



Access to Care Forum
July 11, 2014
Speaker Biographies

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Dianna E. Abney, M.D., F.A.A.P. Health Officer, Charles County Department of Health. [See her C.V.](#)

Karyn M. T. Black, LCPC, is the Director of the Charles County Core Service Agency, and a Licensed Professional Counselor. She graduated with her Masters degree in Counseling in 1998 from West Virginia University, with a focus on community counseling. The first twelve years of her career were spent working for a Residential and Psychiatric Rehabilitation Program where she developed a love for working with individuals living with serious and persistent mental illness. Beginning as a case manager and later as the Program Director, she was exposed to the larger systemic policy issues affecting this population. Seeing the opportunity for growth as the Director of the Core Service Agency, Karyn accepted the opportunity to learn about the unique issues facing the consumers engaged in the Charles County mental health system. In her current position, she has worked tirelessly to remove barriers to treatment and improve the opportunities for individuals and families receiving services in the Charles County Public Mental Health System.

Rachael Faulkner is the Director of Government Affairs and Communications at the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Behavioral Health Administration. In this role, Ms. Faulkner manages legislative activities for the Administration and oversees all requests for information and communications. Prior to this role, Ms. Faulkner was the Director of Interagency Affairs and Education Policy at the Maryland Department of Disabilities. Ms. Faulkner earned a BA in Social Work and American Studies from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County and a MSW degree in Management and Community Organizing from the University of Maryland, School of Social Work.

Leni Preston serves as Chair of the *Maryland Women’s Coalition for Health Care Reform* - nonpartisan statewide alliance of individuals and organizations founded in 2006 to ensure that every Marylander has access to comprehensive, affordable, accessible and high quality health care. Women bring a unique and powerful perspective to this work because of their personal stake in our health care system – as caregivers for themselves, their families and their communities – and as the primary decision makers on their family’s health care.

With passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, the Coalition has focused its policy, legislative and advocacy work on ensuring that Maryland implements the law in a way that meets the diverse needs of consumers. The Coalition has also prioritized work on



Maryland's initiatives to increase quality and lower costs, as well as the goal of reducing health disparities to advance health equity.

Prior to her work as a volunteer with the Coalition, Leni spent her professional career in the field of management at historic sites and museums. From 1996 – 2007 she led the consulting firm, *Preston & Associates*, which specialized in strategic planning for nonprofits and museums.

Raquel Samson, Deputy Director, Health Systems Infrastructure Administration and Director of the Office of Primary Care Access, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Her work focuses on policy planning and service delivery efforts within DHMH, which allows her to draw on her extensive experience in women's health, assessing community health issues, and designing and implementing multi-stakeholder solutions. Prior to working at DHMH, Ms. Samson was the Director of Community Health at Susan G. Komen for the Cure, where she oversaw large corporate foundation community health grants for global and domestic programs. She also served as the Associate Director of the Center for Health Improvement at the Primary Care Coalition of Montgomery County Maryland (PCC). Ms. Samson started her career in education and was Associate Director of Education and Training at Planned Parenthood of New York City. She later served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Morocco supporting maternal and child health and implemented micro credit programs with women's groups in Kenya for UNICEF. Ms. Samson received her Master of Public Health from Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine in International Reproductive Health and Demography.

Amber Starn is an epidemiologist at the Charles County Department of Health. She received her Masters of Public Health from the University of Kentucky with a concentration in epidemiology. Since 2004, Amber has worked as an epidemiologist for the Charles County Department of Health and has also served as a data consultant for the University of Maryland: Charles Regional Medical Center and the College of Southern Maryland. She performs health data trend analysis and disease rate comparison and understands the health needs of the county. She has previously worked as the Director of Health Promotion and Education Services for the Charles County Department of Health, where she served as the coordinator for the Partnerships for a Healthier Charles County, the county's local health improvement coalition. Amber has authored several data analysis reports specific to Charles County, including the 2011 Charles County Community Health Needs Assessment Report, the 2013 Charles County Local Management Board Needs Assessment for Children, Youth, and Families, the 2012 Charles County Substance Abuse Advisory Coalition's Underage Drinking Intervening Variable and Contributing Factor Needs Assessment Project, and the 2013 Charles County Core Service Agency Needs Assessment Report of the Public Mental Health System.

