

Milken Institute School of Public Health

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

DrPH 2021 Cohort Bios

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Ashley Cecere, M.S., B.S.

Ashley Cecere serves as a Biologist within the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA), a component of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) within the Health and Human Services (HHS). Ashley spent the last 10 years of her career at BARDA and is currently serving as the Special Assistant to the BARDA Director.

Ashley previously functioned as a Project Manager and Contracting Officer Representative within the Chemical, Biological, Radiological & Nuclear (CBRN) Division where she concentrated on the advanced research and development of next generation blood products. She also served as the technical lead for Blue Knight, a collaboration between BARDA and Johnson & Johnson Innovation – JLABS, which aims to spur innovation in the field of public health. She also supported BARDA’s efforts to curtail the COVID-19 pandemic through the management of adjunct diagnostic technology programs within the Rapidly Deployable Capabilities portfolio under the Division of Research, Innovation and Ventures (DRIVE). Ashley’s experience at BARDA also includes the management of advanced research and development programs for Anthrax and Ebola Vaccines.

Prior to BARDA, Ashley supported the Defense Threat Reduction Agency’s (DTRA) Biological Threat Reduction Program (BTRP) where she provided Subject Matter Expertise for disease surveillance and research projects in Former Soviet Union countries. She worked at the National Cancer Institute where she performed genotyping and sequencing activities to include assessing, adapting and implementing new technologies. At Midwest Research Institute, she provided biological sample analysis using real-time polymerase chain reaction (rt-PCR) and electrochemiluminescence (ECL) in a protocol-driven, 24/7 environment contract laboratory that supported federal agencies involved in national security.

Ashley completed a Bachelor of Science with Honors in Biology at the University of Mary Washington. She achieved her Master of Science in Biotechnology from Johns Hopkins University while working full time at Midwest Research Institute. In 2020, Ashley completed the Partnership for Public Service Excellence in Government Leadership Program.

Ashley is originally from Massachusetts and currently resides in Virginia. She is excited to be joining the GWU drPH program so that she can enhance her public health knowledge and build upon her leadership skills to further support her organization’s critical role in facing public health issues.



Andrew Craig, M.S., B.A.

My name is Andrew Craig and I am a DrPH student in Health Behavior. I am originally from Canada but grew up in Fort Collins, CO. I've worked in electronic medical record (EMR) consulting for most of the last decade and am currently working as a consultant at the VA, designing physician software solutions. I became interested in public health because I believe there is tremendous potential for the data gathered from EMR systems to revolutionize healthcare and I want to be at the forefront.



Floramae Eru Esapebong, M.S., B.S.

Floramae is a Global Public Health practitioner with ten years of strategic leadership experience working in diverse non-profit humanitarian and developmental settings. She is passionate about improving the lives and health outcomes of vulnerable populations worldwide. She has proven expertise in leading large projects, managing multicultural teams, and successfully resolving implementation challenges.

Floramae also specializes in leading and coordinating emergency responses, with a demonstrated ability to facilitate multi-stakeholder engagement across maternal child health, nutrition, non-food items (NFIs), Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), food security, livelihoods, and cash sectors. In addition, she has direct experience overseeing large grants from the U.N., E.U., U.S. Government agencies, FCDO (DFID), the CDC Foundation, and the Clinton Global Initiative. She is also skilled in implementing innovative and novel approaches that champion participatory mobilization of communities, civil societies, and governments to promote inclusive development.

Over the past three years, much of her work has focused on providing water, sanitation, and hygiene to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, diarrheal diseases, and acute respiratory infections among school children in low-income settings and people in the U.S. experiencing homelessness.

Floramae is a second-year DrPH student at the GWU Milken Institute of Public Health.



Monica Forquer, M.S., B.S.

Monica Forquer has 15 years of experience in fitness and health education, program design, and behavior change. Her background in exercise science has enabled her to support people of all ages and ability levels to stay active through sport and exercise. Monica worked as a personal trainer, group exercise instructor, strength and conditioning coach, and physical educator before returning to school for graduate studies. It was through her master's studies at George

Washington that she became interested in public health.

Prior to her doctorate, Monica served as the Senior Manager of Fitness at Special Olympics. Monica oversaw global fitness initiatives that reached people with intellectual disabilities in over 90 countries. She supported international chapters to implement exercise and nutrition programs in schools, sports clubs, fitness centers and day programs that resulted in behavior change and improved cardiovascular health. Monica also steered the development of training courses for physical activity professionals and fostered relationships with national and international organizations in order to encourage inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities into fitness opportunities in their communities.

Monica is pursuing her DrPH in order to better understand barriers to physical activity and design effective programs and policies, especially for those in underserved populations. Monica hopes to contribute her knowledge and experience from exercise science to physical activity promotion and chronic disease prevention efforts. Monica's ultimate goal is to drive true systems change to improve national and global physical activity levels.



Daryl Holder, M.H.S.A, M.S., P.M.P, F.A.C.H.E, B.S.

Daryl A. Holder is currently a first year Doctor of Public Health student within The George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health. Daryl currently serves as the Health Management Advisory/Special Assistant to the Chief Operating Officer (COO) at the Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health Clinical Center. The Clinical center is the nation's premier research hospital, serving more than 10,000 new patients each year. Daryl supports the COO in executing his strategic and managerial daily tasks in collaborating with 26 Institutes/Centers Senior leaders across the NIH Campus and staff in promoting programs, projects and initiatives in support of enhancing the Clinical Center's dual mission of pioneering clinical research and clinical care.

Throughout his polish and impressive naval career of 26 years, Daryl has held several highly visible leadership positions in operational (i.e. Navy/Marines/Joint/Special Forces) and nonoperational settings (i.e. Naval Hospitals, Clinics and Medical headquarters) settings. He was privileged to lead several health service detachments during combat operations in support of the Global War on Terrorism (i.e. Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation New Dawn). His decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal, Joint Commendation Service Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal, the Navy and Marine Achievement Medal, and various service and campaign awards.

With a penchant for clear, precise and effective health policy written with the end-user needs in mind, Daryl's research interests lie in discovering preventive and transformative approaches in combating the negative impacts of social determinants on vulnerable populations. Once care is receive within a traditional brick-and-mortar infrastructure, a patient's transition home to recuperate can often times be inhibited due to insufficient resources, resulting in readmission at worst or the shame of admonishing questions by healthcare providers at best. This harmful cycle can be lessen into a more a manageable processes if effective and efficient interventions are put into practice.

Daryl is board certified and a Fellow in Healthcare Management presented by the American College of Healthcare Executives (FACHE). He also possesses both the Project Management Professional (PMP) and Lean Six Sigma Green Belt Certifications. He holds a Master's Degree in Health Service Administration (MHSA) from the George Washington University, a Master of Science (MS) Degree in Management and Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from the University of Maryland Global Campus (formerly the University of Maryland University College); and a

host of post-graduate certifications. He enjoys volunteering at local food banks within the Washington DC metropolitan area, DC Center Kitchen, long-distance running, novice golfer, reading, traveling and touring (both domestic and international) historical venues.



Elizabeth Kittrie, M.M., B.A.

Ms. Elizabeth Robboy Kittrie is currently serving as a Senior Advisor in the Office of the Associate Administrator of the Bureau of Health Workforce (BHW) at the Health Resources and Services Administration. In this capacity, she is a member of the Senior Leadership Team and advises the Associate Administrator and Deputy Administrator on a wide range of programmatic and policy issues related to the Bureau's \$3.2 billion portfolio, with a particular emphasis on the Bureau's uses of and dissemination of data. Ms. Kittrie also serves as Chief of Staff for the Bureau's COVID Incident Command, working closely with all parts of HRSA on pandemic response efforts. At HRSA, Ms. Kittrie participates on a number of cross-departmental committees including the HHS White House Executive Order Working Group on the Development of a Sustainable Workforce, the HRSA Center for Innovation, and the HHS Data Council's Data Oriented Workforce Work Group.

Ms. Kittrie has served in a number of capacities across the US Department of Health and Human Services. Prior to joining HRSA, she served as a Strategic Advisor for Open Science and Data Science at the National Institutes of Health, holding positions in the Big Data to Knowledge Initiative and that National Library of Medicine. At NIH, she led the Open Science Prize, an international competition funded by the NIH and the UK-based Wellcome Trust to harness the power of open data to enhance public health and biomedicine. She previously served in the HHS Office of the Secretary, where she served as the Senior Advisor to the Chief Technology Officer and co-founded the HHS Innovation, Design, Entrepreneurship and Action (IDEA) Laboratory and the HHS Innovation Council. Ms. Kittrie also spent several years in academia, where she served as the founding Associate Director of the Biomedical Informatics Department at Arizona State University, a novel academic unit that she helped to launch in close partnership with Dr. Panch Panchanathan who is now the current Director of the National Science Foundation.

During her years of federal service she has won many awards including the Secretary's HHS Award for Meritorious Service, a NIH Award for Merit, and an Award for Excellence from the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency. Ms. Kittrie has also won numerous fellowships including an Aspen Health Forum Fellowship, Biomedical Informatics Marine Biological Laboratory Fellowship, and most recently a Milken Institute School of Public Health DrPH Fellowship. She completed the Senior Leadership Program at the NIH in 2018.

Ms. Kittrie holds a Masters in Management from the Heller School of Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University. She holds a Bachelor of Arts from the University of

Michigan at Ann Arbor, where she graduated with High Distinction and was invited to join the Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society.

Ms. Kittrie is excited to be joining the 2021 Cohort of the DrPH Program at the Milken Institute School of Health Policy. She will be pursuing the degree part-time as she continues to work full-time at HRSA.



Bryce Mendez, M.P.H., M.A., B.A.

Bryce H.P. Mendez, a native of Maui, Hawaii, is an Analyst in Defense Health Care Policy at the Congressional Research Service (CRS). He covers a broad policy portfolio that includes the Defense Health Program, Military Health System, combat casualty care, and military medical research and development. Prior to joining CRS, he was the Branch Head of Healthcare Business at the Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery. Bryce is a graduate of the George Washington University, where he received a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science (2008) and a Master of

Public Health in Health Policy (2010). He also has a Master of Arts in Defense and Strategic Studies (2018) from the U.S. Naval War College.

Along with his civilian health policy career, Bryce is also a Lieutenant Commander in the United States Navy Reserve and assigned to U.S. Naval Forces Europe/Africa as a health care administrator and medical planner. During his tenure as a Navy reservist, he has served in numerous overseas locations, including Germany, Italy, and South Korea. Bryce is Board Certified in Public Health and a member of the American Public Health Association, American College of Healthcare Executives, and the Association of Military Surgeons of the United States. He currently resides in Falls Church, Virginia.



Toyese Oyeyemi, M.B.A, M.P.H., M.C.H.E.S, B.A.

Toyese Oyeyemi (he/him) is Executive Director of the Beyond Flexner Alliance based at the George Washington University. His research, teaching, and practice have focused on equitable health workforce development, social and structural determinants of health, and community-driven interventions and research. Mr. Oyeyemi is a Master Certified Health Education Specialist (MCHES), certified project management associate, and maintains a faculty lecture title and teaching responsibilities in population health at the University of New Mexico. He studied community health (BA) at New Mexico State University, public health (MPH) at the University of New Mexico, and business management (MBA) at the University of Arizona.

Mr. Oyeyemi is focused on leading strategies to advance equity within and across training programs and institutions that educate our health workforce. He served as a Health Extension Regional Officer at the University of New Mexico Office for Community Health from 2013 to 2020, where he was responsible for programming that included the statewide training and deployment of community health workers, diversifying the regional healthcare pipeline and workforce, and policy advocacy in response to local community health priorities. Prior to that role, he was a civilian health promotion coordinator for the 377th Air Force Medical Group and has held multiple community council roles and nonprofit Board leadership posts. Mr. Oyeyemi also launched an independent consulting outfit, focused on securing grant funding specifically for Black-owned, equity-driven nonprofit organizations in the United States and South Africa. Toyese Oyeyemi is also a Senior Fellow for Health Equity at the Atlantic Institute and co-director of the Health Workforce Diversity Initiative at the Fitzhugh Mullan Institute for Health Workforce Equity. His experience in community health program development, evaluation, and policy initiated from his interest in equitable distribution of social resources and driven by the mantra of health as a human right for all.



Laura Santacrose, M.P.H., B.S.

Laura Santacrose earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Human Development from the College of Human Ecology at Cornell University in 2011. She also earned a Master of Public Health (MPH) degree with a concentration in Social Behavior and Community Health as a David Axelrod Fellow from the University at Albany School of Public Health in 2013. Between her pursuit of these two degrees, Laura worked as the first Public Health Fellow within the Health Promotion Department of the student health center at Cornell

University. There, she gained valuable public health experience developing and evaluating campus-based strategies to support student mental health and address alcohol misuse.

After completing her MPH degree, Laura returned to Cornell in the Spring of 2014 to serve as a Health Initiatives Coordinator, with responsibility for leading comprehensive public health initiatives to support the health and well-being of a diverse campus population of approximately 24,000 undergraduate and graduate students. Three years into this role, she was promoted to her current position as the Assistant Director of the Skorton Center for Health Initiatives at Cornell Health. The Skorton Center works to protect and improve student and campus health through institutional leadership, education, research, and public engagement.

In her role as Assistant Director, Laura develops, implements, and evaluates key programs, policies, and strategies associated with campus health initiatives. This includes the promotion of mental health and well-being and anti-racism resources, as well as the prevention of sexual violence, suicide, alcohol and other drug misuse, bias, and hazing. Laura conducts epidemiological research to monitor behavioral health trends in the student population and uses these data to inform decisions related to campus health initiatives. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Laura worked closely with campus colleagues to inform behavioral modification guidelines and to develop communication strategies and educational trainings that contributed to the low COVID-19 transmission rate at Cornell University.

Throughout her time at Cornell, Laura has provided significant leadership and served as a key contributor to numerous campus and health communication campaigns featuring web, print, and video content (e.g., the award-winning film *Intervene*). A college campus is a unique context in which to practice public health because of the regular turnover of the student body, the opportunity to affect change in multiple dimensions of the living-learning environment, and the ability to work across the social ecological model (i.e., providing clinical services to individuals,

delivering programs to groups of students, staff, and faculty, and implementing environmental strategies and policies to improve health and well-being).

As a DrPH student at the George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health, Laura looks forward to deepening her knowledge of public health and further developing her leadership and research skills in order to advance as a practitioner, scholar, and leader in the field of public health.



Sylvia Shirima, M.S., B.M.S.c

Sylvia Shirima currently works as a Program Manager at the George Washington University Cancer Center (GWCC). She is joining the DrPH program with an interest in global health.

She received her bachelor's degree in biochemistry from the University of Western Ontario, Canada and thereafter worked as an intern at the Kilimanjaro Centre for Community Ophthalmology. She then went to pursue a graduate degree at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. She graduated in 2007 and worked as a public health specialist for more than ten years.

Prior to joining GWCC, her work was primarily focused on HIV prevention and treatment programs in Tanzania with a focus on prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. Sylvia provided technical assistance to the country's reproductive and child health program funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. She also had the opportunity to work with various donor funded programs as a consultant in short term projects such as the development of district health plans for elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV using bottleneck analysis, end of program assessment for a nutrition program in northern Tanzania, analysis of HIV/AIDS referral systems, and evaluation of a youth vocational education and training program. Her experience working in Tanzania has shaped her interest in using evidence-based science to inform health systems strengthening. Her areas of interest include but are not limited to, cancer survivorship programs, HIV prevention, maternal and child health and more specifically the use of research-based evidence in achieving universal health care services and bridging the gaps in access of quality healthcare services.

Sylvia was born in Kenya and has three brothers. After completing her master's degree, she resided in Moshi and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania before moving to the United States in 2019. She is excited to pursue her doctorate degree at the prestigious George Washington University School of Public Health in the scenic DC area.



Charanya Sundar, R.D.N., L.D., M.S., B.S.

Charanya Sundar is a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist with a Master's Degree in Nutritional Sciences from the University of Illinois at Chicago and a Bachelor's Degree in Neuroscience from Johns Hopkins University.

Currently, she is a Public Health Nutritionist at the Department of Aging and Community Living, providing oversight of nutrition programs that serves 10,000 at risk older adults and is passionate about finding solutions to complex systemic issues, including food insecurity, chronic diseases, and malnutrition.

Before this position, she has worked in various clinical, private practice, and outpatient settings as a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist for five years, primarily focusing on Type 2 Diabetes and Metabolic Syndrome. She truly enjoyed her work and was fascinated by understanding the underlying mechanisms of chronic diseases and incorporating behavior modification techniques. While rewarding to see patients come off of medications, become pain-free, and improve the quality of their lives, she felt that she had limited impact on a population level, particularly on the most vulnerable communities. Thus, she became curious about finding solutions to address the systemic issues that influence nutrition on a population level, leading her to her position in public health.

Her goal is to empower others through education to advance the practice of public health and nutrition. She loves to stay up to date on best practices and research and enjoys teaching others what she learns.



Diane Young, R.N., M.S., B.S.

Diane J. Young is a Registered Nurse and the Associate Director of the Family Health Services Division with the Prince Georges County Health Department. Ms. Young is a recognized public health leader with a passion for improving health outcomes and the wellbeing of marginalized populations. She came to the Prince Georges County Health Department in 2012 from the NIH where she was the Nurse Manager for the Blood Services Section of the Transfusion Medicine Department. Since joining the Health Department in 2012, Ms. Young has been responsible for several public health programs including those associated with improving maternal and child health outcomes, ending the HIV epidemic and

for COVID-19 testing and vaccinations in Prince Georges County Maryland.

The devastating impact that COVID-19 has had on Prince Georges County Maryland fueled Diane's interest to return to graduate school to work on her DrPH. She plans to continue her work at the Health Department while pursuing her DrPH in Prevention and Community Health. Diane envisions a world where women are no longer dying from preventable pregnancy related complications, where black women benefit from health equity that leads to optimal pregnancy outcomes and where HIV is not just undetectable but eradicated without further perinatal transmission.