



## Breakout Session 1 - Session 1: Women's Health

Empowering Women's Wellness: Cycles, Change, and Choice



# Councilmember Laurie-Anne Sayles

Councilmember Laurie-Anne Sayles is an At-Large member of the Montgomery County Council. Elected in 2022, she is the first Jamaican-American elected to the Council and the first Black woman elected to any countywide office. Before taking office, she similarly made history on the Gaithersburg City Council.

Councilmember Sayles brings decades of experience in public health, public service, and local advocacy. Before joining the Council, she held leadership roles with the African American Democratic Club, Montgomery County Young Democrats, the National League of Cities, and Maryland Municipal League, where she promoted early childhood education, economic justice, and environmental health.

Councilmember Sayles serves on the Council's Health and Human Services and Economic Development Committees. As the Chair of Health and Human Services, she has worked tirelessly to ensure everyone in Montgomery County has what they need to thrive.

Councilmember Sayles has championed equitable access to quality educational and career pathways for our youth, affordable housing, and multimodal public transit while promoting new opportunities for local farmers, small businesses, and our biotech industry – all in pursuit of her “S.M.A.R.T” agenda. She is also proud to have hosted five cohorts of her Youth Advisory Council, inviting middle and high school students from across the

county to share their perspectives on local issues while gaining hands-on experience in policymaking.

Councilmember Laurie-Anne Sayles, now newly appointed to the NACo Board, has led Montgomery County's selection for the Counties for Housing Solutions (C4HS) program—one of just six jurisdictions nationwide chosen. Working alongside partners like Smart Growth America, Results for America, the Urban Institute, and Opportunity Insights, she aims to deliver policy changes that respond to Montgomery County's growing housing challenges, including high rent burdens, rising homelessness, and an urgent need for tens of thousands of affordable housing units by 2030.



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# **Carol Samuels- Botts MD**

Carol Samuels-Botts MD is a retired pediatrician and a proud graduate of the Howard University College of Medicine. She spent more than thirty years providing care at the Largo Maryland office of the Mid Atlantic Permanente Medical Group.

Passionate about the practice of Pediatrics she strongly believes that the health and wellbeing of infants, children and adolescents are essential to the

success of communities and that dedicated physicians are necessary to provide comprehensive medical care and guidance.

Throughout her long career she sought to make a difference by sharing her skills and expertise. Notably, she was involved in designing medical care teams that best support patient needs and, in the recruitment, hiring and retention of physician colleagues. She also showed care for her patients by advocating for medical ethics and being involved in community relations and government affair initiatives.

Demonstrating leadership at the state level, she served two terms as a director on the Maryland Board of Physicians, the State agency responsible for licensing, discipline and education of Maryland physicians. In addition, The Governor of Maryland appointed her to state commissions on medical practice parameters, asthma and autism, where she influenced medical practice standards in each of those areas. Because of these accomplishments, as well as her reputation in the medical community, she was included on the list of "Top Docs" in several issues of the Washingtonian magazine.

In retirement she has continued to make a positive impact through her work and community involvement. She has provided medical care at a clinic in an underserved immigrant community and has been a member of the African American Women's Giving circle, awarding yearly grants to women led nonprofit organizations in the Washington DC area. She is a member of the AARP Maryland Speakers Bureau, giving presentations to senior groups about Caregiving, Aging and Brain and Body Health. A lifelong learner and art enthusiast she enjoys her work as a docent at the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery.

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# **Ana Rodney**

Ana Rodney is a Baltimore City-based practicing doula with nearly 19 years of experience, as well as a yoga instructor, energy healer, and wellness practitioner. She is the founder and former Executive Director of MOMCares and currently leads The Rising Mama, a wellness organization that centers mothers as the foundation of family and community health.

Ana has spoken and facilitated workshops throughout the Mid-Atlantic region, including at Johns Hopkins Hospital, the University of Maryland Medical System, Greater Baltimore Medical Center, and George Washington University. She is a graduate of Morgan State University.

Ana serves as a Commissioner on the Baltimore City Women's Commission, where she also acts as Policy Lead. She is the Chair of the Baltimore City Maternal Mortality Review Board and serves on the Fetal and Infant Mortality Review Board. In addition, Ana is the Director of Advocacy and Public Policy for the Doula Alliance of Maryland and the President of Maryland Families for Safe Birth. She also serves as Co-Chair of the March of Dimes Maryland Maternal and Infant Health Equity Coalition's Policy and Systems Change Committee.

Her policy and systems-level work in maternal health has been recognized by the Public Justice Center, and she is the recipient of the NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland Young Advocate Award, the Open Society Institute Community Fellowship, the Warnock Foundation Award, and other honors recognizing her service to mothers and families in Baltimore City. Ana is also a recipient of the Goldman Sachs One Million Black Women Impact Grant for MOMCares and an alumna of the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses program.

Previously, Ana served as a Perinatal Mental Health Consultant for the Baltimore City Health Department. She was named a Baltimore Homecoming Hero in 2019 and a "Game Changer" by Baltimore Magazine in 2021. Her professional background also includes work in education, where she taught in Baltimore City as an artist and Spanish/English co-teacher from 2006 to 2014.

Above all, Ana is a mother to Aiden and Asher Rodney, ages 11 and 4, whose lives continue to ground and guide her commitment to maternal and family well-being.