

Achieving a Just Response to Sudden, Unexpected Infant Deaths - A Workshop

Speaker Biographies

Alex J. Adams, PharmD, MPH, serves as Assistant Secretary for Family Support, leading the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. He was nominated to lead the agency by President Donald J. Trump and was confirmed on October 7, 2025, by a vote of the U.S. Senate.

Adams brings years of health, human services, education, and regulatory expertise to advance President Trump and Secretary Kennedy's broader vision to Make American Healthy Again. Prior to leading ACF, Adams spent more than ten years in Idaho State Government, most notably as Governor Brad Little's budget and regulatory director and state Department of Health & Welfare director. In these capacities, he oversaw the state's first upgrade to a AAA credit rating with both Fitch Ratings and Moody's. Adams led the governor's zero-based regulation initiative, which resulted in Idaho becoming the least regulated state in the nation. He also made significant efforts to improve Idaho's child welfare system, enacting kin-specific licensing standards, announcing paid family leave for foster parents, extending foster care to age 23, and overseeing record recruitment and retention of foster homes.

Adams earned his bachelor's degree and Doctor of Pharmacy degree from the University of Toledo in Ohio and his Master of Public Health degree from Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore.

Sarah Brand-McCarthy is a pediatric psychologist and health services researcher whose work centers on improving psychosocial care for children with serious medical illness and their families. She serves as the Director of Psychology for the Robert's Program on Sudden Unexpected Death in Pediatrics at Boston Children's Hospital. Brand-McCarthy's program of research focuses on developing and evaluating interventions that address grief, trauma, and family well-being following a child's death.

Her perspective as a bereaved parent deeply informs her clinical and research endeavors. Following the illness and death of her daughter, Molly, in 2022, Brand-McCarthy's work has increasingly explored the intersections of personal experience, professional identity, and compassionate care in pediatric healthcare. She is committed to advancing family-centered, trauma-informed, and grief-responsive models of care that honor the enduring connections between children, families, and clinicians.

Elizabeth Bundock,* M.D., is the Chief Medical Examiner of Vermont and a consultant with Gray Matter Forensic Consulting, LLC who has extensive forensic pathology experience, routinely performing medicolegal death investigations and postmortem examinations, consulting and

testifying in criminal and civil proceedings, teaching, and training. As a board-certified forensic pathologist and neuropathologist, she has special interests in sudden pediatric death, epilepsy-related deaths, and head trauma. Bundock is a Clinical Assistant Professor in the Department of Pathology at the University of Vermont Larner College of Medicine, and a member of the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME), American Academy of Forensic Sciences, and American Association of Neuropathologists. She is currently a consultant to the American Academy of Pediatrics Task Force on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. She was Co-Chair of the NAME Panel on Sudden Unexpected Death in Pediatrics and Co-Editor of the resulting 2019 panel publication “Unexplained Pediatric Deaths: Investigation, Certification and Family Needs”, which established national consensus guidance for pediatric medicolegal investigations. Bundock completed residency and fellowships at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston and Children's Hospital Boston and the Office of Chief Medical Examiner in New York City.

Lieutenant **Joe Drelles** serves as the Detective Unit Commander for the Grand Rapids Police Department (Michigan), where he leads investigative operations and oversees specialized units. With over 20 years of law enforcement experience, he has held key roles within the Detective Unit, including Supervisor of the Family Services Team and Supervisor of the Criminal Intelligence Team. In his work with Family Services, he managed complex and sensitive investigations, including numerous child and infant death cases, demonstrating a strong commitment to thorough and victim-centered policing.

Throughout his career, Drelles has also served as a patrol supervisor, Field Training Officer, and Explorer advisor, contributing to both agency operations and officer development. Prior to joining Grand Rapids, he worked with the Tempe Police Department (Arizona) as a patrol officer and Violent Crimes investigator. He remains dedicated to advancing investigative practices, supporting personnel, and fostering collaboration within the law enforcement community.

Keith A. Findley is an emeritus professor at the University of Wisconsin Law School where his primary areas of research and teaching have focused on evidence, criminal procedure, and wrongful convictions, including the role played by forensic sciences and cognitive biases. He co-founded the Wisconsin Innocence Project (1998) and the Center for Integrity in Forensic Science (2017). From 2009-2014, he was president of the Innocence Network, an affiliation of approximately 70 innocence advocacy organizations around the world. He has authored more than 50 scholarly articles and is co-editor of the 2023 book, *Shaken Baby Syndrome: Investigating the Abusive Head Trauma Controversy* (Cambridge University Press 2023). He has presented and taught regularly to groups including defense lawyers, judges, prosecutors, forensic scientists, physicians, and police officers. He is a current member of the Medicolegal Death Investigation Consensus Body of the Academy Standards Board of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences. He has litigated and consulted on hundreds of criminal and civil cases, many focusing on wrongful convictions and forensic science errors, and has served as an expert witness in dozens more. In his retirement he continues to consult, provide expert testimony, teach nationally on all of these topics.

Joanna Garstang is a Clinical Associate Professor of Child Protection at the University of Birmingham (UK), Consultant Community Pediatrician and Designated Doctor for Child Death for Birmingham and Solihull. Her specialist areas are in safeguarding children, Child Death Review and Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy and Childhood. Her research has focusses on improving multi-agency working in safeguarding and preventable child mortality. Garstang completed a

National Institute for Health and Care Research study 'Involving Parents and Staff in Learning from Child Deaths', developing a Child Death Review toolkit with bereaved parents. She led a study 'Improving Safeguarding Outcomes following adoption or Special Guardianship', funded by the Nuffield Foundation. She is currently leading research on risks of vaping and infant death and improving care for families after sudden child death.

Garstang is Chair of the Association of Child Death Review Professionals, Chair of ISPID (International sudden infant and child death) and a Specialist Medical Advisor to the English National Child Mortality Database. She provides expert witness testimony for criminal and family court cases relating to child deaths.

Richard Goldstein, MD, is a palliative care pediatrician and the Director of Robert's Program on Sudden Unexpected Death in Pediatrics (SUDP) at Boston Children's Hospital, and an Associate Professor of Pediatrics at Harvard Medical School. Robert's Program, co-founded by Goldstein, is a first-of-its-kind translational program that conducts family-centered clinical assessments following unexplained pediatric deaths, evaluating them for heterogeneous undiagnosed diseases with possible genetic underpinnings. His team of experts in pediatrics, genetics, neurology, neurogenetics, pathology, neuropathology, neonatology, cardiology, forensics and metabolism, work to understand the underlying biological etiologies that lead to SUDP, transforming basic assumptions about unexpected pediatric deaths and leading to advances in genetics, neuropathology, and general pathology. Goldstein also studies how young families cope with loss, including grief research on over 400 mothers for three years following sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) deaths. He has served on the Board of Directors of the American Association of SIDS Prevention Physicians and the International Society for the Study and Prevention of Perinatal and Infant Death (ISPID) and received the ISPID Distinguished Researcher Award. He is a graduate of Harvard Medical School and pediatric residency at Boston Children's Hospital.

Stephanie Haridopolos, MD, is a distinguished board-certified family medicine physician who completed her residency training at Albany Medical Center. She is a medical writer, philanthropist, and public health advocate. She currently serves as Chief of Staff and Senior Advisor in the Office of the Surgeon General, where she provides strategic guidance and leadership on public health initiatives aimed at improving the health of the American people.

With over 20 years of medical experience, Haridopolos is a family physician focused on preventative and primary care, serving as a medical home for her patients to ensure comprehensive continuity of care. She has dedicated her life's work to empowering patients with knowledge to live a healthier lifestyle.

Her dedication to public health was recognized when she was honored as Florida's Outstanding Woman in Public Health by the University of South Florida's College of Public Health. This accolade highlighted her leadership as Chair of the Board of Directors for Florida Healthy Kids Corporation, which offers income-based healthcare coverage for children in Florida.

Dr. Haridopolos led a successful effort to have the Florida legislature increase eligibility for subsidized coverage under the federal poverty level for children in Florida KidCare. Signed into law, House Bill 121 established a glidepath for families by allowing them to keep subsidized coverage as they earn more, enabling the pursuit of financial stability without losing government assistance. This measure underscores Dr. Haridopolos's dedication to making a difference for

families and children. She continues to focus on improving healthcare access for children on a national scale as part of her role in the Office of the Surgeon General.

Her work extends beyond direct patient care as she has fought to advocate for her patients and to enact legislation that puts patients first. Dr. Haridopolos has had a significant impact on healthcare policy, particularly in expanding access to affordable healthcare for children.

Haridopolos also played a pivotal role in addressing the opioid epidemic in Florida. She supported the enactment of Florida's Pill Mill law, which imposed stricter regulations on pain management clinics to reduce the number of "pill mills" that were contributing to the opioid crisis. This legislation included mandatory registration with the state department of health, physician ownership requirements, and tightened prescribing and dispensing guidelines.

Haridopolos has contributed her expertise to several high-profile commissions addressing critical public health issues. She has served on the Florida Department of Health's Tobacco Advisory Council, the Statewide Task Force on Prescription Drug Abuse and Newborns, and the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence Foundation. In 2017, she was appointed by Governor Rick Scott to serve on the Florida Board of Medicine where she served as chair of both Rules and Legislation, and Probation committees. She also participated in the South Probable Cause Panel. Additionally, she is a member of both the American Academy of Family Physicians and the Florida Academy of Family Physicians.

Haridopolos holds a bachelor of science degree from Stetson University and a medical degree from the American University of the Caribbean School of Medicine completing her medical school elective/selective courses in London, England.

Lauri W. McGivern, MPH, F-ABMDI, is a Board-Certified Medicolegal Death Investigator with the Vermont Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, where she has served for more than twenty-five years. She currently serves as the Medicolegal Death Investigator Coordinator, overseeing the recruitment, training, and supervision of medicolegal death investigators statewide.

McGivern has extensive experience in medicolegal death investigations and has served as a subject matter expert on numerous state and national committees. Her service includes the Vermont Child Fatality Review Team; the Vermont Vulnerable Adult Fatality Review Team (Past Chair); Past President of the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators (ABMDI); the Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) Medicolegal Death Investigator Subcommittee; and the American Academy of Forensic Sciences Standards Board, as well as multiple technical working groups focused on advancing standards within the field of medicolegal death investigation.

McGivern holds a Master of Public Health from the University of Vermont, a Graduate Certificate in Forensic Science, and a bachelor's degree with a concentration in Public Health and Human Services. Her professional interests include accuracy in death certification, development and implementation of best practices and standards for medicolegal death investigators, and fatality and injury prevention among vulnerable populations, including infants and children.

Carrie Shapiro-Mendoza, PhD, MPH, is an epidemiologist and national leader in sudden unexpected infant death (SUID) research, surveillance, and prevention. During more than two decades at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, she led efforts to strengthen the epidemiologic foundation for understanding and preventing sleep-related infant deaths. Her work

advanced standardized case definitions, improved cause-of-death classification, and strengthened national and state surveillance systems used to monitor SUID trends and disparities. This research has directly informed pediatric safe sleep guidance and national prevention efforts aimed at reducing infant mortality and advancing equity in infant survival.

Shapiro-Mendoza has authored more than 120 publications and MMWRs on SUID, infant mortality, and maternal and child health, and served as a federal liaison to the American Academy of Pediatrics Task Force on SIDS. She currently serves as Adjunct Professor in the Department of Health Policy and Management at Emory University's Rollins School of Public Health. She holds a PhD and MPH in Epidemiology from the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston and a BS in Nursing from the University of Vermont.

M.J. Menendez is the Executive Director of the Center for Forensic Science and Education where she is also a Senior Fellow in Forensic Jurisprudence. Menendez earned her law degree from the University of Colorado in May of 1991. She served as an Assistant United States Attorney for the District of Colorado for 13 years. During that time, she was detailed to the Department of Justice's Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces headquarters in Washington, D.C. where she was the national Heroin, Opioids, and Fentanyl Special Projects Coordinator. Menendez has also spent ten years as a Deputy District Attorney and three years as a district court judge in Jefferson County, Colorado. She teaches at the Robert F. Borkenstein Alcohol course hosted at the Center for Studies of Law in Action, as well as the Borkenstein Drug course, and she has presented nationally and internationally on issues relating to the intersection of law and forensic science. Menendez has previously served as Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee and the Ad Hoc Workforce Remediation Committee for the National Association of Medical Examiners.

Stacey M. Miranda has served as a prosecuting attorney for more than 25 years, currently holding the position of Supervisory Assistant State's Attorney for the Connecticut Division of Criminal Justice's Conviction Integrity Unit. Throughout her distinguished career, Miranda has specialized in the investigation and prosecution of Murder, Sexual Assault, and Child Abuse/Neglect cases including Abusive Head Trauma, successfully trying numerous high-profile felony cases to verdict.

In her current supervisory role, Miranda oversees a dedicated team of attorneys and support staff, providing strategic guidance on case management and courtroom advocacy, while ensuring complicated cases are thoroughly examined for legal probity. She previously served as the Supervisory Assistant State's Attorney in New Haven where she was the Supervisor of the Special Crimes Unit and was the Chair of the New Haven Multi-Disciplinary Team, where she helped develop the South Central Child Advocacy Center.

Beyond the courtroom, Miranda is a recognized leader in the legal community and has presented at the National Symposium on Child Abuse. She has taught as an adjunct professor at Quinnipiac University, University of New Haven, and Gateway Community College. Miranda is also regularly involved with statewide training of prosecutors and police officers. She is a recipient of the Award for Outstanding Contribution to the New Haven Police Department, the Leadership Award in Recognition of Outstanding Service to the Connecticut Bar, and the Connecticut Law Tribune New Leader of the Law in Public Service for her unwavering commitment to justice and public service.

Miranda earned her Juris Doctor from Quinnipiac University School of Law and is an active member of the Connecticut State Bar Association.

Torleiv Ole Rognum,* MD, PhD, is professor emeritus of forensic medicine at the University of Oslo. Since 2003, he has been a member of the Norwegian Forensic Medical Commission. In 1996, he was elected Head of Institute of Forensic Medicine and in 2012 was appointed Director of Department of Forensic Pathology and Clinical Forensic Medicine. After training/research in pathology and pediatrics from 1976 -1984, he took up a position in forensic medicine at the University of Oslo. He was appointed professor of forensic medicine in 1991. From 1987-2016, Rognum was a leader of a research group and supervised several fellows, mainly on biochemical, immunological, and genetic studies in sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and sudden unexplained death in childhood. He initiated and led a research project on death scene investigation (DSI) in sudden unexpected child deaths in Southeast Norway 2001-2004, and based on this experience, the same model for DSI was introduced for the whole country in 2010. From 1986-2011, he was chairman of the professional Council of the Norwegian SIDS Society. From 1998-2000, he served as chairman of the Norwegian Biotechnology Advisory Board. He was a member of Norway's public inquiry on Child Maltreatment from 2015-2017. He received honors for "The right to live price" in 2007. He was appointed knight of the order of St Olav in 2007.

Meg Sullivan, MD, MPH, serves as the Deputy Secretary of Public Health Services at the Maryland Department of Health.

Sullivan is a board-certified pediatrician with extensive experience in public health, health policy, human services, and emergency response. She served in the role of Acting Assistant Secretary for the Administration on for Children and Families (ACF) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), developing deep expertise in programs and initiatives that promote the well-being of children and families. Prior to that role, Sullivan was a Counselor to the Secretary of HHS, providing strategic guidance and expertise for multiple public health and human service agencies. She has also served as the Chief Medical Officer for the Administration on for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR), the agency within HHS that leads the nation's medical and public health preparedness, response, and recovery efforts for disasters and public health emergencies.

Prior to serving at HHS, Dr. Sullivan was the Medical Director at the Mecklenburg County Health Department in Charlotte, North Carolina where she provided medical leadership for all health department programs as well as the COVID-19 response. Previously, she has worked at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, a Federally Qualified Health Center in Washington, DC, and as the Medical Director of an organization in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala.

Sullivan completed medical school at the University of California, San Diego and her pediatric residency at New York Presbyterian/Columbia University Medical Center. She received a Master of Public Health (MPH) degree from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

*Member of Workshop Planning Committee