

Roundtable on Obesity Solutions

Committee

Anand Parekh

Chair

Anand Parekh, M.D., M.P.H., is the chief health policy officer at the University of Michigan School of Public Health and senior advisor at the Institute for Healthcare Policy and Innovation. In this capacity, he helps translate the care, practice, and research occurring at the university to policymakers to drive health impact. Parekh also serves as an adjunct professor in health management & policy. Previously, Parekh served as the chief medical advisor at the Bipartisan Policy Center (BPC) where he provided clinical and public health expertise across the organization. From 2015 to 2025, he led specific efforts tackling policy issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic, future of public health, opioid crisis, and obesity epidemic & nutrition. His healthcare expertise was recognized by the Washingtonian in its listing of Washington DC's 500 Most Influential People. Prior to joining BPC, he completed a decade of service at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). As an HHS Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health in the Senior Executive Service from 2008 to 2015, he developed and implemented national initiatives focused on prevention, wellness, and care management. Specifically, he played instrumental roles in the implementation of the Recovery Act's Prevention and Wellness Fund, the Affordable Care Act's prevention initiatives, and HHS' Multiple Chronic Conditions Initiative. He received the Surgeon General's Outstanding Service Award for his efforts. Briefly in 2007, he was delegated the authorities of the HHS Assistant Secretary for Health overseeing ten health program offices and the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps. Earlier in his HHS career, he played key roles in public health emergency preparedness efforts related to pandemic influenza and bioterrorism as special assistant to the science advisor to the secretary. Parekh is a board-certified internal medicine physician, a fellow of the American College of Physicians, and an adjunct associate professor of medicine at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, where he previously completed his residency training in the Osler Medical Program of the Department of Medicine. He provided volunteer clinical services for many years at the Holy Cross Hospital Health Center, a clinic for the uninsured in Silver Spring, MD. He is a past member of the Board on Population Health and Public Health Practice at the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, special advisor to the Commission on Local Public Health Leadership convened by the de Beaumont Foundation, fellow at the Bipartisan Policy Center, and chair of the Board of Directors of the Presidential Scholars Foundation. He has spoken widely and written extensively on a variety of health topics such as chronic care management, population health, value in health care, and the need for health and human services integration. His book *Prevention First: Policymaking for a Healthier America* was first released in 2019 (2nd edition in 2024) and argues that prevention must be our nation's top health policy priority. A native of Michigan, Parekh received a B.A. in political science, an M.D., and an M.P.H. in health management and policy from the University of Michigan.

Jamy D. Ard

Vice Chair

Jamy D. Ard, M.D., is a professor in the Department of Epidemiology and Prevention and the Department of Medicine at Wake Forest University School of Medicine. He is also co-director of the Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Weight Management Center, directing medical weight management programs. Following completion of his residency training, he was selected to serve as a chief resident in internal medicine at Duke. He also received formal training in clinical research as a fellow at the Center for Health Services Research in Primary Care at the Durham VA Medical Center. During this time, he participated in a focused research experience on lifestyle interventions for hypertension and obesity at the Duke Hypertension Center. Dr. Ard's research interests include clinical management of obesity and strategies to improve cardiometabolic risk using lifestyle modification. His work has focused on developing and testing medical strategies for the treatment of obesity in special populations, including African Americans, those with type 2 diabetes and older adults. Dr. Ard has participated in several major National Institutes of Health (NIH) funded multi-center trials including Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH), DASH-sodium, PREMIER, and Weight Loss Maintenance Trial. He has been conducting research on lifestyle modification since 1995 and has received research funding from a variety of federal and foundation sources, including the NIH and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. His work has been published in numerous scientific journals and he has been a featured presenter at several national and international conferences and workshops dealing with obesity. Dr. Ard has more than 20 years of experience in clinical nutrition and obesity. Prior to joining the faculty at Wake Forest in 2012, Dr. Ard spent 9 years at the University of Alabama at Birmingham in the Department of Nutrition Sciences. Dr. Ard has served on several expert panels and guideline development committees, including the National Academies (previously Institute of Medicine) Committee on Consequences of Sodium Reduction in Populations, the American Heart Association/American College of Cardiology/The Obesity Society Guideline Panel on the Identification, Evaluation, and Treatment of Overweight and Obesity in Adults, and the American Psychological Association Obesity Guideline Development Panel. He is also serving on the editorial board for the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition and the International Journal of Obesity. Dr. Ard is a National Academy of Medicine member. He received an M.D. and completed internal medicine residency training at Duke University Medical Center.

Stephanie A. Navarro Silvera

Vice Chair

Stephanie A. Navarro Silvera, Ph.D., M.S., C.P.H., is professor of public health at Montclair State University (MSU). After completing her masters' degrees, she worked as a nutrition educator at the Women, Infants, and Children Supplemental Food Program (WIC) at St. Joseph's Medical Center in Paterson, New Jersey. She then went on to work as an epidemiologist at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the department of Epidemiology and Population Health before joining the faculty at MSU. During her professorship her work has focused on racial/ethnic disparities in health outcomes, and she was awarded the prestigious National Cancer Institute's K01 Career Development Award in 2009 to pursue this work. She has also served on the boards of the American Public Health Association Cancer Caucus, on the American Society for Preventive Oncology Junior Member and Membership Committees and is a current member of the New Jersey Society for Public Health Education Academic Advisory Board. She has, more recently, been called upon by the New York/New Jersey media to serve as an expert to interpret and explain the epidemiology of the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Silvera holds a bachelor's degree in biology from Rutgers University, an M.S. in nutritional sciences from Rutgers University, and a doctorate in epidemiology from the Yale School of Medicine.

Ross Arena

Member

Ross Arena, Ph.D., M.S., is professor in the Department of Physical Therapy, College of Applied Health Sciences, University of Illinois Chicago. Dr. Arena's scholarly interests include: 1) Exercise testing and training in patients diagnosed with cardiopulmonary disease/dysfunction; and 2) Healthy living initiatives that promote the health span. He has an ongoing extraordinary record of scholarly productivity and impact, which is accelerating further—with over 800 peer-reviewed manuscripts and book chapters. He has an ongoing extraordinary record of scholarly productivity and impact, which is accelerating further—with over 840 peer-reviewed manuscripts and book chapters. His h-index is 118 (ranked in the top 1% globally) and he has more than 100,000 citations. Dr. Arena is a fellow of the American College of Sports Medicine, and American Association of Cardiovascular Rehabilitation and Prevention. Dr. Arena received his B.S. in human performance from Southern Connecticut State University and his M.S. in physical therapy and Ph.D. in physiology from the Medical College of Virginia/Virginia Commonwealth University.

Michael Knight

Member

Michael G. Knight, M.D., M.S.H.P., FACP, Dipl. ABOM, is an internal medicine and obesity medicine physician, and a clinical associate professor of medicine at The George Washington University in Washington, DC. He is also the head of services at IMPaCT Care, a company that supports healthcare organizations by delivering the most widely used, evidence-based community health worker model in the United States that improves health outcomes by addressing health inequity and the social determinants of health. Dr. Knight is board certified in internal medicine and obesity medicine. His expertise is in obesity, chronic disease management, and sexual health. He currently practices clinically in the GW Weight Management Clinic, where he works with a multidisciplinary team to provide medical weight management through nutrition, physical activity, and medication management. Dr. Knight has been a featured medical expert on radio, television, and in print news media, and routinely speaks at events internationally and throughout the United States. Dr. Knight serves on the National Medical Association Board of Trustees, and is the founder and president of the Renewing Health Foundation. Dr. Knight has received numerous awards for his professional and clinical practice, including the American Medical Association Foundation Leadership Award, Washingtonian Magazine's Top Doctors Award, and the Top 40 Under 40 Leaders in Health Award by the National Minority Quality Forum. He completed undergraduate studies at Oakwood University, and attended the Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine of Case Western Reserve University. He completed residency at New York Presbyterian-Weill Cornell Medical Center, and was a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Clinical Scholar at the University of Pennsylvania, where he completed a Masters in Health Policy Research.

Bruce Y. Lee

Member

Bruce Y. Lee, M.D., M.B.A., is a systems modeler, computational, artificial intelligence (AI), and digital health expert, professor, writer, and journalist. Currently, he is a professor of health policy and management at the City University of New York Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy, where he is executive director of the Center for Advanced Technology and Communication in Health (CATCH), PHICOR and AIMINGS (Artificial Intelligence, Modeling, and Informatics for Nutrition Guidance and Systems) Center. Dr. Lee is also founder and CEO of Symsilico. Previously, he was an associate professor at Johns Hopkins University where he was the executive director the Global Obesity Prevention Center (GOPC) and was a founding partner of the Aspen Institutes Project Play consortium, which included most of the major sports leagues in an effort to increase youth participation in sports. Dr. Lee has authored over 295 scientific publications (including over 110 first author and over 120 last author) nearly all of which have focused on developing and using new systems, computational, and AI/modeling methods. He has been the principal investigator for well over \$60 million in grants and contracts from a wide range of funders such as the National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Science Foundation, USAID, and various foundations. He is also a health and science journalist and humorist who has written extensively for the general media. He is a senior contributor for Forbes, where his articles have been read over 90 million times since 2019, has a blog "A Funny Bone to Pick" for Psychology Today, maintains "Minded by Science" on Substack, and has written for other outlets such as the New York Times, Time, The Guardian, and MIT Technology Review. His work and expertise have been regular featured in media such as the New York Times, USA Today, Los Angeles Times, CBS News, USA Today, Good Morning America, BBC, Bloomberg, and National Public Radio (NPR). Dr. Lee received his B.A. from Harvard University, M.D. from Harvard Medical School, and M.B.A. from the Stanford Graduate School of Business. He completed his internal medicine residency training at the University of California, San Diego.

Nikki Massie

Member

Nikki Massie, M.A., is a non-profit digital marketing and fundraising professional based in Baltimore, MD. For nearly 20 years, Ms. Massie has also been a patient advocate on behalf of people living with obesity, lending her lived experience to conversations around policy, access, treatment and more. She current serves as the board chair for the Obesity Action Coalition, where she's served as a board member since 2014. Ms. Massie holds an M.A. from the Notre Dame of Maryland University.

Katie Adamson

Ex Officio Member

Katie Adamson is the vice president of health partnerships and policy for YMCA of the USA, the national resource office for the nation's 2,700 YMCAs. Ms. Adamson provides guidance and consultation on healthy living policy, partnerships, and program strategies at the national level and for local Ys and the state alliances of YMCAs. She serves on several national boards and advisory committees and was an inaugural member of the Roundtable on Obesity Solutions at the National Academies. Prior to working at YMCA of the USA, Katie spent several years as a managing director of public law and policy strategies at law firms in DC. She also spent four years at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, where she developed and maintained Congressional and partner relations for the agency and served in the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion and the Financial Management Office. In the earlier part of her career, she spent six years on Capitol Hill serving in several legislative roles in Congress, including as legislative director for Congressman Bernie Sanders (I-VT) who now serves as a U.S. Senator. Ms. Adamson is a graduate of the University of Virginia with a B.A. in political and social thought.

Nadine Allyn

Ex Officio Member

Nadine Allyn, M.S., is a senior science and health advisor at the American Heart Association (AHA), where she leads nationwide scientific initiatives focused on real-world evidence generation, chronic disease solutions, and participant-centered research. Since joining the Association in 2006, she has guided major programs spanning quality improvement, certification, research strategy, and population health innovation. Ms. Allyn began her career as a registered dietitian at Brigham and Women's Hospital, providing clinical nutrition care and contributing to interdisciplinary approaches to cardiometabolic health. Her expertise includes nutrition science, chronic disease prevention and management, real-world treatment effectiveness, implementation science, and research design grounded in patient experience. She has played a key role in efforts in obesity solutions, food-as-medicine initiatives, health economics and outcomes research, and studies aligned with the AHA's Life Essential 8 framework. Ms. Allyn has received multiple organizational awards recognizing her leadership and cross-sector collaboration. She earned her bachelor's degree in nutritional science from Cornell University and her master's degree in nutrition and public health from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

Caitlin S. Boon

Ex Officio Member

Caitlin S. Boon is the senior director, health & nutrition policy for Mars, Inc. Based at the company's global headquarters in Virginia, Dr. Boon leads policy engagement on health, food safety, and nutrition issues across the portfolio and helps guide Mars' policy leadership in Washington, D.C. and across the U.S. Before joining Mars, Inc., Dr. Boon served in various roles at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Most recently, she served as Associate Commissioner for Food Policy and Response, providing leadership on a variety of food safety activities including implementation of the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act, outbreak response, and recall activities. Previously, Dr. Boon served as Senior Science Advisor to the Chief of Staff, serving as a principal advisor to Commissioner Gottlieb. Before joining FDA, Dr. Boon served as a study director at the National Academies and directed the IOM Food Forum. She holds a B.S. in food science and poultry science from North Carolina State University, a M.S. degree in food policy at City University London while on a Fulbright grant to the United Kingdom, and received a Ph.D. in food science from the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Katie Brown

Ex Officio Member

Katie Brown, Ed.D., R.D.N., is president of National Dairy Council (NDC), a non-profit dairy nutrition research and education organization. In this role, Dr. Brown leads efforts to promote health and prevent diet-related diseases, including obesity. She is committed to advancing strategies to reduce obesity prevalence through NDC's extensive research portfolio, consumer insights, and innovative behavior change interventions. In her previous staff role with the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND), Dr. Brown led a multi-site in-school childhood obesity prevention program, authored numerous publications, and presented at several national and international conferences. She served as faculty for the Certificate of Training in Adult Weight Management program of the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR), and as an expert reviewer or member of evidence-based position paper workgroups with the AND. Dr. Brown previously served as a volunteer leader and member of obesity prevention organizations including the Society of Nutrition Education and Behavior, the Energy Balance Workgroup, and the AND Prevention of Childhood Obesity Coalition taskforce. Dr. Brown recently completed a Certificate of Training in Obesity for Pediatrics and Adults from the CDR. She holds a B.S. and M.S. in nutrition and a doctorate degree in education.

Laurie Friedman Donze

Ex Officio Member

Laurie Friedman Donze, Ph.D., is program director in the Clinical Applications and Prevention Branch of the Division of Cardiovascular Sciences at the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Her research and programmatic interests focus on the treatment and prevention of obesity and cardiovascular conditions via sustained healthy lifestyle behaviors and/or use of medications. Her program portfolio includes randomized clinical trials focused on obesity, physical activity, diet, sedentary behavior, sleep, and hypertension. Mechanistic trials and observational studies in her portfolio examine the psychiatric and psychosocial comorbidities and predictors of cardiovascular disease, and the mechanisms by which they affect cardiometabolic health. Dr. Donze also manages fellowship and career development grants in her areas of expertise. Dr. Donze is a co-chair of NHLBI's Obesity Working Group and the GLP-1 Task Force, and is an NHLBI co-representative to the NIH Obesity Research Task Force Senior Leadership Group. She has a particular interest in social, structural, and metabolic determinants of obesity and cardiometabolic health disparities. Prior to joining NHLBI, Dr. Donze worked as the deputy director and supervising psychologist of the Johns Hopkins Weight Management Center, where she participated in the multidisciplinary evaluation and treatment of patients with obesity, overweight, and a variety of eating disorders and comorbid psychological and medical conditions. She also held a faculty appointment in the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and was a co-investigator on several clinical trials of obesity treatments, including the NIH-funded Look AHEAD trial. Dr. Donze then worked as a scientific review officer at NIH, after which she worked in full-time private clinical practice, specializing in psychotherapy for anxiety disorders, obesity and eating disorders, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in civilians and military families. She has been licensed as a psychologist in Maryland since 1997 and has the Authority to Practice Interjurisdictional Telepsychology (APIT), which allows her to treat patients in other states via telehealth. In addition to her work at NIH, she currently maintains a small clinical practice via telepsychology. Dr. Donze received her bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of California, Berkeley, and her master's and Ph.D. in psychology from Michigan State University.

Amenda Fisher

Ex Officio Member

Mendy Fisher, Ph.D., M.N.Sc., is senior manager II of associate well-being at Walmart, where she is responsible for well-being strategy including designing, implementing, and evaluating well-being programs and benefits for 1.6 million associates across the United States. This work includes programming specific to medical management of weight loss and chronic health conditions. She also supports SDoH, community, and inclusion initiatives, caregiving programs, and measurement strategies to quantify the effects of Walmart well-being programs on individuals, business performance, and community outcomes. Dr. Fisher is a nurse practitioner with a Ph.D. in nursing focused on behavioral health economics from the University of Kansas.

Allison Gertel-Rosenberg

Ex Officio Member

Allison Gertel-Rosenberg, M.S., serves as vice president and chief policy and prevention officer at Nemours Children's Health, leading the organization's National Office of Policy and Prevention. Her work focuses on advancing federal policy, advocacy, and innovative prevention strategies to improve population health and well-being for children. She has led nationally impactful initiatives such as Kindergarten Readiness, Moving Health Care Upstream, Let's Move! Child Care, Healthy Kids, Healthy Future, and the National Early Care and Education Learning Collaborative with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Widely recognized as a leader in population health, Ms. Gertel-Rosenberg regularly publishes and presents on child health, social drivers of health, and cross-sector partnerships. She earned a B.S. in public health from Rutgers University and an M.S. in health policy and management from the Harvard School of Public Health.

Alyson B. Goodman

Ex Officio Member

Alyson Goodman, M.D., M.P.H., is chief of the Obesity Prevention Branch in the Division of Nutrition, Physical & Obesity at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). She is a board-certified pediatrician and medical epidemiologist, and a Captain in the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps. In Dr. Goodman's 15 years experience at CDC, she has authored over 60 strategic papers in applied epidemiology of obesity, nutrition and child health. She oversees a multidisciplinary branch that focuses on national, state, and local surveillance, including through the use of electronic health records, applied research, and public health practice. Dr. Goodman's work focuses on increasing access to evidence-based interventions for child obesity, with special interest in clinical quality improvement and implementation science. She is a senior advisor to CDC's extramural Nutrition and Obesity Policy Research & Evaluation Network, and the CDC federal liaison to the Section on Obesity for the American Academy of Pediatrics. She sees patients at the Children's Healthcare of Atlanta pediatric obesity medicine clinic. She received her M.D. and M.P.H. from Emory University, completed pediatrics residency training at Boston Children's Hospital & Boston Medical Center, and a post-doctoral fellowship with CDC's Epidemic Intelligence Service.

J. Nadine Gracia

Ex Officio Member

J. Nadine Gracia, M.D., M.S.C.E., is president and CEO of Trust for America's Health (TFAH), a nonprofit, nonpartisan public health policy, research and advocacy organization in Washington, DC committed to promoting optimal health for every person and community and making prevention and health equity foundational to policymaking at all levels. Dr. Gracia is a national health equity leader with extensive leadership experience in federal government, the nonprofit sector, academia, and professional associations. Before being appointed president and CEO, she served as TFAH's executive vice president and chief operating officer. Prior to joining TFAH, Dr. Gracia served in the Obama Administration as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Minority Health and director of the Office of Minority Health at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). In that capacity, she directed departmental policies and programs to end health disparities and advance health equity and provided executive leadership on administration priorities including the Affordable Care Act and My Brother's Keeper. Previously, she served as chief medical officer in the HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health, where her portfolio included adolescent health, emergency preparedness, environmental health and climate change, global health, and the White House Council on Women and Girls. Prior to that role, she was appointed as a White House Fellow at HHS and worked in the Office of the First Lady on the development of the Let's Move! initiative to solve childhood obesity. A first-generation Haitian American, Dr. Gracia is active in many civic, professional, and academic organizations. She serves as a member of the Aspen Global Leadership Network, the National Academy of Medicine Culture of Health Program Advisory Committee, the Dean's Council at the University of Maryland School of Public Health, the Board of Advisors of the Center for Climate, Health, and the Global Environment (C-CHANGE) at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, and Women of Impact. Dr. Gracia received her M.D. from the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, her M.S. in clinical epidemiology from University of Pennsylvania, and her B.A. in French from Stanford.

Kayla Jackson

Ex Officio Member

Kayla Jackson, M.P.A., has oversight for AASA, The School Superintendents Association's work related to health and mental health, especially as they relate to positive academic outcomes for students. Prior to joining AASA, Jackson was the Vice President of Programs at the National Network for Youth. She has extensive background in women's and adolescent health, youth, and youth at high risk for negative health outcomes related to reproductive health, breast cancer, mental health, and sexually transmitted infections/HIV. Ms. Jackson received her B.A. in English from Mount Holyoke College and an M.P.A. from New York University.

John Jakicic

Ex Officio Member

John Jakicic, Ph.D., M.S., FACSM, is professor at the University of Kansas Medical Center. Considered a leading authority on the benefits of physical activity for weight management, he has more than 230 peer-reviewed publications and has given more than 200 invited presentations. Dr. Jakicic has been an American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) member for more than 30 years, serving as vice president, chair of the Strategic health Initiative for Obesity, and on the ACSM Board of Trustees, multiple committees, and as associate editor for Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise®. He has also served on the board of directors for the Mid-Atlantic Chapter and New England Chapter of ACSM. Dr. Jakicic holds an M.S. in exercise science from Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania and a Ph.D. in exercise physiology from the University of Pittsburgh.

Gabrielle N. Johnston

Ex Officio Member

Gabrielle N. Johnston, M.P.H., is senior director for communications and public affairs at the American Council on Exercise (ACE). She is a public health communications professional with over a decade of successful experience in health communications and public affairs. Ms. Johnston specializes in strategic communications and public relations, delivering effective solutions for building awareness around global health issues and fostering brand awareness. In her role at ACE, she contributes to elevating the importance of health and exercise professionals in public health and advancing ACE's mission around increasing physical activity opportunities. Through her commitment to this role, she has helped to grow ACE's recognition in the public health and physical activity community and assisted with the organization becoming a dynamic partner in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's initiative Active People Healthy NationSM. Prior to her time at ACE, she worked in both the federal government at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service and at the major hospital system, UC San Diego Health. Ms. Johnston holds an M.P.H. degree from Tulane University and is a returned Peace Corps Volunteer.

Rebecca Krukowski

Ex Officio Member

Rebecca Krukowski, Ph.D., is professor in the Department of Public Health Sciences at the University of Virginia's School of Medicine and Comprehensive Cancer Center as well as co-lead of the Community Cancer Control and Obesity Research Center. Her National Institutes of Health-funded research has focused on leveraging technology to increase access to evidence-based behavioral interventions. Her expertise includes self-monitoring behaviors and behavioral weight management interventions for adults in general and within specific populations (e.g., military personnel, those who are quitting smoking, pregnant individuals, and rural populations). Dr. Krukowski has been a member of the Society of Behavioral Medicine since 2009 and was named as a fellow in the Society of Behavioral Medicine in 2020. In 2023, Dr. Krukowski was presented the Leading the Narrative award through the Society of Behavioral Medicine, for her contributions to science communication. She is also a fellow with The Obesity Society. Her academic training includes a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University of Vermont, a medical psychology internship at Duke University Medical Center, and a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences' College of Public Health.

Theodore Kyle

Ex Officio Member

Ted Kyle, R.Ph., M.B.A., founded ConscienHealth in 2009. Mr. Kyle is a pharmacist and healthcare innovation professional who works with health and obesity experts for sound policy and innovation to address obesity. He serves on the board of directors for the Obesity Action Coalition, advises The Obesity Society on advocacy, and consults with organizations addressing the needs of people living with obesity. His widely read daily commentary, published at ConscienHealth.org, reaches an audience of more than 10,000 thought leaders in health and obesity. His peer-reviewed publications focus on weight bias and policy related to health and obesity.

Jennifer S. Lee

Ex Officio Member

Jennifer S. Lee, M.D., is chief medical officer for the Alliance of Community Health Plans, representing non-profit, provider aligned community health plans across the nation. At the Alliance, she launched the member-wide Chronic Disease Pledge to improve outcomes in diabetes and heart disease by 2030. She is also a clinical associate professor of emergency medicine at The George Washington University in Washington, DC. Previously she was a visiting scholar at the National Academy of Medicine focused on value-based payment reform. She previously served as the director of the Medicaid program for the Commonwealth of Virginia and prior to that as deputy undersecretary for health for policy and services at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and as deputy secretary of health and human resources for Virginia governor Terry McAuliffe. Dr. Lee also served as a White House fellow and a health policy fellow on the U.S. Senate health, education, labor, and pensions committee. She is a board-certified, practicing emergency physician. She received her bachelor's from Yale University, her medical degree from Washington University School of Medicine, and completed her residency at Johns Hopkins.

Lisa McGuire

Ex Officio Member

Lisa McGuire, Ph.D., is a nationally recognized leader at the intersection of public health with aging and Alzheimer's. She is the vice president of strategic alliances and practice innovation at the Gerontological Society of America (GSA). Dr. McGuire most recently was the Lead for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Alzheimer's Disease Program responsible for growing the program over 1000%, developing the first Building out Largest Dementia (BOLD) Infrastructure awards, launching 4 editions of Healthy Brain Initiative Road Maps, all to strengthen the public health infrastructure for Alzheimer's, and former member of the NAPA and RAISE Advisory Councils. She has published well over 100 articles and book chapters on aspects of cognition, caregiving, dementia, obesity, and aging. As a former caregiver for her mother with mixed dementia, Dr. McGuire is professionally and personally passionate about caregiving and issues related to dementia. Dr. McGuire has a Ph.D. in Lifespan Developmental Psychology from Bowling Green State University, completed a post-doctoral fellowship in the Gerontology Center at The Pennsylvania State University and earned honorary Fellow Status in the American Psychological Association and the Gerontological Society of America.

Myeta Moon

Ex Officio Member

Myeta M. Moon, M.P.H., is director of health at United Way Worldwide. She has spent much of her career in the nonprofit and government sectors, with a focus on improving community health in urban environments. In this role, she directs and supports the development and implementation of health impact strategies for mobilizing communities. Previously, Ms. Moon was the director of City Initiatives at KaBOOM!, a national non-profit dedicated to ensuring that all kids have the balanced and active play needed to thrive. In this capacity, she oversaw efforts to encourage cities to utilize play to address urban challenges with program, policy, and infrastructure interventions. As part of her work, she managed the Playful City USA, a national program that recognizes the efforts of cities working to increase play access in their communities. Prior to joining KaBOOM!, she was the associate vice president of Health for the United Way of New York City. While there, she was instrumental in developing and implementing program to policy initiatives that addressed issues of food and nutrition in low-income New York City communities. In 2012, she took a brief leave of absence from United Way to work as a field organizer for Organizing for America in Durham, North Carolina. In this role, she recruited, trained, and managed community-based teams of volunteers to register, persuade, and motivate voters to re-elect President Barack Obama. Before United Way of NYC, Ms. Moon was an assistant legislative representative for the New York City Mayor's Office. She advocated on behalf of the City's Health and Human Services agencies to the New York State Legislature, Governor's Office, and New York State agencies. Ms. Moon holds a B.A. from the University of Virginia and a M.P.H. from Columbia University.

Joseph Nadglowski, Jr.

Ex Officio Member

Joe Nadglowski is president and CEO of the Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) – a non-profit organization formed in 2005 dedicated to elevating and empowering those affected by obesity through education, advocacy, and support. A frequent speaker and author, Mr. Nadglowski is especially passionate about access to obesity treatments and tackling weight bias as well as sharing his own experiences with obesity. He has more than 25 years of experience working in patient advocacy, public policy, and education and is a graduate of the University of Florida.

Megan Nechanicky

Ex Officio Member

Megan Nechanicky, M.S., R.D., joined General Mills in 2014 and is currently the nutrition manager for North America Retail and nutrition research. In her role, her team provides strategic direction for business and R&D partners related to health and wellness. She also leads a team focused on unlocking opportunities for business growth through nutrition science. Previously, Ms. Nechanicky oversaw nutrition communications and reporting where she worked on elevating key messages with stakeholders on the company's nutrition commitments and advancing work externally with government, trade associations, and academic institutions to positively position General Mills for future growth. In 2017, Ms. Nechanicky completed a 6-month international assignment in the General Mills Nyon, Switzerland office where she gained experience living and working within the Europe and Australian Region to build and advance nutrition science, research, and communications. When Ms. Nechanicky first joined General Mills in 2014, she led health influencer communications for some of General Mills' largest brands including Cheerios, Fiber One, and Nature Valley. In this role, she delivered cutting-edge science, consumer trends, and new product development and marketing to health influencers such as dietitians, physicians, nurses, and fitness professionals. Prior to General Mills, Ms. Nechanicky was the first dietitian to work at the President's Council on Fitness, Sports, and Nutrition. In her role, Ms. Nechanicky led nutrition and physical activity-related initiatives and events. She was also responsible for the Department of Health and Human Services coordination of First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! initiative to end childhood obesity within a generation. Ms. Nechanicky served on the Federal steering committee to develop the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Physical Activity Guidelines Midcourse Report and coordinated the communications strategy and report launch in 2013. Ms. Nechanicky is a registered dietitian and holds a bachelor's degree in food marketing from Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia, P.A. and a dual master's degree in exercise physiology and nutrition from San Diego State University.

Jonathan Pak

Ex Officio Member

Jonathan Pak, Pharm.D., M.B.A., leads the Metabolic-Obesity, Clinical Development & Medical Affairs Therapeutic Area, overseeing obesity and metabolic dysfunction-associated steatohepatitis (MASH) at Boehringer Ingelheim. His work experience includes clinical research and development, drug safety and pharmacovigilance, medical affairs, and in leading various teams in developing and bringing new drugs to market in the cardio-renal metabolic therapeutic areas such as diabetes, obesity, and MASH. He studied electrical engineering as an undergraduate at Virginia Tech, then later received his Doctor of Pharmacy degree from Virginia Commonwealth University where he also completed a fellowship in cardiovascular research. He earned his M.B.A. from Rutgers University.

Chris Pernell

Ex Officio Member

Chris T. Pernell, M.D., M.P.H., FACPM, is a dynamic physician leader and social change agent. In her practice, she focuses on health justice, community-based advocacy, and population-wide health promotion and disease prevention. A celebrated visionary and apostle of public health, Dr. Pernell serves as the director of the NAACP Center for Health Equity. The Center is charged with driving equitable health outcomes and transforming healthcare systems while valuing the whole person. Prior to joining the NAACP, she launched The Esther Group, a public health consulting and health equity strategy firm. Previously, she served as the first chief strategic integration and health equity officer at University Hospital in Newark, New Jersey. Prior to joining University Hospital, she led the 1199SEIU/League Labor Management Initiatives (LMI) Workplace and Community Health Program. Dr. Pernell is a fellow and regent-at-large for the American College of Preventive Medicine. She holds an appointment as a clinical assistant professor at the Rutgers New Jersey Medical School. Dr. Pernell graduated cum laude from Princeton University before attending Duke University School of Medicine. She received her M.P.H. from the Columbia Mailman School of Public Health in 2011 and completed the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health General Preventive Medicine Residency. She earned her M.D. from Duke University School of Medicine in 2003.

Nicolaas P. Pronk

Ex Officio Member

Nicolas (Nico) Pronk, Ph.D., M.A., FACSM, FAWHP, is president of the HealthPartners Institute and chief science officer at HealthPartners, Inc. and holds an academic appointment as affiliate full professor of health policy and management at the University of Minnesota, School of Public Health in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He continues to serve as a co-investigator on research studies in the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health in Boston, Massachusetts. Dr. Pronk's work is focused on connecting scientific evidence of effectiveness with practical applications of programs and practices, policies and systems that measurably improve population health and well-being. His work applies to the workplace, the health system setting, and the community and involves development of new models to improve health and well-being at the research, practice, and policy levels. He was confirmed by the White House to serve as co-chair of the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services' Advisory Committee on National Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Objectives for the year 2030 (aka "Healthy People 2030"). Dr. Pronk is chair for the Roundtable on Obesity Solutions at the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. He serves on various health-related committees and boards including the board of directors for the Health Enhancement Research Organization (HERO) and is the founding and past president of the International Association for Worksite Health Promotion. He is widely published in both the scientific and practice literatures and is an international speaker on population health and well-being. Dr. Pronk received his doctorate degree in exercise physiology at Texas A&M University and completed his post-doctoral studies in behavioral medicine at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center at the Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Margaret Read

Ex Officio Member

Margaret Read, M.A., is senior director of impact and evaluation at the Partnership for a Healthier America (PHA). She joined the organization in April 2023, and she oversees the overall data, evaluation, and impact of PHA's programmatic work and corporate commitments. Prior to joining PHA, Ms. Read worked at Share Our Strength for 3 years as a Senior Manager leading research focused on universal school meal policies and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on school meals and child food insecurity. Ms. Read also worked for 8 years with the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Health where she conducted national research on the impact of the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act and the impact of the charitable food system in food pantries. Ms. Read is actively involved in the Nutrition and Obesity Policy Research and Evaluation Network (NOPREN) serving as workgroup co-chair and has previously served as an advisor or board member of local and state level food system nonprofits. Ms. Read received a master's degree in clinical and health psychology from Northern Arizona University and an undergraduate degree in health and exercise science from Centenary College of Louisiana.

Sylvia B. Rowe

Ex Officio Member

Sylvia B. Rowe, M.A., is president of SR Strategy, which addresses the science to communications to policy continuum on a broad range of global health, nutrition, food safety and risk issues. She is also an adjunct professor at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and Tufts Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy. Previously, Ms. Rowe served as president and chief executive officer of the International Food Information Council (IFIC) and IFIC Foundation, in Washington, D.C. During her eleven-year tenure, IFIC established itself as a leader in consumer research and consumer-based communications in nutrition, food safety, and health. Ms. Rowe's leadership resulted in national public-private partnerships and coalitions between IFIC, and preeminent government agencies and health organizations committed to developing science-based communications and programs. Ms. Rowe is a member of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine's Food and Nutrition Board and of the Food Forum (former chair). She is also a contributing editor of Nutrition Today. Ms. Rowe has served on several boards and advisory committees of the following: American Heart Association, The Obesity Society, Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network, American Society for Nutrition, Washington, D.C. Mayor's Commission on Food, Nutrition and Health, Grains for Health Foundation, University of Rochester Medical Center, Food and Drug Law Institute, Society for Nutrition Education Foundation, Maryland Title IX Commission, and the American Society of Association Executives Foundation. She is also a member of the International Women's Leadership Forum and the National Press Club among other professional groups. Ms. Rowe's background in media and expertise in issues management are reflected in her professional history as a producer and on-air host of several television and radio talk shows covering social, political, and economic and consumer issues. She also previously held positions in public relations, marketing, and membership development for several diverse associations. Ms. Rowe received a bachelor's degree from Wellesley College and was awarded a master's degree from Harvard University, both with honors.

Emily Sassaman

Ex Officio Member

Emily Sassaman, M.S., is director, medical affairs strategy within the cardio, renal, metabolic team at Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals, Inc., based in Ridgefield, Connecticut. In this role, she leads U.S. medical strategy development for priority late-phase assets and obesity and liver disease states, driving evidence generation, scientific exchange, and cross functional alignment. Her professional expertise centers in medical affairs strategy, evidence generation, clinical trial management, scientific engagement for late stage and launch phase assets in metabolic disease states. Her background includes strategic oversight of clinical data communication, integration of medical insights into development and launch planning, and coordination across clinical development, health economics, and outcomes research (HEOR), value and access, commercial teams, and field based medical teams to support scientifically rigorous, policy compliant exchanges. She holds a M.S. from Wake Forest University and a B.S. from Old Dominion University.

Marlene B. Schwartz

Ex Officio Member

Marlene Schwartz, Ph.D., is director of the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Health and professor of human development and family sciences at the University of Connecticut. Dr. Schwartz studies how nutrition and wellness policies implemented in schools, food banks, child-care, and local communities can improve children's health. Prior to joining the Rudd Center, she served as co-director of the Yale Center for Eating and Weight Disorders. She has published over 145 peer-reviewed papers and has received research grants from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the United States Department of Agriculture, and the National Institutes of Health to study the federal child nutrition programs; school wellness policies; the effect of food marketing on children; and how to improve the nutritional quality of the inventory in the charitable food system. Dr. Schwartz earned her Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Yale University in 1996.

Tracy J. Sims

Ex Officio Member

Tracy Sims, M.A., is executive director of corporate affairs at Eli Lilly and Company. In his role, he leads health system analysis and modernization efforts for chronic diseases including obesity and diabetes. Mr. Sims' role also includes responsibility as a real-world evidence research scientist focused on both obesity and diabetes care. Mr. Sims has extensive international and domestic health system analysis and function improvement experience with previous leadership efforts on five continents. Mr. Sims' research has focused in: measurement of activation for type 2 diabetes care management, benefits of continuous glucose monitoring, impact of body size and type 2 diabetes bias and stigma on obesity and diabetes care outcomes, individual, provider, and payer perspectives on obesity care, and health equity in obesity and diabetes care. He is a member of the American Sociological Association. Mr. Sims holds a B.A. with a double major in communications and history from Whitworth University and an M.A. in sociology from University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Kristen R. Sullivan

Ex Officio Member

Kristen R. Sullivan, M.S., M.P.H., is director of prevention and survivorship with the American Cancer Society (ACS). During her career with ACS, Ms. Sullivan has held positions within both the Patient Support and Corporate Communications departments. In her current role as director of prevention and survivorship, her work focuses on reducing cancer risk and improving outcomes for cancer survivors through nutrition and physical activity. This includes working with health systems and other partners to create healthier environments. Prior to joining ACS, she served as a health communications fellow in the Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Ms. Sullivan earned a bachelor's degree in molecular biology from Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and masters' degrees in nutrition and public health from Tufts University in Boston.

Carly Wright

Ex Officio Member

Carly Wright is the chief program officer at SHAPE America - Society of Health and Physical Educators, where she leads the organization's advocacy, policy, professional practice, and strategic program initiatives. Over nearly two decades with SHAPE America, she has held progressively senior leadership roles, including director of public policy and advocacy, advancing federal, state, and local policies that strengthen health and physical education in schools. Wright's expertise centers on education policy, school health, physical education, public health advocacy, and coalition building. She has represented SHAPE America before Congress and federal agencies, led national advocacy initiatives including SHAPE America's annual SPEAK Out! Day, and played a key role in securing health and physical education provisions in federal education legislation while expanding access to federal funding for school health and physical education programs. She also works extensively with national coalitions focused on public education, youth health, and physical activity.