

2ND ANNUAL

# OPTIMIZING OUTCOMES

## MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS SUMMIT

Friday, August 15, 2025

Hyatt Place Durham/Southpoint  
7840 NC-751  
DURHAM, NC

Check-In 8:00 am  
Program 9:00 am – 4:30 pm

### FEATURED KEYNOTES



**Janelle Palacios, PhD, CNM**  
Founder of  
Encoded 4 Story



**Jamie Belsito, BA**  
Founder and Policy &  
Partnerships Director  
of Maternal Mental  
Health Leadership  
Alliance

The United States faces a maternal health crisis as mortality rates continue to accelerate at an alarming pace. Many elements impact the increased risk of pregnancy complications that lead to maternal death, yet more than 80 percent of these deaths are considered preventable. Notably, racial and ethnic disparities exist as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities are at least two to four times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than White women. It is critical to acknowledge that mental and substance use disorders are common conditions that complicate the perinatal period and are currently the leading cause of maternal mortality. North Carolina is particularly affected, having reported disproportionate rates of pregnancy-related deaths from mental health conditions and injuries that are largely attributed to overdose. Moreover, discrimination is recorded as the most prevalent contributory factor.

Through the efforts of NC MATTERS and the Optimizing Outcomes: MMHSUD Summit, healthcare and public health professionals will be uniquely positioned to support a maternal health call to action. The purpose of this event is to provide relevant updates in maternal health screening and treatment options and elevate destigmatizing approaches to integrated care. Participants will have the opportunity to address real world scenarios by engaging in peer-to-peer sharing across varying perinatal care regions and to explore leading recommendations and resources that aid in practice change.

### Target Audience

Physicians (OB/GYN, family medicine, primary care, psychiatry, specialists), advanced care practitioners, behavioral health and substance use professionals (psychologists, therapists, social workers, counselors), nurses, doulas and support teams, as well as others interested from across North Carolina



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES  
Division of Public Health



NC MATTERS



Aetna Better Health®

WAKE AHEC  
PART OF NC AHEC

RECRUIT  
TRAIN  
RETAIN



## Learning Objectives

---

At the conclusion of this competency-based activity, the participant should be able to:

- Examine how substance use disorders intersect with perinatal mental health and contribute to maternal deaths, emphasizing the need for integrated care solutions.
- Utilize key tools to help facilitate community understanding of perinatal mental health and patients' acceptance of their diagnoses for appropriate care.
- Identify how to navigate and recommend perinatal mental health care services based on patient assessment.
- Identify strategies for building meaningful relationships with perinatal patients and offering holistic support.
- Analyze region-specific perinatal mental health related projects and develop appropriate recommendations to implement into practice.
- Review three brief Motivational Interviewing interventions for patient engagement in the perinatal care setting.
- Describe how the healthcare system supported or failed those seeking mental health and/or substance use disorders care.
- Restate the urgency in centering maternal mental health in national policy dialogue.

## Faculty

---

### ANCHOR PERINATAL WELLNESS

**Veronica Kemeny, LCSW, PMH-C**

Founder & Director of Engagement

**Roxanne Rosenberg, LCMHC, PMH-C**

Founder & Clinical Director

**Carolina Robbins, LCSW, PMH-C, EMDR**

Founder & Director of Operations

### CABARRUS HEALTH ALLIANCE

**Sonja Bohannon-Thacker, MSW, LCSW, PMH-C**

Director of Behavioral Health Division

### ENCODED 4 STORY

**Janelle Palacios, PhD, CNM**

Founder

### MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH LEADERSHIP ALLIANCE

**Jamie Belsito, BA**

Founder & Director of Policy and Partnerships

### NC DHHS DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH

**Judith Johnson-Hostler, MA, LCAS, NCC, LCMHC-A, CSI**

Perinatal Substance Use Project Coordinator

**Rebecca Moore-Patterson, MSW, LCSW**

ERASE MM Project Director

### NC TREATMENT ACCOUNTABILITY FOR SAFER COMMUNITIES

**Laurie Conaty, MSW, LCSW, LCAS**

Motivational Interviewing Implementation Coordinator

### PATIENT REPRESENTATIVES

**Consuela Chapman**

**Ashley Jones**

**Melissa Margolin**

**Alice Stone**

### SUDA INSTITUTE

**Russell Suda, MD**

Medical Director

### UNC HORIZONS

**Elisabeth Johnson, PhD, FNP-BC, CARN-AP, LCAS**

Division Director



**CLICK HERE TO REGISTER**

# OPTIMIZING OUTCOMES



## Agenda

---

- 8:00 am **Registration, Breakfast, Exhibitors, and Networking**
- 8:55 **Welcome and Announcements**
- 9:00 **The Overlooked Connection: Mental Health, Overdose, and Maternal Mortality in North Carolina**  
Rebecca Moore-Patterson, MSW, LCSW and Elisabeth Johnson, PhD, FNP-BC, CARN-AP, LCAS
- 9:30 **KEYNOTE Perinatal Mental Health Screening and Treatment Saves Lives: Tools, Tips & Tribulations**  
Janelle Palacios, PhD, CNM
- 10:30 **Perinatal Mental Health Systems of Care**  
Veronica Kemeny, LCSW, PMH-C, Roxanne Rosenberg, LCMHC, PMH-C, and Carolina Robbins, LCSW, PHM-C, EMDR
- 11:15 **Break and Exhibitors**
- 11:30 **Perinatal Care Beyond the Visit: Relationships Matter**  
Russell Suda, MD and Sonja Bohannon-Thacker, MSW, LCSW, PMH-C
- 12:20 pm **Lunch, NC MATTERS Fellows' Recognition, and Exhibitors**
- 1:15 **Regional Projects: Roundtable Discussion**
- 2:00 **Break and Exhibitors**
- 2:10 **Using Motivational Interviewing to Quickly Engage and Develop Patient Change Goals in a Perinatal Health Setting**  
Laurie Conaty, MSW, LCSW, LCAS
- 2:50 **Elevating Patient Voices: Lived Experiences Panel**  
Moderator: Judith Johnson-Hostler, LCMHC, LCAS, NCC, CSI  
Consuela Chapman, Ashley Jones, Melissa Margolin, and Alice Stone
- 3:30 **KEYNOTE Saving Mothers, Saving Futures: The Urgency of Maternal Mental Health Reform**  
Jamie Belsito, BA
- 4:25 **Closing Remarks**
- 4:30 pm **Adjourn**

# OPTIMIZING OUTCOMES

## Registration

---

- **Fee:** \$50
- Vouchers will be accepted.
- Registration will include online handouts and online certificate of completion.
- Call 919-350-8547 for our Inclement Weather Updates.
- Attendance at this activity grants permission for Wake AHEC to use any photographs, audio, video, or other images from this activity for promotional or educational purposes. Please notify an AHEC staff member if you have concerns.
- **Please note:** Friday, August 15, 2025 is open to ALL interested professionals. Thursday, August 14, 2025 is a CLOSED program by invitation only for the NC MATTERS Maternal Mental Health Fellowship program fellows.

**Cancellations and Refunds:** No refunds or credits will be given for cancellations received after July 24, 2025. Substitutions are encouraged.

## Conference Site and Hotel Reservations

---

### Hyatt Place Durham/Southpoint

7840 NC-751, Durham, NC 27713

Tel: **919-688-7800** option "0" to speak with a reservation team member

- Group Code G-NCMI
- Group rate: \$121/night – valid until July 14, 2025 or until capacity is reached
- **[Click to make reservation](#)**

## Credit

---

**CME Credit:** The Wake Area Health Education Center (Wake AHEC) designates this live activity for a maximum of **6.25 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™**. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.



The North Carolina Medical Society is a member of the Southern States CME Collaborative (SSCC). Wake Area Health Education Center is accredited by the SSCC to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

**Contact Hours:** Wake AHEC will provide up to 6.25 Contact Hours to participants.

A participant must attend 100% of the program to receive credit. Partial credit will not be awarded.

## ADA Statement

---

Wake AHEC is fully committed to the principle of equal educational opportunities for all individuals and does not discriminate on the basis of any characteristic protected by federal or state law. If you require any of the auxiliary aids or services identified in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), in order to participate in programs or services, please call us at 919-350-8547. Organizing such resources generally takes 3-4 weeks, so please give us as much notice as possible to make appropriate arrangements.



**CLICK HERE TO REGISTER**

# OPTIMIZING OUTCOMES

## Planning Committee

### AETNA

#### **Kathi Saunders, MHA**

Aetna Managed Healthcare  
Consultant

### NC DHHS DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH

#### **Judith Johnson-Hostler, MA, LCAS, NCC, LCMHC-A, CSI**

Perinatal Substance Use  
Project Coordinator

#### **Tara Owens Shuler, MEd, LCCE, CD(DONA)**

Maternal Health Branch Head

#### **Deborah Smith, MSW, LCSW**

Regional Social Work Consultant

### NC MATTERS

#### **NC DHHS DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

#### **Courtney Masters, MSPH, CD-L**

Program Director

### UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

#### **Karen Burns, MSW, LCSW-A, PMH-C**

Program Director

#### **Carine Kelleher, MPH**

Program Manager

#### **Margo Nathan, MD**

Medical Director

#### **Anne Ruminjo, MD, MPH**

Conference Course Director  
Clinical Education Director

### PATIENT REPRESENTATIVE

#### **Vanessa Bravo, NCCPSS**

### REACH OUT & READ

#### **Amber Pierce**

NC State Director

### UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

#### **Melissa Godwin, LCSW**

Clinical Associate Professor

### WAKE AHEC

#### **Erica Futrell, MSL**

Associate Director,  
CME & Pharmacy

#### **Lue McKnight, MBA**

Project Coordinator,  
CME & Pharmacy

**Questions?** Contact Lue McKnight at 919-350-0469 or [lmcknight@wakeahec.org](mailto:lmcknight@wakeahec.org)

NC Maternal Mental Health MATTERS (Making Access to Treatment, Evaluation, Resources, and Screening Better) is North Carolina's Perinatal Psychiatry Access Program. Our vision is for all perinatal patients in North Carolina to have access to timely and high-quality mental health care and substance use treatment services. By offering real-time psychiatric consultation, resource and referral services, and training opportunities to health care professionals across the state, NC MATTERS works to reduce health disparities and increase healthy birth outcomes. NC MATTERS was established with funding from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) with the goal of enhancing systems for screening, assessment, and treatment of depression, substance use, and other behavioral health disorders in pregnant and postpartum patients.

*This conference is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of an award totaling \$750,000 with an additional 10 percent financed by NC governmental sources for an overall total of \$825,000. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by HRSA, HHS, or the U.S. Government. For more information, please visit [HRSA.gov](http://HRSA.gov).*



**CLICK HERE TO REGISTER**