualified community health center in Billings, Montana.

Dr. Crichlow was next at the University of Minnesota as the Director of Advocacy and Policy in the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health and the inaugural holder of the Mac Baird Endowed Chair for Family Medicine Advocacy and Policy.

Dr. Crichlow's Fellowships include a Fellowship in Health Policy through the Dept of Health and Human Services. She is a Commissioner for Federal and State Policy for the American Academy of Family Physician and is also on the national Board of Directors and the Immediate Past President of the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine and the founder of The Ladder, a mentorship program for kids interested in health careers.

## Moderator

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Dr. Simreet Khaira, MD (she/her)  
*Child and Adolescent Associate Medical Director, Massachusetts Behavioral  
Health Partnership*

Dr. Khaira is a board-certified Child, Adolescent, and Adult Psychiatrist working for MBHP as Associate Medical Director. Prior to this position, she served as the Associate Regional Medical Director in MA for Lifestance Health. After completing her residency and fellowship training at Tufts Medical Center, Simreet joined a small outpatient private practice, Commonwealth Psychology Associates. There she partnered with senior leaders to help grow the business, including the creation of policies and procedures rooted in best practices. She went on to lead the team, and when the company was eventually acquired by Lifestance Health, her role was expanded to support the larger region.

## Panelists

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Ashley Naginewicz, EdD, LMHC (she/her)  
*Chief of Behavioral Health, Caring Health Center (CHC)*

Dr. Ashley Naginewicz is a Doctorate-Level, Licensed Mental Health Counselor who works with mental health and substance use clients to help them on the path to recovery and overall wellness. Ashley believes that long-term recovery and wellness from substance use and mental health issues can be achieved; as well as finding a sense of peace and balance within one's life. Dr. Naginewicz has worked in the field of mental health and substance use for 13 years with experience in counseling with medication-assisted treatment, mindfulness recovery, and cognitive behavioral therapy. She is trained in mindfulness and acceptance therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, and motivational interviewing. She has also published articles for the Interdisciplinary Journal of Advances in Research in Education, written a chapter for a publication on social justice, and presented for Learning Disability Worldwide. She is the Chief of Behavioral Health at Caring Health Center.



Colleen M. Nguyen, MPH, DrPHc (she/her)  
*Executive Director, Asian Women for Health (AWFH) and DrPH candidate, Tulane University*

Colleen M. Nguyen, MPH, is the Executive Director of Asian Women for Health (AWFH) and a Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) candidate at Tulane University. With nearly 20 years of experience in public health, community engagement, and health equity, she has led initiatives spanning cancer, infectious diseases, and mental health. The daughter of Vietnamese refugees and a lifelong community organizer, Colleen brings both lived experience and professional expertise to her work. At AWFH, she leads community-driven programs in culturally responsive health education, workforce development, and community-engaged research.



Dr. Luis R. Alvarez-Hernandez, PhD, MSW, LICSW (he/him/él)  
*Assistant Professor, Boston University School of Social Work, Department of Clinical Practice*

Dr. Luis R. Alvarez-Hernandez is a queer Puerto Rican social work practitioner, educator, and researcher, currently serving as an Assistant Professor at Boston University School of Social Work. Dr. Alvarez-Hernandez is a community-engaged scholar, centering the transformational possibilities of iteratively linking research, community, and practice. His research focuses on the structural and social determinants of health of Latine, LGBTQ+, and immigrant communities with a particular attention to the liberatory experiences of people living at the intersections of these identities. He is the author of the award-winning book, "See Me! Gay and Trans Latinos' Testimonios on Mental Health, Discrimination, and Joy in South Texas." His work is informed by over 10 years of experience as a bilingual (English and Spanish) clinical social worker in mental health and healthcare settings and by critical and feminist theories. He teaches graduate courses related to clinical practice, critical theories, and interventions with marginalized groups.



Dr. Opeoluwa Sotonwa, LLM, LPD (he/him)  
*Commissioner, Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH)*

Dr. Opeoluwa Sotonwa is the Commissioner for the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. He previously served as the Executive Director of the Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. An accomplished international thought leader, he has been involved with disability rights issues since becoming a lawyer in Nigeria. He was instrumental in drafting and passing the Nigerian disability rights law, as well as over 20 pieces of legislation in Missouri.

Commissioner Sotonwa has dedicated his career to partnering with purposeful organizations, community leaders, and government agencies to improve the quality of life for individuals who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or late-deafened. He was a Vice President of the National Black Deaf Advocates and currently serves on several think-tank organizations worldwide, focusing on disability rights advocacy.

He founded the Opeoluwa Sotonwa Foundation, which provides annual scholarships to economically disadvantaged Deaf and hard-of-hearing college students in Nigeria. Commissioner Sotonwa graduated with a Law degree from the University of Ilorin and a Master of Laws from Howard University School of Law. He also received a Doctor of Law and Policy degree from Northeastern University. He is a Council of State Governments' Henry Toll Fellow and a recipient of the Judge Krekel Trailblazer Award for Human Rights.



Rahsaan D. Hall, Esq. (he/him)  
*President and CEO, Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts (ULEM)*

Rahsaan Hall is President and CEO of the Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts (ULEM). There he leads ULEM's efforts to enable communities to overcome racial and social barriers that cause economic inequities, which are exacerbated by sexual and domestic violence, by creating employment and economic development opportunities. He is also the founder and principal of

Rahsaan Hall Consulting where he provides experienced racial justice and criminal law reform advocacy focusing on community engagement, policy advocacy, and racial equity. He recently ran for Plymouth County District Attorney.

Previously, Rahsaan served as the Director of the Racial Justice Program for the American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts. Rahsaan also managed the ACLU of Massachusetts' What a Difference a DA Makes campaign to educate state residents about the power and influence of district attorneys.

Rahsaan has received multiple awards and recognitions for his work including Massachusetts Black Lawyers Association 2024 Trailblazer Award, Boston Magazine's Top Lawyers 2021, the Equal Justice Coalition's 2019 Beacon of Justice Award, Get Connected's 2018 GK100 Boston's Most Influential People of Color, Massachusetts Communities Action Network 2018 Carry if On Leadership Award. Rahsaan also serves on the boards of the Who We Are Project and the Hyams Foundation. He is a graduate of The Ohio State University (BA), Northeastern University School of Law (JD) and Andover Newton Theological School (MDiv). He is an ordained reverend in the African Methodist Episcopal Church.