



**HEALTHY MOTHERS,  
HEALTHY BABIES**

*Coalition of Georgia*

# 2022

# Annual Meeting & Conference

"Using Our Collective Strength to Improve  
Maternal and Infant Health"

Rainwater Conference Center  
Valdosta, GA

October 20 & 21, 2022

# AGENDA

## DAY ONE: Thursday, October 20, 2022

9:00 AM	Registration Opens
12:00 PM	Welcome & Lunch
12:15 PM	Keynote
12:30 PM	Mom Stories Video Panel
1:15 PM	Break
1:30 PM	Session A
2:30 PM	Break
2:45 PM	Session B
3:45 PM	Break
4:00 PM	Session C
5:00 PM	Break
6:00 PM	Wetzel Award Reception

## DAY TWO: Friday, October 21, 2022

7:30 AM	Registration & Breakfast
9:00 AM	Welcome
9:15 AM	Perinatal Workforce Panel
10:00 AM	Break
10:15 AM	Session D
11:15 AM	Break
11:30 AM	Lunch
12:30 PM	Break
12:45 PM	Session E
1:45 PM	Break
2:00 PM	Session F
3:00 PM	Break
3:15 PM	Closing Remarks

*We highly encourage all participants to visit our exhibition hall during breaks!*



## WELCOME!



Each year, we organize hundreds of Georgians at our event to provide a platform for multi-sector collaboration and awareness building around critical issues facing Georgia's families.

Given the lasting effects of COVID-19, the implications of inflation, and the concerning rates of maternal and infant mortality in our state, it is imperative that we come together to leverage our talents to find real solutions. Your fierce commitment to improving health outcomes for families is an invaluable addition to the event, setting the stage for rich conversation, learning, and connection. It is through individuals like you that we've been able to advance policies, expand resources, and share innovative solutions aimed at moving us closer to our shared goal.

We are excited to serve alongside you and, thank you for joining us!

*♥ The HMHBGA Team*

## LET'S CONNECT!



# Wonder Mom Award

*Presented To:*  
**Simbi Animashaun**



*Simbi Animashaun is a mom of 3, educator, published author, certified birth & bereavement doula, and maternal infant health advocate. She is also the founder of United By Loss Foundation, Inc. and Simmaculate Health & Wellness, LLC.*

The Wonder Mom Award recognizes a Georgia mom who demonstrates the power of a mother's inner strength to deal with the successes and challenges in life while exhibiting an interest in her community by empowering fellow moms through services that enrich mothers, children, and families.

## Simbi's Why

*"Only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile."*

“

In 2018, I became a mother after experiencing a hemorrhagic stroke, years of infertility, perinatal loss, and depression. Since then, my life has changed. I am now living my life to its fullest. My three children are gifts from God! They keep me faithful, focused, and driven to be a positive change in my family and community. In 2020, I began my advocacy work by helping other mothers and birth givers who experienced perinatal loss. I provide birth and bereavement doula services, health and wellness products and services, perinatal loss comfort boxes, and grief support groups. I enjoy serving my children and the community!

”

The Carolyn Wetzel Continuum Award recognizes an individual who contributes to the health and well-being of Georgia's families by being a positive change agent. This award is in memory of Carolyn Wetzel, a long-time HMHBGA member, friend, and dedicated public health advocate for mothers and babies.

## "A Fierce Advocate for Maternal and Infant Health"

Our Executive Director, Ky Lindberg, shares how Nikki's work has impacted Georgia's families:

"As a mom of three, I know very intimately how important it is to be wrapped in love, supported, and afforded space to heal when welcoming a new lil one to your life. Yet for many, they feel they can't prioritize self which can have detrimental effects on the lives of themselves and their baby. Nikki has made an immeasurable impact on the health and well-being of families across Georgia. She leverages her years of experiences to support families in prioritizing whole health, many times offering services and support without pay or recognition. She is a fierce advocate for maternal and infant health, using her voice and expertise to make sure every family has access to the tools they need to foster a healthy pregnancy and postpartum period."

# Carolyn Wetzel Continuum Award

*Presented To:*  
**Nikki Reeves**



*Nikki Reeves is from Lawrenceville, Georgia and is a single mother to three young sons. She is also a respected perinatal professional, a doula, a mentor, a coach, a facilitator, and a friend. She loves empowering families with childbirth workshops, labor services, and support groups.*

# Featured Speakers



## Dr. Dora Hughes

*Chief Medical Officer, CMS Innovation Center*  
Day 1 Keynote Speaker

Dora Hughes, M.D., M.P.H., is the Chief Medical Officer at the CMS Innovation Center at the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. She leads the Center's work on health equity, provides clinical and policy advice on model development, and liaises with the Innovation Center's stakeholder community.

Prior to this role, Dr. Hughes was on faculty at The George Washington University in Washington, DC. She has consulted in the life science industry and served in senior roles at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee in the U.S. Senate.



## Dr. Natalie Hernandez

*Executive Director, Center for Maternal Health Equity*  
Wetzel Reception Keynote Speaker

Natalie Hernandez advocates for women and birth givers through her research in maternal health. Her work is dedicated to advancing science toward eliminating women's health inequities by evaluating healthy policy and social determinants of health, specifically with Black and Latina populations. She has more than 17 years of experience in developing community partnerships and implementing community-based participatory research (CBPR) that engages diverse stakeholder groups, including health care providers, patient populations, organizational leaders, and policymakers. Dr. Hernandez currently sits on Georgia's Maternal Mortality Review Committee, Georgia PRAMS Steering Committee, and various maternal and child health organizations.

# Panels & Plenaries

## Motherhood: The Stories that Connect Us

Three moms share their powerful pregnancy, birth, and postpartum stories. By opening up about their experiences, we learn about the critical role that systems of care play in supporting maternal health equity, and what we can do to demand better humanity, compassion, and care in the birthing community.



### Precious Andrews

*Moderator*

Precious is a proud Hampton University graduate with a B.A. in Psychology and an M.Ed in Special Education. This wife and mother of four beautiful girls worked as a child welfare official with the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services. Precious' "why" is fiercely committed to delivering quality and thoughtful programs to families that will help strengthen the community she not only is apart of but is passionate about.



### Quantrilla Ard

*Panelist*

Quantrilla Ard is a passionate behavioral scientist and public health professional. She uses her social media platforms to engage, educate, and inform others about her doctoral research and personal experience with preeclampsia. Dr. Ard is a champion of reproductive justice and maternal health disparities and serves as a Certified Patient Family Partner with Mommas Voices through the Preeclampsia Foundation, and a Family Health Advocate through the H.E.A.R.T for Clayton program.



### Kamisha Wright-Williams

*Panelist*

Kamisha Wright-Williams is a daughter, wife, mother, sister, and friend. Born and raised in Savannah, GA, she is determined to help women find their voice that was once stolen. She is in the process of launching "Ages of Hope," a support group for mothers and families who have experienced prenatal and infant loss. Kamisha is also preparing to release her first book, "The Epiphany of a Butterfly." It puts a spotlight on sexual trauma, molestation, grief, generational curses, and more.



### Neidra Chubb

*Panelist*

Neidra Chubb is the mother of Jr. Stocks-Chubb and Josiah Chubb, Jr., her first born son who gained his wings on November 2, 2018 to SIDS. During the first few months after losing her son, she felt lost and alone. This led Neidra to work with various organizations to spread awareness to the prevention of SIDS, safe sleep, and grief. Currently, Neidra is the founder of Mommy Strong and a director with First Candle.

# Panels & Plenaries

## Perinatal Workforce Panel

This dynamic panel features Georgia-based perinatal professionals who explore how they can collaborate to improve maternal health outcomes.



### Keisha Reeves

*Moderator*

Keisha Reeves is a Georgia native that has witnessed the stigma of mental health and has made it her mission to normalize therapy. She is certified in perinatal mental health, serving women who are trying to conceive, have fertility issues, have experienced infant loss, transitioning into motherhood as well as postpartum depression.



### Dr. Joy Baker

*Panelist*

Dr. L. Joy Baker is a Board Certified General OB/GYN in LaGrange, Georgia. Baker was one of the first OB/GYN physicians in GA to earn special certification in PMADs and treatment of addiction in pregnancy. Her clinical & research interests include health equity for Black & Brown women, with regard to maternal morbidity, perinatal quality improvement, and minimally invasive GYN surgery.



### Victoria Gordon

*Panelist*

Victoria Gordon has over ten years of nursing experience working with women and infants in inpatient hospital settings, outpatient health, and community based healthcare. She is a staunch advocate for improving access to healthcare, improving the quality of healthcare, and decreasing barriers to practice in the state of Georgia.



### Bethany Branch-Erby

*Panelist*

Bethany Branch-Erby is a certified home birth & postpartum doula, lactation specialist, award-winning birth, newborn, birth worker branding photographer, and mother of 3. Bethany's training and skills have given her insight into the backend of birth work, and is overjoyed to support families in bringing forth their greatest miracles.



### Sekesa Berry

*Panelist*

Sekesa Berry is a birth justice activist, community leader for Black Birth Workers, mother of four, and a community mother to many. She believes that mothers are the first teachers to youth and at the center of nation building. Sekesa works with grass-roots organizations and local non-profits to decolonize birth, curtail birth traumas, and restore natural birthrights.



### Sterling Simmons

*Panelist*

Sterling is a certified breastfeeding specialist and full-spectrum doula serving. She has been educating and assisting clients since 2016. She works hard to diversify the lactation field by creating culturally inclusive breastfeeding materials such as her educational breastfeeding coloring book and teaching aids.

# Breakout Sessions

Thursday, October 20

Session A Options - 1:30 PM

## Advocating for Mental Health Access in Georgia

Helen Robinson, MPA

*The urgent need for improved access to behavioral health care has opened a rare window of opportunity for transformative policy change. This session will explore the recent passage of Georgia's Mental Health Parity Act, how the Act will improve access to care, and the next steps to ensure its implementation.*

## Keep Families Covered: Minimizing the Harm of the Medicaid Unwinding

Leah Chan, MPH

*Once the COVID-related public health emergency ends and Medicaid eligibility determinations re-start, Georgia faces a looming health care crisis that falls particularly hard on Black and Latinx families. We must use all the tools available to keep children and families covered.*

## Civic Advocacy, Engagement and State Policy

Natasha Taylor, MA

*This seminar expands the capacity of advocates to engage their communities and advocate for their communities' specific needs. By providing individuals with the training, tools, and resources needed to engage in effective advocacy and community engagement, this training will empower community leaders to influence policy decisions that promote improved Black maternal and child health outcomes in the state of Georgia.*

Session B Options- 2:45 PM

## "I think they had a racial prejudice towards me": Narrative-Based Medicine "Maternal Near Miss" Study

Kaitlyn Hernandez-Spalding, MPH

*The Maternal Near Miss project is a collection of birthing persons' stories during their pregnancy, birth, and postpartum period. Using narrative-based medicine, virtual interviews were conducted with over 80 women of color in the United States about their lived experiences of severe maternal morbidity and maternal near miss events. We hope to use these perspectives to influence policy and clinical strategies.*

## Centering Equity in Maternal Mental Health Screening

Kandyce Hylick

*Maternal mental health disorders affect 20-25% of pregnant women or within one-year postpartum. Yet, "universal screening" rates to detect the disorders remain low. This session highlights current evidence-based screening tools, barriers to care, and the need for equitable solutions that allow access to quality care and culturally-appropriate screening.*

## Assessing Perinatal Risk and instituting prevention of PMADS

Dr. Sipra Laddha, MD, Dr. Sheril Kalarithara, MD

*Perinatal mood disorders are one of the most frequent complications of pregnancy. However, in our current system, we rarely systematically assess for depression or anxiety prior to delivery and frequently underutilize the risk assessments to help prevent maternal distress proactively. This presentation aims to bridge our current knowledge of perinatal risk and connect to innovative solutions that prevent maternal mood morbidities.*

# Breakout Sessions

Session C Options - 4:00 PM

## VidaRPM: Remote Pregnancy and Postpartum Monitoring for Rural and Underserved Women in Georgia

Dr. Marlo Vernon, PhD, MD

*VidaRPM is an innovative and simple text messaging (SMS) and web application. Designed to impact maternal mortality and morbidity disparities in rural and underserved minority populations, VidaRPM addresses gaps between women's knowledge about blood pressure and mental health during and after pregnancy and adequate navigation and access to care. We present pilot data and future expansion plans in Georgia.*

## How Data is Saving Moms' Lives

Dr. Katherine Sylvester, DPT, PT, Dr. Jessica Thompson, DPT, PT

*Wearable technology paired with guidance from a healthcare provider is an invaluable tool for improving maternal and infant outcomes. From helping moms make healthier choices to detecting anemia, heart issues, infections, and preeclampsia between office visits, women are surviving pregnancy and delivery and thriving postpartum through Operation M.I.S.T.*

## Using CBPR to Design mHealth Interventions for Preventing Maternal Mortality

Dr. Katherine Sylvester, DPT, PT, Dr. Jessica Thompson, DPT, PT

*The purpose of this study is to examine the facilitators for and barriers to postpartum transitional care for rural Black women, to inform the development of a culturally relevant mHealth intervention called Preventing Maternal Mortality using Mobile Technology or PM3.*

Friday, October 21

Session D Options- 10:15 AM

## This Girls is on Fire

Cena Martin

*This life skills presentation supports maternal development in leadership and the development of core entrepreneurship skills. This "Entrepreneurship Award Winning" coach reveals the five skills she developed to go from at-risk youth to a leadership trainer for mothers ready to use entrepreneurship as a primary way to secure their financial future.*

## Doulas For Every Birth

Korie Renee, Certified Birth Doula, Certified Placenta Encapsulation Specialist

*In this session, participants will obtain specific information on what doulas are, how they contribute to the birthing process and understand why doulas should be covered by insurance.*

## Expanding Access to Oral Healthcare to Pregnant and Postpartum People Across Georgia

Fowzio Jama, MPH

*Participants will deepen their understanding of the intersection between oral and perinatal health. The session will examine how physiological and behavioral changes during pregnancy can lead to oral pathologies, resulting in adverse health outcomes for both mother and infant. We will address our current work with PCORI to amplify the voices of providers and perinatal persons to identify and address barriers to oral care in our state.*



# Breakout Sessions

## Session E Options - 12:45 PM

### **Building Blocks to Equitable Care: Informational Support for Postpartum Women**

Dr. Mary Ukuku, PhD, MPH, Dr. Yenupini Joyce Adams, PhD, RNC-MN

*To help combat adverse consequences, an integrated level of support must be present during and after birth. A key area of support is informational support (knowledge of warning signs of complications, advice, or feedback) provided by healthcare providers. Understanding the level of informational support women receive is imperative to help create an equitable model of care for postpartum women.*

### **Why DEI in Leadership is Vital to Healthcare Outcomes**

Dr. Lisa Herbert, MD, FAAFP, CPEC

*Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in healthcare can positively impact our communities and improve the health of Georgia's mothers, babies, and families.*

### **Doulas Serving Rural and Immigrant/Refugee Communities**

Sydney Comstock, MPH

*This mixed methods, community-engaged study with HMHBGA has interviewed and surveyed 23 doulas in metro Atlanta and is now expanding to 40 doulas who serve rural areas and immigrant/refugee communities in Georgia. The goal is to improve access to full spectrum doula care and to reduce maternal-child health inequities for all Georgia communities.*

## Session F Options - 2:00 PM

### **Atlanta Healthy Start Initiative (AHSI): Examining a Local Program's Impact on Reducing Disparities and Improving Maternal and Infant Health Outcomes through Community-Based Services**

Janina Daniels-Gilmore, MHSA, CWC1

*Between 2016 and 2018, the average Black infant mortality rate in Fulton County, Georgia was 10.9, while the White rate was 2.1, meaning Black infants died at five times the rate of White infants. The Atlanta Healthy Start Initiative (AHSI) is a federally funded maternal and child health program dedicated to reducing disparities in maternal and infant health in Fulton County.*

### **Let's Talk Community Chat (Safe Sleep)**

Barb Himes, Certified Doula

*Despite the safe sleep messaging for almost 30 years, significant racial disparities continue. We must change how these messages are delivered and by whom. Let's Talk Community Chats are monthly community gatherings meeting families where they are and where they are comfortable with trusted community members offering support and resources.*

### **Stranded in a Maternity Care Desert: Improving Access & Equity for Moms and Babies**

Madison Scott, Esq., Shelmekia Hodo, MBA, CLC Tamara Mason, MPH, CHES Ethan Lott

*The U.S. is one of the most dangerous places to give birth in the developed world with 7 million Americans living in urban and rural areas without adequate access to care. This presentation will preview research pending from HMHBGA's State of the State Report and March of Dimes pending 2022 report while exploring solutions to improve maternal and infant health.*



**LOOK  
FORWARD**  
TO NEW BEGINNINGS

LOOK TO  
**NORTHSIDE**  
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is proud to support  
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We commend HMHBGA's commitment to improve access to health care for mothers and babies while focusing attention on the full spectrum of maternal and child health concerns.

To see how we keep care at the heart of our work, please visit [www.amerihealthcaritasga.com](http://www.amerihealthcaritasga.com).



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Healthcare Georgia Foundation is pleased to partner with Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Georgia to promote health equity and to improve maternal and infant health outcomes across Georgia. We wish HMHBGA a successful conference!



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## We are proud to support HMHB.

Our partnerships with Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies and other healthcare partners shine a light on the maternal mortality crisis in Georgia as well as other issues related to women's health.

Learn more about our work  
on maternal mortality.

[WWW.GACOMMISSIONONWOMEN.ORG](http://WWW.GACOMMISSIONONWOMEN.ORG)



HEALTHY MOTHERS,  
HEALTHY BABIES

Coalition of Georgia





# Working together to help people live healthier lives

UnitedHealthcare® is proud to sponsor Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Georgia. Together, we can help mothers and babies live healthier lives.

# WE ARE THE BLACK MAMAS MATTER ALLIANCE



Join the fight to advance Black maternal health, rights and justice in the U.S. and globally.

The Black Mamas Matter Alliance, Inc. (BMMA) is a national network of Black women-led and Black-led, birth and reproductive justice organizations and multi-disciplinary professionals, working across the full-spectrum of maternal and reproductive health.

BLACKMAMASMATTER.ORG

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Center for Maternal Health Equity

Join a study for Black women, by Black women



The PM3 study helps new mothers in Georgia stay healthy as they care for their babies in the first few months. Participation may include your use of a mobile app.

To become a partner or participant, email us at pm3.cmhe@msm.edu OR call us on (404) 793-3753



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**For more information contact:**

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- Maternal and Child Health
- Women's Economic Self-Sufficiency Program (WESSP)
- COVID-19 Vaccination and Testing

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# JOIN THE COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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## WHAT IS IT?

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The purpose of the Community Advisory Committee is to represent the broad interests in the community to promote positive maternal and infant health outcomes.

The Committee is responsible for promoting maximum interaction of families, community organizations, and businesses, and, ensure that HMHBGA's activities are responsive and culturally relevant to those it serves.

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## WHO CAN JOIN?

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Open to anyone interested in maternal and child health.

Members are asked to serve for a minimum of 1 year. The Committee will meet at a minimum of three times a year.



HEALTHY MOTHERS,  
HEALTHY BABIES  
*Coalition of Georgia*

**APPLY TODAY!**



[WWW.HMHBGA.ORG](http://WWW.HMHBGA.ORG)

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# PREGNANT WORKERS FAIRNESS ACT



HMHBGA joins 110+ orgs in delivering an urgent letter to Sen. Chuck Schumer calling for a vote on the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act. The votes are there. Pregnant & postpartum workers cannot wait any longer for relief.

#ProtectPregnantWorkers

Scan below to read the letter:



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