



The Health Funders & Public Policy Legislative Wrap-up

May 13, 2021, 3:00 PM EST
Program & Speakers' Bios

Vincent DeMarco

Manager, Healthcare for All

Vincent DeMarco is a long-time advocate for public health causes including reducing teen smoking, underage drinking and gun violence, expanding health care access and making prescription drugs more affordable. He is the subject of a book by former FTC Chair and Advocacy Institute co-founder, Michael Pertschuk, entitled The DeMarco Factor: Transforming Public Will into Political Power. He played a key role in the enactment of Maryland's life-saving tobacco tax increase of 2007, alcohol tax increase of 2011, and Firearm Safety Act of 201, and anti-price gouging law for prescription drug prices of 2017 and is working to guarantee health care for all Marylanders. His work has resulted in legislation which has substantially reduced smoking in Maryland, giving Maryland the fourth lowest smoking rate in the nation, reduced drunk driving deaths as a result of the alcohol tax increase, and has expanded health care insurance to over 300,000 people. As National Coordinator of Faith United Against Tobacco, a national coalition of leaders from across the country working to reduce smoking, he played a key role in the enactment in June of 2009 of landmark national legislation to authorize the FDA to regulate tobacco products. He is the Board Chair of the Maryland Clean Energy Jobs Initiative working to increase renewable energy use in Maryland. And, as an Adjunct Assistant Professor at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, he is working to educate public health students from around the world on effective methods of advocating for public health policies. He has been recognized for his work by the organizations such as the Baltimore Sun which declared him "Marylander of the Year" in 1988, the Central Maryland Ecumenical Council which awarded him its 2002 "Ecumenical Leadership Award" and the Daily Record which named him one of Maryland's 60 most influential people in 2010.



Ashley Black, Esq.

Attorney Access to Health & Public Benefits Project

Ashley is the lead attorney for the Public Justice Center's Access to Health and Benefits Project, which supports policies and practices that promote the overall health of Marylanders struggling to make ends meet. The Project seeks to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities in healthcare access and health outcomes. Prior to joining the Public Justice Center in 2018, Ashley worked at Disability Rights Maryland (formerly Maryland Disability Law Center) as a mental health attorney. In that role, she provided direct representation and brief legal services to individuals with behavioral health disabilities in civil rights issues and advocated for systemic changes to Maryland's behavioral health system to improve the lives of behavioral health consumers.



Ashley graduated from the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law with her Juris Doctor and the Health Law Certificate in 2015.



Dan Martin, Esq.

Senior Director of Public Policy, MHAMD

Dan Martin, JD is the Senior Director of Public Policy for the Mental Health Association of Maryland (MHAMD). He leads the MHAMD public policy team and coordinates with a variety of external stakeholders to further policies that expand access to quality mental health and substance use treatment for Marylanders of all ages. Dan organizes and directs a variety of advocacy campaigns and initiatives, chairs multiple coalitions, and publicly represents MHAMD before the Maryland General Assembly, the media, and

on various task forces, workgroups, commissions and committees. He served for four years as co-chair of the Maryland Behavioral Health Advisory Council.





Linda Raines
CEO, Mental Health Association of Maryland & BrainFutures

Linda Raines leads the Mental Health Association of Maryland (MHAMD), the second oldest mental health advocacy group in the nation, and oversees a broad platform of advocacy, education and service oversight programs with state and national impact. Under her leadership, MHAMD became a founding partner in creating Mental Health First Aid USA’s national training program, established interagency policy coalitions to aggregate and unite the lobbying voices of Maryland’s behavioral health community, launched criminal justice reform efforts, created an effective platform for mental health and aging policy reform, and developed a national professional development training program for elder care workers. Her efforts to establish the Maryland Consumer Quality Team, which conducts unannounced site visits to adult and youth mental health and substance use programs and facilities, have improved outcomes for tens of thousands of individuals receiving public behavioral health services throughout Maryland, and the program serves as a national model for other states looking to adopt similar practices of excellence. In 2015, she spearheaded efforts to form BrainFutures, a nonprofit organization established in 2015 by MHAMD, dedicated to improving human outcomes by assessing and advancing the practical application of neuroscience research. With Raines’ more than thirty years of experience as a mental health advocate and leader, BrainFutures is increasing the range of therapeutic and well-being options available to the public by bridging the gap between research, innovation, and practice.

