



# Montgomery County Commission on Health

**ANNUAL REPORT**  
FISCAL YEAR 2025

**July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025**

# Table of Contents

---

Letter from the Chair	3
Mission, Purpose and Meeting Information	4-5
Membership	6
Meet the Members	7-11
Priorities, Testimonies, Correspondence	12
Liaisons, Committees and Work Groups	13
Commission on Health Workgroup Summary Reports	14-15



As volunteers serving on the Montgomery County Commission on Health (COH), we remain steadfast in our mission: to advise the County Executive and County Council on policies, programs, and funding priorities that advance the health and well-being of all residents. It is a responsibility we take seriously and with deep commitment.

In Fiscal Year 2025, the Commission directed its efforts toward three key priorities: maternal and child health, behavioral health, and strengthening operational oversight of county health clinics. These areas were selected not only for their immediate impact on health outcomes but also for the long-term implications for health equity in our county.

- To improve **maternal and child health** by expanding and diversifying the perinatal workforce. Addressing persistent disparities requires a culturally responsive and interdisciplinary approach, including home-based care coordination, behavioral health integration, and breastfeeding support.
- To confront the growing **behavioral health and substance use** crisis, which disproportionately affects youth and vulnerable populations. Mental health remains a top concern across the country. However, our system continues to face critical shortages in behavioral health providers and inpatient treatment capacity. Addressing these barriers is essential to ensuring timely, accessible care for those in need.
- To support the creation of a **Health Clinical Manager role** within DHHS Public Health Services' clinics. As Medicaid expansion increases demand, this position is essential to improving clinic operations, standardizing practices, reducing wait times, and ensuring equitable access to care.

Much of this work was carried out through our specialized work groups, composed of dedicated professionals who bring invaluable expertise and an unwavering commitment to public service. We are immensely grateful for their time, energy, and thoughtful collaboration. Their findings and recommendations reflect a shared vision for a healthier Montgomery County and were formally presented to the County Executive and County Council. Our work this year has reaffirmed that sustainable progress in public health is only possible through collaboration. We are grateful for the ongoing support of our partners, stakeholders, and the broader community, whose engagement and advocacy continue to drive meaningful change. We recognize that our progress would not be possible without the support of our partners, stakeholders, and the broader community and are sincerely grateful for your continued partnership. One focus in FY26 will be to rebuild and maintain partnerships with the other DHHS BCCs to identify areas of collaboration and synergy.

Thank you for your unwavering support and shared commitment to a healthier Montgomery County. We look forward to building on this work together in the year ahead.

With appreciation,

Dr. Gabriela D. Lemus  
Chair, Montgomery County Commission on Health

## Mission and Purpose

The primary mission of the Montgomery County Commission on Health (COH) is to advise the County Executive and the County Council on public health issues, programs, services and the allocation of funds devoted to public health needs and to monitor and assess the priorities of the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (MCDHHS) in its efforts to address the health needs of residents in this County. The purpose of this report is to comply with the annual requirement that the COH provide the County Executive and the County Council with an update on the activities of the COH from July 2022 through June 2023.

**CHAPTER 24-24 OF  
THE MONTGOMERY  
COUNTY CODE  
PROVIDES  
AUTHORITY FOR THE  
COMMISSION ON  
HEALTH. THE  
COMMISSION ON  
HEALTH (COH) WAS  
ESTABLISHED ON  
JULY 1, 1988**

## County Code Enabling Legislation Sec. 24-24. Functions

To advise the County Executive and the County Council, the Commission must:

1. Periodically review available County public health programs, services, and facilities;
2. Comment on gaps, deficiencies, or duplication in County public health programs, services, and facilities;
3. Report each year to the County Executive on the performance of DHHS public health programs, actions needed to improve the programs, and the priorities within which the improvements should be made;
4. Comment on the proposed allocation of funds to County public health programs in accordance with the Department's priorities, considering the available financial resources and the need for health cost containment;
5. Advise on local public health planning needs;
6. Comment on the appropriateness of institutional health services proposed to be offered in the County and the metropolitan area by the private sector and nonprofit, state, or other public sector agencies;
7. Advise on the development of statewide criteria and standards for certificates of need and health planning, considering the regional impact when appropriate.
8. The Commission must report to and meet with the County Council, sitting as the County Board of Health, at least annually, on the programs and policies within its purview.

## Structure

---

The Commission is comprised of 19 voting members with representation from consumers and providers of health services in the County. As dictated by County Code, the COH also has a representative from the Montgomery County Medical Society. In accordance with County Code the majority of the 19 commissioners were consumers with the balance being providers, including the Medical Society representative. The ex officio (non-voting) members of the COH include the County Health Officer and the County Council liaison. The COH continues to represent a diverse cross-section of Montgomery County residents.

Membership consisted of 17 members who were racially and ethnically diverse and vary in age, gender, geography and experience in health policy, public health, and the health care system.

The COH Chair and Vice Chair are elected by COH members and serve one-year terms. During FY25 Dr. Gabriela Lemus was the Chair of the Commission and Dr. Marcela Cámpoli was the Vice Chair.



## Meetings

---

The COH meets at 6 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month (except in August). All meetings are open to the public. The COH met monthly via the virtual meeting platform Zoom during the 2025 fiscal year. The COH had one in-person meeting for the retreat May 15<sup>th</sup> 2025. The Commission also had a June recess due to the Holiday.

At a minimum, every member of the Commission is expected to either serve on one workgroup and, when possible, as a liaison to other health-related County boards, commissions, committees or minority health initiatives and programs.

With its broad perspective of public health, the COH recognizes the value of collaboration and communication with other health-related boards, commissions and committees. Many commissioners have an area of specialization, interest or constituency of public health and are therefore encouraged to serve as liaisons with other relevant health-related boards, commissions and committees (BCCs). Integral to this area of special interest is the constraint that all actions are in voice of the entire COH and not self-serving in any manner. Finally, members of the COH also served on committees that allowed the COH to conduct its business such as the membership, nominating and retreat planning committees. These committees require significant time and are in addition to the monthly scheduled meetings.

## **FY25 MEMBERSHIP**

---

### **CONSUMER REPRESENTATIVES**

Marcela Cámpoli, PhD, MHA  
Donna Cawley, MA  
Rashida Dokes, MSW  
Susan Emery, MS  
Laurel Fain, MS  
Adam Finkelstein, JD, MPH  
Gabriela Lemus, PHD  
Tatjana Meerman  
Cesar Perez, PhD  
Venchele Saint Dic, MPH  
Betty Smith, MLS  
Arthur Summerville

### **PROVIDER REPRESENTATIVES**

Yingxi Chen, MD, MPH, PhD  
Beth Barrows, M.S, R.N., CCM  
Joey Nichols, MD, MPH, FAAFP  
Milan Patel, Sr.PT

### **MEDICAL SOCIETY REPRESENTATIVE**

Brent Berger, MD

### **EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS (NON-VOTING)**

Dr. Kisha Davis, MD, MPH, FAAFP, Montgomery County Health Officer  
Tara Clemons, Legislative Analyst, Montgomery County Council

### **STAFF**

Meghan Sontag, MS, MPH Program Manager, DHHS  
Felicia Hugee, MPH, PMP, Manager III, DHHS  
Magda Brown, Office Services Coordinator, DHHS

## MEET THE MEMBERS

---

### **Beth Barrows**

Beth has been a Montgomery County resident since 2010 after relocating to Maryland from Oakland, California. Beth is a registered nurse with a diverse background comprised of hospital-based clinical nursing and care coordination experience; university-based clinical leadership development and teaching experience; and over 12 years of experience working for a large, intrastate health maintenance organization (HMO) as a clinical nurse, ambulatory case manager, and most recently as a quality improvement specialist.

In her personal life, she enjoys traveling, spending time with family/friends, volunteering with her local AME church, and dreams of someday returning to volunteer in the Peace Corps Response program.

### **Brent Berger**

Brent is an internist with Bethesda Medical Associates, a primary care practice with a focus on prevention and wellness. A native of Montgomery County, he has been practicing here since 1990, and is on the staff at Suburban Hospital. Brent received his BA from Johns Hopkins University and his MD from the University of Maryland School of Medicine.

### **Marcela Cámpoli**

Dr. Cámpoli holds a doctorate in health economics (summa cum laude), a master's in health administration, and a bachelor's degree in business administration. Certified by the American Society of Quality, she has completed the WHO/PAHO International Health residency and Georgetown University's Bias Reduction Improvement Program. Currently, she is the Director of the Institute for Nursing Research & Quality Management at the American Nurses Association and the Research and Operation Coordinator for the Research Division in the Psychiatry Department at Georgetown University. She also serves on the Montgomery County Council on Health, the "Welcome Back Center" Board, and the Latino Health Initiative Steering Committee. Additionally, she is a pro-bono Board Member for Care4Health. Dr. Marcela Cámpoli is a multicultural professional with over fifteen years of experience in implementing evidence-based practices to enhance program performance and strategic change management. She has led teams, served under-served populations, and established measurable analytics for innovative projects. Her expertise spans health and education, digital health, data analytics, and clinical research coordination. She also has a strong background in health economics, administration, and quality improvement.

### **Donna Cawley**

Donna is committed to educating and advocating for residents of Montgomery County on health-related matters. She currently serves on the African American Health Program Executive Committee, which serves as an advisory body to the Department of Health and Human Services. She is an active member of her church's Health & Wellness Ministry; and her sorority's Emergency Response Team, which aided the county in the delivery of COVID-19 test kits and masks to homebound residents. Prior to relocating to Maryland, she served on the board of the Minority Health Coalition of LaPorte, Indiana, where she spearheaded an initiative to raise funds to cover the cost of mammograms for underserved women. Donna received her B.S. in Business from Indiana Wesleyan University and an M.A. in Law from Regent University.

## COMMISSION ON HEALTH FY25 ANNUAL REPORT

### **Yingxi Chen**

Yingxi is a Medical Epidemiologist at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), where she works on large-scale linkage studies to understand health trends and risks. Yingxi has been working in the field of Public Health and Population Science for over 10 years. She holds a medical degree (M.D.), a Master of Public Health, and a doctorate degree in epidemiology.

### **Rashida Dokes**

Rashida Dokes is a licensed master social worker who currently works as a social service coordinator for Montcare Nursing and Rehabilitation. Rashida received her bachelor's degree in psychology from Delaware State University and her master's degree in social work from Adelphi University (NY). She has an extensive background in community development focusing on housing/funding and access to health care. She continues to work towards the advancement of care within the community by advocating and educating on the social determinants of health and its effects on the population at large.

### **Susan Emery**

Susan is a retired engineer who worked in Computer Science and Telecommunications Management for 30 years. Eighteen years ago, she founded a Montgomery County nonprofit organization, Circle of Rights, Inc., dedicated to preventing stroke. Circle of Rights has presented in multiple languages on blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, healthy eating, and healthy living in public facilities throughout Montgomery County. Susan received a BS from Michigan State University and an MS from University of Maryland/University College.

### **Laurel Fain**

Laurel Fain (she/her) works for the United States Agency for International Development as a Foreign Service Officer. Her current role is Deputy Director of the Inclusive Development Hub, where she works to ensure that overseas investments by the U.S. Government promote inclusion and equity. Prior to this position she managed public health programs in developing countries throughout Africa and Asia. Laurel has served as a board member on several multinational health partnerships and an international school board. Laurel received her MS at the Harvard School of Public Health and her multidisciplinary undergraduate degree in Women's Health at the University of California at Santa Cruz.

### **Adam Finkelstein**

Adam is a healthcare attorney whose practice focuses on the law and policy of federal healthcare programs and managed care issues. He previously served as a Health Insurance Specialist in the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation. He has a MPH from the Harvard School of Public Health, a JD from the University of Pennsylvania and BA from George Washington University.

## MEET THE MEMBERS

---

### **Gabriela Lemus**

Dr. Lemus is a passionate advocate for the Latinx community at the intersection of social justice and economic growth. Her career spans more than 15 years in senior strategic leadership roles in congressional and government affairs, non-profit management, policy advocacy and community/civic-engagement. She joined Maryland Latinos Unidos (MLU) as the founding Executive Director in 2020 after launching – Revolution Strategy US - a management and communications strategy consultancy where she advised clients best practices for building multi-racial coalitions and advocacy campaigns, advancing public policy and civic engagement. In her first year as Executive Director of MLU, she also co- founded and administers the Mid-Atlantic Latinx Vaccine Equity Coalition (MALVEC). She is an innovator in voter engagement and civic participation for the Latino community.

### **Tatjana Meerman**

Tatjana honed her market research skills in the private sector and eventually led a team of 10 who provided customized research and analysis services to a range of Fortune 500 clients. Upon her return to Montgomery County 17 years ago, she took on the managing editor and publisher positions at a market research imprint. In conclusion of her professional career, Tatjana immersed herself in the public sector where she lent her editing, writing, and research skills to several Federal Government agencies, including the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Assistance. Newly retired, she is satisfying her curiosity about the intersection of state and local politics. She earned a BA in Professional Writing from Carnegie Mellon University a long time ago.

### **Joey Nichols**

Joey Nichols, MD, MPH, FAAFP is a board-certified family physician with a special emphasis in mental health. He practices primary care and psychotherapy in Takoma Park, where he has lived since 2019. He approaches care from a whole person perspective, and he collaborates frequently with complementary and alternative medicine providers. He is a former board member of CHEER and the Maryland Academy of Family Physicians and is a co-founder and current board member of Psychedelic Assisted Therapy and Healing (PATH).

### **Milankumar Patel**

Milankumar is a Senior Physical Therapist (PT) at the Adventist Healthcare Shady Grove Medical Center Hospital, where he primarily works and treats adult as well as geriatric patients as Acute Care PT. He is a foreign educated PT from India, longtime resident of Montgomery County, MD, has been practicing Physical Therapy in the USA since 2014. He also, is a Certified Fall Prevention Specialist as well as Certified Dementia Care Specialist and subject matter expert in physical rehabilitation of adult geriatric population. Milan serves county residents as a therapist and is a frontline healthcare provider, who proudly carried out duties at hospital during Covid-19 Pandemic. He is committed to serving his community and advocating for the residents of Montgomery County. He is multi-lingual provider and is certified interpreter of Hindi language for Hindi speaking patients, coming to seek treatment at the hospital. He is also a Clinical Instructor to his students and Volunteers his services for various non-profit organizations, assisting them with community health fairs. He understands public health trend, risks associated with aging population and is a strong supporter of Health Equity for all.

## MEET THE MEMBERS

---

### **Cesar Perez**

Cesar Perez is the Director of the Division of Establishment Support, Office of Regulatory Programs (ORP), Office of Product Evaluation and Quality (OPEQ), Center for Devices and Radiological Health (CDRH) at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The Division is responsible for the development and implementation of policies and processes related to medical devices' imports, registration and listing, exports, regulatory inspections/audits and compliance programs. As the Director, he is responsible in providing strategic leadership for the Division and serves as the technical authority and principal advisor to the Office Director on medical devices programs. From 2015-2018, he was the Branch Chief of the Surveillance and Enforcement Branch I, Division of Premarket Labeling and Compliance, FDA, which is responsible for enforcing premarket requirements, as well as labeling and promotion/advertising requirements for medical devices. Cesar attended the State University of New York at New Paltz in 1998, and obtained his bachelor's degree in Biology. In 2008, he received his Ph.D. in Microbiology from New York University. Cesar served in the United States Army Reserve from 1998-2006 as a Non-Commissioned Officer. In 2003, he was activated and served one year on active duty at Fort Hood, Texas in support of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) operation. In 2009, Cesar joined the United States Public Health Service (USPHS,) and holds the rank of Commander (CDR).

### **Venchele Saint Dic**

Venchele Saint Dic is a Public Health Analyst at the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), where she works closely with Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). Her passion lies in improving access to quality care for communities facing health disparities and advocating for better health outcomes and effective communication strategies, with a particular focus on Behavioral Health. She is actively pursuing a doctorate degree (DrPh) in Public Health Leadership. Venchele holds a Bachelor's degree in Public Health and a double minor in Biology and Spanish from Simmons University, and a Master's in Public Health Policy, Analysis & Evaluation (MPH) from the University of Maryland, College Park. Venchele is also the founder of Pathway Coach Writing, an online business dedicated to helping other businesses and individuals leverage writing as a powerful branding strategy.

### **Betty Smith**

Betty holds a BSc degree in Psychology from Howard University. Prior to attending Montgomery College, Takoma Park, MD, where she graduated with an Associate's Degree in Nursing, she administered Volunteer Services programs for the American Red Cross. Her Masters Degree is in Legal Studies. She has practiced as a Registered Nurse in the District of Columbia and Maryland as well as several states throughout the country in support of Clinical Hotline Telehealth Services provided by CVS/CARMARK. She has over 20 years of Nursing practice in Medical Surgical; Neuro/Brain Injury; Community Health; Medical Stroke; High Risk Postpartum; Infectious Disease and General Medicine.

### **Arthur Summerville**

Arthur T. Summerville III is Chairman and founder of Medical Innovations and WoundPic, a medical distribution and consulting company with an office in Washington DC and supporting healthcare customers in the US, Columbia, Middle East and West Africa currently. Before entering business consulting, Arthur

## COMMISSION ON HEALTH FY25 ANNUAL REPORT

worked in Franchising, building services and Medical Technology. Arthur spent more than 12 years in Senior Management and business development working for major companies like The Blackstone Group, Jani-King Franchises , Medline Industries and GSK in management roles. He has a B.S. in Computer Communication Technology and a minor in Businesses administration from North Carolina A&T State University and a M.S from RIT in Imaging Science Technology with a minor in business.

## Commission on Health Priorities

---

At the Commission on Health Annual Retreat held March 21, 2024, the Commission set three priorities FY25:

- Maternal and Child Health
- Behavioral Health and Substance Use
- Request for a Health Clinic Manager

## Commission Correspondence

---

The Commission on Health sent the following letters during Fiscal Year 2025:

- Letter to the County Executive, November 2024, and to County Council, February 2025, advocating to:
  - expand and diversify the perinatal workforce
  - address the shortage of behavioral healthcare providers and the critical lack of bed availability in behavioral health facilities.
  - fund a Health Clinical Manager for DHHS Public Health Services' Clinics

## Commission on Health Testimonies

---

The Commission on Health testified at the following forums:

- County Council HHS Committee Work Session for HHS Boards, Committees and Commissions on October 17, 2024.

## Commission on Health Councilmember Meetings

---

- Select Commissioners met with Councilmember Albornoz April 7, 2025
- Select Commissioners met with Council President Stewart April 17, 2025
- Select Commissioners met with Councilmember Luedtke April 21, 2025
- Select Commissioners met with Councilmember Sayles April 29, 2025

## Commission on Health Liaisons

---

<b>Voluntary Advisory Groups</b>	<b>COH Member(s)</b>
Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Advisory Council	Yingxi Chen
Asian American Health Initiative (AAHI)	Yingxi Chen
Commission on Aging (COA)	Marcela Campoli
Commission on Homelessness	Laurel Fain
Community Action Board	Betty Smith
Early Childhood Coordinating Council	Cesar Perez
Healthy Montgomery Steering Committee	Susan Emery
Latino Health Initiative (LHI)	Marcela Campoli
Mental Health Advisory Committee	Donna Cawley
Montgomery Cares Advisory Board (MCAB)	Beth Barrows

## Commission on Health Committees

---

### **Membership Committee**

Betty Smith  
Adam Finkelstein

### **Nominating Committee**

Marcela Cámpoli  
Gabriela Lemus

### **Retreat Planning Committee**

Cesar Perez  
Susan Emery  
Gabriela Lemus

## Commission on Health Workgroups

---

### **Maternal and Child Health**

Susan Emery, Gabriela Lemus, Cesar Perez, Rashida Dokes, Yingxi Cimo Chen

### **Mental Health/Behavioral Health**

Donna Cawley, Joey Smith, Laurel Fain, Venchele Saint Dic, Beth Barrows

### **PHS' Health Clinic Manager**

Milan Patel, Venchele Saint Dic, Arthur Summerville, Susan Emery

## Commission on Health Workgroups Summary Reports

---

### **Maternal and Child Health**

At the Commission on Health's Annual Retreat in March 2024, the Maternal and Child Health Work Group was established to evaluate current programs that support new mothers and address factors contributing to low birth weight, developmental delays, and other infant health challenges.

#### **Findings**

- Current County programs are unable to meet the full demand for services due to staffing shortages.
- The primary driver of vacancies is the County's lower pay scale compared to private sector positions, resulting in recruitment and retention challenges.
- As a result, higher-paid staff are routinely performing tasks that could be managed by lower-paid personnel, if those positions were filled.
- The existing model does not fully address the social, behavioral, and breastfeeding support needs that are critical to improving maternal and infant health outcomes.

#### **Recommendations**

1. **Prioritize Home-Based Care:**
  - Expand home visitation programs to allow providers to better assess social determinants of health, offer breastfeeding support, and address behavioral health needs in a more comfortable, stigma-free environment.
  - Home-based care has been shown to improve maternal engagement and promote healthier birth outcomes.

### 2. **Address Staffing Shortages:**

- Conduct a compensation analysis to evaluate pay scale competitiveness and develop a strategy to attract and retain qualified staff.
- Explore flexible staffing models that allow routine tasks to be delegated appropriately, maximizing the efficiency of higher-skilled personnel.

### 3. **Reduce Stigma and Barriers to Care:**

- Design outreach and service delivery models that are culturally sensitive, client- centered, and focused on building trust with vulnerable populations.  
These recommendations were made to the County Council. If implemented, they will improve birth outcomes and maternal health, increase service capacity to meet client demand, create a more sustainable workforce model, and foster long-term cost savings by addressing health challenges earlier and more effectively.

## **Mental Health/Behavioral Health**

The Mental Health/Behavioral Health Workgroup was formed at the March 2024 Commission on Health’s Annual retreat to prioritize the County’s urgent behavioral health and substance use crisis, particularly impacting youth and vulnerable populations. Commissioners recognize mental health as one of the most significant health issues among residents and advocated to address the shortage of behavioral healthcare providers and the critical lack of bed availability in behavioral health facilities. To expand the pool of behavioral healthcare providers, the Commission advocated for Council to prioritize funding to programs and services that expand the pool of mental health care providers and substance use professionals, to fund peer workforce and to fund outcome- based programs. To increase bed availability for behavioral health and substance use, the Commission joined the Mental Health Advisory Committee in advocating for the use of the Behavioral Health Hospital Community Dashboard.

Expanding the network of providers and prioritizing funding for additional beds are essential steps to meeting the rising Mental Health and Behavioral Health needs of residents.

## **Investing in Equitable Access: Request for a Health Clinical Manager**

As Montgomery County continues to experience increased healthcare demand, particularly due to Medicaid expansion, funding a Health Clinical Manager is a vital step toward ensuring efficient, equitable, and patient-centered care across county health clinics. This role will support operations in the Public Health Service (PHS) Clinics- Dental, HIV, STI, and Mobile Health Clinic, providing critical administrative oversight to improve staffing coordination, reduce wait times, and enhance service delivery.

The request is grounded in recent data showing significant patient volume, including over 5,500 dental visits and 1,000+ mobile clinic touchpoints in FY24—and projected demographic shifts, with the senior population expected to double by 2040. A Health Clinical Manager will help bridge service gaps, especially for uninsured, Medicaid-enrolled, and immigrant populations who face barriers to care. By investing in this position, Montgomery County reaffirms its commitment to health equity and high-quality care, ensuring all residents can access the services they need—efficiently and with dignity.

## Montgomery County Commission on Health

Commission on Health  
1401 Rockville Pike  
2nd Floor  
Rockville, Maryland 20852

### WE'RE ON THE WEB!

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/PHS/CommOnHealth/COHIndex.html>



The Commission on Health was established on July 1, 1988. See chapter 23-24 of the Montgomery County Code for a description of the mission of the Commission on Health.



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Marc Elrich  
*County Executive*

Dr. James Bridgers  
*Director*

The County Executive and County Council encourage people who live or work in Montgomery County to become actively involved in matters affecting the quality of life in Montgomery County. Appointments are made to over 75 Boards, Committees, and Commissions by the County Executive, with confirmation by the County Council.

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/boards/index.html>