

8th Annual Maryland Tobacco Control Conference
Navigating the Changing Landscape: The Future of Tobacco Control in Maryland
June 5, 2024 | BWI Airport Marriott

8:15 AM to 8:45 AM	Registration/Breakfast	
8:45 AM to 9:15 AM	Welcome and Opening Remarks Kathleen Hoke, <i>Legal Resource Center (LRC)</i> Dana Moncrief, <i>Maryland Department of Health (MDH)</i> Dr. Elizabeth Kromm, <i>Maryland Department of Health (MDH)</i> Location: Salon GH	
	Concurrent Session 1	
9:20 AM to 10:20 AM	<i>Tobacco Use Prevention and Education in Schools</i>	<i>A Focus on Youth: Cessation and Prevention</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ronya Nassar, <i>Harford County Health Department</i> Jason Semanoff, <i>Maryland State Department of Education</i> Suzannah Ward, <i>Maryland State Department of Education</i> Moderator: Brooke Torton, LRC Location: Pennsylvania Virginia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Bonnie Halpern-Felsher, <i>Stanford REACH Lab</i> Dr. Monique Soileau-Burke, <i>American Academy of Pediatrics</i> Moderator: Blair Inniss, LRC Location: Salon GH
10:20 AM to 10:30 AM	Break	
10:30 AM to 11:30 AM	Keynote Dr. Craig Fryer, <i>University of Maryland School of Public Health</i> Location: Salon GH	
11:30 AM to 12:15 PM	Lunch and Award Presentations	
	Concurrent Session 2	
12:20 PM to 1:20 PM	<i>Policy and Emerging Technology: Injury to Black Communities</i>	<i>Tobacco Enforcement in Maryland</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. David O. Fakunle, <i>Morgan State University School of Community Health & Policy</i> Dr. Francesca G. Weeks, <i>University of Maryland School of Public Health</i> Moderator: Blair Inniss, LRC Location: Pennsylvania Virginia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jeff Hann, <i>Alcohol, Tobacco, and Cannabis Commission</i> Kathleen Hoke, <i>Legal Resource Center</i> Dana Moncrief, <i>Maryland Department of Health</i> Moderator: Kathleen Hoke, LRC Location: Salon GH
1:20 PM to 1:30 PM	Break	

1:30 PM to 2:30 PM	<p>Tobacco Endgame Chris Bostic, <i>Action on Smoking & Health</i></p> <p>Maryland Office of the Attorney General Perspective Anna MacCormack, <i>Office of the Attorney General</i></p> <p>Moderator: Brooke Torton, LRC Location: Salon GH</p>
2:30 PM to 4:00 PM	<p>Cannabis Regulation: Roles and Responsibilities Kathleen Hoke, <i>Legal Resource Center</i> Dana Moncrief, <i>Maryland Department of Health</i> Dawn Berkowitz, <i>Maryland Cannabis Administration</i> Jeff Hann, <i>Alcohol, Tobacco, and Cannabis Commission</i></p> <p>Moderator: Kathleen Hoke, LRC Location: Salon GH</p>

Session Descriptions

Concurrent Session 1 9:20 AM to 10:20 AM

Tobacco Use Prevention and Education in Schools

Learning Objectives:

1. At the end of this session, participants will understand the importance of partnerships and programming between health departments and local county boards of education.
2. At the end of this session, attendees will understand Maryland Board of Education programming relating to youth tobacco use.

A Focus on Youth: Cessation and Prevention

Dr. Bonnie Halpern-Felsher from the Halpern-Felsher REACH lab at Stanford University will provide an overview of the Lab's research and describe their evidence-based curriculum and resources aimed at preventing and reducing tobacco product use. She will also briefly discuss similar resources geared toward cannabis and fentanyl prevention and use. Dr. Monique Soileau-Burke will then discuss the Maryland landscape and the work of the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Learning Objectives:

1. During this session, participants will learn about best practices in the field of tobacco cessation.
2. At the end of this session, participants will understand how to access and use specific cessation resources.

Keynote Session 10:30 AM – 11:30 AM

Moving Beyond Symbolic Gestures: The Respectful Engagement of Minoritized Communities in Tobacco Research

Dr. Craig S. Fryer will talk about what he has learned from his extensive, community-engaged work related to tobacco and cannabis use. Dr. Fryer will explain how respectful engagement with young, underserved communities brings dynamic dimension to the data about who uses tobacco and cannabis, and what policymakers, public health professionals, and advocates can learn about effective mechanisms to reduce tobacco and cannabis use by engaging these communities. With a focus on racial and ethnic inequities, Dr. Fryer will describe his work with urban African American youth and provoke conversation about ethical and effective approaches to regulating tobacco products popular with this population, including small cigars and cigarillos and menthol products.

Learning Objectives:

1. During this session, attendees will learn about the intersection of tobacco and cannabis regulatory policies in Maryland.
2. During this session, attendees will learn about racial and health inequities related to marijuana and tobacco use among youth populations.

Concurrent Session 2 12:20 PM to 1:20 PM

Policy and Emerging Technology: Injury to Black Communities

Dr. David Fakunle will discuss tobacco retailer density and the impact it has on community tobacco use. His focus will include impact as it relates to race and socioeconomic status. Dr. Francesca Weaks will discuss how tobacco industry advertising uses artificial intelligence to target specific populations, especially through social media marketing.

Learning Objectives:

1. At the end of this session, participants will understand how tobacco policy disproportionately affects special populations in Maryland.

2. During this session, participants will learn how artificial intelligence is used to target and entice youth to use tobacco products.

In April, the Maryland General Assembly passed the Tobacco Retail Modernization Act of 2024 (SB 1056), bringing changes to the enforcement landscape for the Maryland Department of Health, local health departments, and the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Cannabis Commission (ATCC). Kathi Hoke will provide an overview of the Act, noting what passed and what was left on the cutting room floor. Dana Moncrief will provide insight into how MDH is preparing to meet its obligations under that Act and how the Department will engage and collaborate with local health departments on the new provisions. Jeff Hann will explain the role of the ATCC, with a particular focus on license suspension and revocation hearings.

Tobacco Enforcement in Maryland

Learning Objectives:

1. During this session, participants will learn about the process of tobacco enforcement in Maryland.
2. During this session, participants will understand how the laws passed during the 2024 legislative session will impact/change tobacco enforcement in Maryland.

Other Sessions

1:30 PM to 2:30 PM

Tobacco Endgame and Maryland Office of the Attorney General Perspective

Chris Bostic, Policy Director for Action on Smoking and Health, will discuss the Tobacco Endgame, the strategy which aims to end commercial tobacco and nicotine use, including important nationwide initiatives and updates. We will also hear from Anna MacCormack, Assistant Attorney General for the Tobacco Enforcement Unit, who will describe the state and national landscape surrounding electronic smoking devices and products.

Learning Objectives:

1. At the end of the session, participants will be able to describe the current federal policy landscape in tobacco control.
2. At the end of the session, participants will understand the federal landscape as it relates to vape products.

2:30 PM to 4:00 PM

Cannabis Regulation: Roles and Responsibilities

The Legal Resource Center received funding to fully expand into the cannabis regulatory space. Many tobacco regulatory staff work directly or indirectly on cannabis issues within their county and Local Health Improvement Coalitions and tobacco coalitions often engage on cannabis issues. This session will lay the groundwork for understanding the role of state entities with responsibilities for regulating cannabis and hemp and the related public health concerns raised by legalization. Dawn Berkowitz will explain the role of the Maryland Cannabis Administration, Dana Moncrief will describe the role of the Maryland Department of Health and funding for local health departments, and Jeff Hann will talk about how the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Cannabis Commission regulates licensees that fall outside of the MCA scope.

Learning Objectives:

1. At the end of this session, participants will know how to request technical assistance from the Legal Resource Center – Cannabis.
2. At the end of this session, participants will understand the state landscape as it relates to adult use and medical cannabis.

Speakers



Dawn Berkowitz

Dawn Berkowitz joined the Maryland Medical Cannabis Commission in 2021 as the Deputy Executive Director. She transitioned to the role of Managing Director of Public Health and Communications when the Maryland Cannabis Administration was established in May 2023 in preparation for regulating both medical and adult-use cannabis, which was legalized on July 1st, 2023. Ms. Berkowitz held an instrumental role in the roll-out, developing and overseeing public and industry education efforts, including mass media and point-of-sale communications on the new laws and responsible use. Ms. Berkowitz also spearheaded the largest to-date medical cannabis patient survey pre- and post- legalization to assess knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to use. Prior to this role, Ms. Berkowitz was with the Maryland Department of Health for over two decades serving as the Director for the Center for Tobacco Prevention and Control from 2013 to 2021, where she provided oversight, guidance, and expertise to local, state, and national tobacco control initiatives. Ms. Berkowitz provided early guidance to the Governor’s Task Force to End Smoking in Maryland in the early 2000s, which formed the legislative and programmatic framework for Master Settlement Agreement dollars coming into Maryland and created the structure of Maryland’s resulting tobacco control program.

Ms. Berkowitz currently serves on the Cannabis Public Health Advisory Council as the ex-officio member for the Maryland Cannabis Administration and held past leadership roles on the executive committees of the national Tobacco Control Network and the Maryland State School Health Council. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and a Master of Public Health, both from Tulane University, and is a Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES).



Chris Bostic

Chris Bostic is an attorney and the policy director for Action on Smoking and Health. He has 23 years of tobacco policy experience at the local, state, national, and international levels. Chris chairs the national steering committee for Project Sunset, a campaign to phase out the sale of commercial tobacco products, and co-chairs the global steering committee. He also serves on the California state tobacco endgame advisory committee, and the Indian national endgame committee. Chris is a former clinical instructor at the University of Maryland School of Law.



Dr. David Olawuyi Fakunle

David Olawuyi Fakunle, Ph.D. is a “mercenary for change,” employing the necessary skills and occupying the necessary spaces to help strengthen everyone divested from their truest self, particularly those who identify as Black, Indigenous and/or a Person of Color. David serves as Assistant Professor of Public and Allied Health at the Morgan State University School of Community Health & Policy, Adjunct Assistant Professor at the University of Florida Center for Arts in Medicine, and Associate Faculty in Mental Health at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. David’s interests include stressors within the built environment, manifestations of systemic oppression, and the utilization of arts and culture to cultivate holistic health through humanity, justice, equity and ultimately, liberation.

Additionally, David has applied artistic and cultural practices such as Black storytelling, African drumming, singing and theater in the proclamation of truth for over 25 years, collaborating primarily with organizations in the Baltimore/Washington, D.C. region. Among many affiliations, David is co-founder and CEO of DiscoverME/RecoverME, an organization that utilizes the African oral tradition to empower use of storytelling for healing and growth, previously served as Executive Director of WombWork Productions, a Baltimore-based social change performing arts company, and serves as Chair of the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission,

the first state-level commission in the U.S. dedicated to chronicling and bringing justice to racial terror lynchings.



Dr. Craig S. Fryer

Dr. Craig S. Fryer is a tenured Associate Professor and former Interim Chair in the Department of Behavioral and Community Health in the School of Public Health at the University of Maryland, College Park (UMD). Additionally, he is the founding Associate Director of the Maryland Center for Health Equity (MCHE) and Director of the Young Adult Drug Involvement Research Assessment (YADIRA) Laboratory.

As a behavioral scientist, Dr. Fryer utilizes mixed methods study designs to examine the sociocultural and environmental contexts of health and well-being, with an emphasis on community-engaged research. His scholarship focuses on racial and ethnic health inequities in substance use, specifically the intersection of tobacco and marijuana use among youth and young adult populations. Dr. Fryer was the Principal Investigator of a five-year, NIH-funded (National Cancer Institute) K01 career development award, *Correlates of Nicotine Dependence among Urban African American Youth*. Additionally, he was the Co-Investigator and Site PI on the FDA/NCI-funded, *Assessing Risk Perceptions for Small Cigars/Cigarillos among Young Adults (R21)*, and *Implied Modified Risk Statements as Predictors of Flavored Little Cigar and Cigarillo Use (R01)*. Most recently, Dr. Fryer is the Co-Investigator and Site PI of the NIDA-funded *C'RILLOS Project: Impact of Tobacco Regulatory Policy on Dynamic Use of Exclusive, Dual or Poly Cigar and Other Tobacco Product Use among Young Adults (R01)*. Moreover, he served as Director of the Research Core for two Center of Excellence in Health Disparities grant awards (P60 and P20) with the MCHE funded by the National Institute for Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD).

Dr. Fryer has served as Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator on a multitude of research studies related to a wide-range of health behaviors and health outcomes, which have been funded by the National Institutes of Health (NCI, NIDA, and NIMHD), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Federal Drug Administration (FDA). Dr. Fryer's collateral research interests include: Black men's health and coping; racism and health; the respectful, recruitment and retention of underrepresented communities in research and the influence of the built environment on health.

His work has been published in leading public health journals such as the *Annual Review of Public Health*, *Nicotine and Tobacco Research*, *Qualitative Health Research*, *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* to name a few.

In addition to research, Dr. Fryer teaches graduate courses in public health ethics and undergraduate courses in health behavior theory, multicultural population health, and Black men's health.

Dr. Fryer's teaching, research, and service are guided by a commitment to creating a more just and equitable society for devalued and underserved communities. As such, he is scholar-activist in an effort to achieve health equity for all people. He completed his undergraduate work at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, OH and obtained a Master of Public Health degree from the University of Pittsburgh in Pittsburgh, PA. He earned his Doctor of Public Health degree from Columbia University, Mailman School of Public Health, Department of Sociomedical Sciences in New York, NY.



Dr. Bonnie
Halpern-Felsher

Dr. Halpern-Felsher is a developmental psychologist whose research has focused on cognitive and psychosocial factors involved in adolescents' and young adults' health-related decision-making, perceptions of risk and vulnerability, health communication, and risk behavior. Her research has focused on understanding and reducing health risk behaviors such as tobacco use, alcohol and marijuana use, risky driving, and risky sexual behavior. Her research has been instrumental in changing how providers discuss sexual risk with adolescents and has influenced national policies regulating adolescent and young adult tobacco use.

As part of the Tobacco Centers of Regulatory Science (TCORS), she is the PI on an NIH/NCI and FDA-funded longitudinal study examining adolescents' and young adults' perceptions regarding as well as initiation, continuation, and cessation of current and new tobacco products, including e-cigarettes and smokeless tobacco. Dr. Halpern-Felsher is also the founder and director of the Tobacco Prevention Toolkit, an online curricular aimed at reducing and preventing youth tobacco use. Dr. Halpern-Felsher's research and committee work have been instrumental in setting policy at the local, state, and national level. In California, Dr. Halpern-Felsher's research was cited in support of school-based tobacco education initiatives within California's Tobacco Education Research Oversight Committee's 2012 Masterplan, and again in their 2017 Masterplan. This Masterplan sets funding priority areas for research, education and intervention for California. Dr. Halpern-Felsher is also collaborating with the California Department of Education to develop, implement and evaluate new school-based tobacco prevention and education materials. At the national level, Dr. Halpern-Felsher's research was highlighted in the 2012 Surgeon General Report, "Preventing Tobacco Use among Youth and Young Adults," and Dr. Halpern-Felsher contributed to the chapter on Clinical interventions: The role of health care providers in the prevention of youth tobacco use. Dr. Halpern-Felsher has been a member of five Institute of Medicine, National Academies of Sciences committees focusing on adolescent and young adult health risk behavior. She has served on the Board of Directors of the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine and currently serves on the Council for the Society for Pediatric Research (SPR), and Co-Chairs the SPR Mentoring Committee.

In 2007, Dr. Halpern-Felsher became one of the Program Directors for the NIH/NIDDK-funded Short-Term Research Experience for Underrepresented Persons (STEP-UP), High School Program. She has received two NIH 5-year grants to coordinate this program thus far. For this Step-Up Program, Dr. Halpern-Felsher mentors and supervises 22-25 junior and senior high school students each year. These high students are recruited throughout the country, and conduct their 8-10 weeks of research in their hometown. In addition to mentoring high school students, Dr. Halpern-Felsher has been a mentor to over 75 graduate and medical students and postdoctoral fellows.



Jeffrey Hann

Jeffrey Hann is the Assistant Director of the Legal and Legislative Division of the Maryland Alcohol, Tobacco, and Cannabis Commission. He graduated Magna Cum Laude and earned his Juris Doctorate from the University of Baltimore School of Law in 2009, and earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Gettysburg College. Prior to joining the ATCC in June 2022, he served the city of Baltimore as a prosecutor for 13 years in the Office of the State's Attorney for Baltimore City, beginning during the term of State's Attorney, Patricia Jessamy. As an Assistant State's Attorney, he prosecuted criminal cases at all levels in the District Court and the Circuit Court for Baltimore City, but did his most fulfilling work as a trial attorney and later supervisor in the general felony unit. From 2017 to 2022 Jeff was cross designated as a Special Assistant United States Attorney to with the Office of the U.S. Attorney for Maryland. In that role he prosecuted federal narcotics and firearms cases in the United States District Court for the District of Maryland and the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit.



Kathleen Hoke

Kathleen Hoke is a Professor, Director of the Legal Resource Center for Public Health Policy, and Director of the Network for Public Health Law, Eastern Region, at the University of Maryland Carey School of Law. Through the Center and Network, Kathleen provides technical legal assistance to state and local health officials, legislators, researchers, and organizations working to use law and policy to improve public health. Hoke graduated Order of the Coif from the Maryland Law, clerked for the Maryland Court of Appeals, and served as an Assistant Attorney General and Special Assistant to the Attorney General of Maryland prior to joining the School of Law in 2002. She was appointed to the Maryland Cancer Council by Governor Hogan and to the E-Facts Task Force by Comptroller Franchot, and she serves on the Editorial Board for the CDC's Preventing Chronic Disease.



Dr. Elizabeth Edsall Kromm

Elizabeth Edsall Kromm, Ph.D., M.Sc., serves as the head of the Prevention and Health Promotion Administration for the Maryland Department of Health. As the largest component of public health services, she is responsible for five bureaus that impact areas such as cancer and chronic disease, maternal and child health, infectious disease prevention and outbreak response as well as environmental health. Prior to joining the state, she spent eight years with the Johns Hopkins Health System as Vice President, Population Health and Advancement for Howard County General Hospital. In that role she also served as Vice President of Development and Chief Operating Officer for the Howard Hospital Foundation and was the principal leader for community relations.

Dr. Edsall Kromm's additional work experiences include leadership positions in local government as well as with national non-profits. She served as policy director for the Howard County Government, a senior officer with The Pew Charitable Trusts, a senior adviser and bureau director with the Howard County Health Department and a program manager with the American Cancer Society.

Dr. Edsall Kromm earned a doctorate in health policy and management from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, where she is an adjunct faculty member in the department of Health, Behavior and Society. She holds a master's degree from the London School of Economics and Political Science and a bachelor's degree from the University of Pennsylvania.

She is proud to serve on the board of the Merriweather Arts and Culture Center. Her professional and community contributions have been recognized by The Daily Record - as one of Maryland's Top 100 Women in 2023 and 2021, a spot on their 2018 VIP list as well as a 2017 Leading Women Award. Dr. Edsall Kromm lives in Columbia with her husband, two children, and one extra grumpy but very lovable miniature schnauzer.



Anna MacCormack

Anna MacCormack is an Assistant Attorney General in the Tobacco Enforcement Unit of the Maryland Office of the Attorney General. Anna primarily works on proving Maryland's diligent enforcement of its tobacco laws in arbitration against tobacco companies pursuant to the Master Settlement Agreement. She is also liaison counsel for Maryland and other Arbitrating States, coordinating the States' efforts during arbitration, and works on tobacco-related legislation and policies.

Before joining the OAG, Anna was Deputy Directory of the Civil Investigations at the New York State's Department of Financial Services. While there, she oversaw and led investigations into violations of the New York Banking, Insurance, Financial Services, and Fair Lending laws, as well as the Dodd-Frank Consumer Protection Act, for a wide range of matters including life insurance, annuities, usury, bail, money transmitting, and unlicensed and high-interest lending. She was also an Adjunct Professor at the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law.

Anna is a graduate of New York University's College of Art & Sciences and School of Law and clerked for the Hon. Cathy Seibel (S.D.N.Y.). Before law school, Anna worked in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York.



Dana Moncrief

Dana Moncrief is the Director of the Maryland Department of Health, Center for Tobacco Prevention and Control. She has been in state service and with the Center for over 17 years. As part of her role, Ms. Moncrief oversees the statewide tobacco control program, focusing on public health efforts to reduce youth tobacco use, help those who use tobacco to quit, reduce exposure to secondhand smoke and vape, and support local efforts. Recently, Ms. Moncrief has established a new branch in the Center to implement programs addressing the public health impacts of adult-use cannabis with a focus on youth prevention, treatment/training for healthcare professionals, and consumer safety. Ms. Moncrief holds her Master's of Health Science degree from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, a Bachelor of Science degree in biology from The Pennsylvania State University and is a Certified Health Education Specialist.



Ronya Nassar

Ronya Nassar is the Director of Population Health for the Harford County Health Department in Bel Air, Maryland. In her role, she oversees several programs which include, epidemiology, health policy, quality improvement/performance management, communications, local health improvement coalition, tobacco and diabetes prevention, and minority health. As an Arab-American woman, her passion lies in health equity and creating public health programs that work on reducing health disparities. Ronya received her undergraduate degree in psychobiology and communications from Albright College and her Master of Public Health from East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania.



Jason Semanoff

Jason Semanoff is a dedicated and experienced third-generation educator with a deep-seated commitment to advancing the fields of comprehensive skills-based health and physical education. His expertise and leadership in the domain are underscored by his impressive track record, which includes serving as past president of SHAPE Maryland, an adjunct lecturer at the University of Maryland College Park, and a licensed PreK-12 health and physical education teacher. In his current role as the director of comprehensive health and physical education at the Maryland State Department of Education, Jason imparts his vast knowledge and passion for health and physical education by providing guidance and technical assistance to Maryland's 24 local education agencies.



Dr. Monique Soileau-Burke

Dr. Monique Soileau-Burke is President of the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and a practicing general pediatrician at The Pediatric Center, LLC, in Columbia, MD. A graduate of Tulane University and Tulane University Medical School, Monique moved to Baltimore in 1999 to complete her pediatric residency at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine where she continues to hold a faculty appointment. She currently serves as President of the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Chair of the State Advisory Commission on Vaccination, member of the Maryland Department of Health Pediatric Vaccine work group, Advisory Council on Health and Physical Education, and Practice Issues Commission. Dr. Soileau-Burke recently served as one of Maryland Governor Larry Hogan's GoVax ambassadors recording television and social media public service announcements, radio spots, and television interviews to educate and encourage COVID vaccination for Maryland's youngest residents.



Suzannah Ward

Suzannah Ward (she/her) is the Coordinator of Comprehensive Health Education with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). In this role she provides content area expertise and technical assistance to Maryland's local education agencies to support their health education programming and grow student health literacy. Prior to beginning her role with MSDE in October of 2023, she worked in health education roles with public schools, the Peace Corps, the University of Tennessee, Answer, and The American School Health Association. She graduated with her Masters of Public Health in the Spring of 2023.



Dr. Francesca Weaks

Dr. Francesca Weaks, (DrPh, MS, MCHES) serves as an Assistant Research Scientist for the Center for Community Engagement, Environmental Justice, and Health (CEEJH) and the Maryland Center for Health Equity (MCHE) at University of Maryland School of Public Health, College Park. For both centers she oversees grant development, financial, and standard operating procedures. Additionally, she serves as a lead researcher with a concentration on community based participatory research, racism, and integration of AI/ML technology with public health research. She is also the founder and principal of The Genevieve Strategies Group LLC, an organization that produces public health accountability and social determinants of health policy strategies, research, and programming methods for state and local communities.

Prior to launching The Genevieve Strategies Group, Dr. Weaks conducted work at National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) where she served as the Health Policy and Research Manager. For over 10 years, she has been a community and social determinant of health researcher (SDH) and public health policy practitioner advocating for communities of color. With a background in health education and promotion, her passion lives in building healthy communities through addressing disproportionate conditions through education and promotion on an individual and community level behavior change, and speaking up on behalf of disadvantaged communities. As an operations guru she loves to strategize and implement sustainable resources and programs for black communities by partnering with grassroots organizations and training communities on how to advocate for effective community policies.

Dr. Weaks' areas of research examines the intersection of racism, health, civil rights law, and policy in community health development. As a researcher by training and a policy advocate and practitioner by experience, she is focused on advocating for equitable community health policies by addressing systematic racism and health disparities. She was recently awarded the National Minority Quality Forum's 2023 40 under 40 Healthcare Leadership Award, in fall 2022 accepted to the National Institute of Health's AIM- AHEAD Leadership Fellowship, and serves on the Milken Institute Health Equity Thought Advisory Panel.

Over the past decade she has resided in Baltimore, Maryland but is a country girl at heart. Originally from NC, she graduated from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University with a Dual Bachelors of Science in Biology & Secondary Education with a minor in Chemistry. She holds a Dual Masters in Health Science with a concentration in Health Administration and Community Health from Towson University and holds her Doctorate in Public Health with a focus in Health Policy & Management from Morgan State University.