

RETAIN Virtual Annual Convening 2022 Speakers

Welcome and Opening Remarks



Taryn Mackenzie Williams is the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Disability Employment Policy. In this position, she advises the Secretary of Labor on how the Department’s policies and programs impact the employment of people with disabilities and leads the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), which works with employers and all levels of government to promote evidence-based policy that improves employment opportunities and outcomes for people with disabilities.

Previously, Williams was the managing director for the Poverty to Prosperity Program at American Progress, which works on progressive policies focused on a broad range of anti-poverty strategies. Before joining American Progress, she worked at ODEP on a variety of issues related to education, workforce policy, Social Security, Medicaid and civil rights. In her role as director of youth policy, Williams led agency efforts to coordinate education and employment policy in support of improved labor force outcomes for disabled youth. From 2014 through 2016, Williams served as ODEP’s chief of staff. She also undertook detail assignments as associate director for public engagement and liaison to the disability community at the White House from 2014 through 2015 and as a policy adviser on the US Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions from 2012 through 2013.

Prior to the federal government, Williams worked as the research coordinator for leadership programs at the Institute for Educational Leadership and as the director of programs at the National Association of Urban Debate Leagues headquartered in Chicago. She holds a bachelor’s degree in public policy from Brown University and a master’s degree in education with a concentration in administration, planning, and social policy from Harvard University. She resides in Washington, DC.



Jennifer Sheehy is the deputy assistant secretary leading the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), U.S. Department of Labor. The mission of ODEP is to develop policy that increases job opportunities for youth and adults with disabilities. In 2016, she was also appointed by the President to the AbilityOne Commission. Prior to her current position, Jennifer spent 10 years at the U.S. Department of Education in many roles, including acting director of the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, acting deputy commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration and special assistant to the Assistant Secretary of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. Jennifer came to the Department of Education from the Presidential Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities where she was senior policy advisor and served a detail as associate director in the White House Domestic Policy Council. Before she joined the task force staff, Jennifer was vice president of the National Organization on Disability and director of its CEO Council.

Jennifer earned a BA from Cornell University and graduated with honors from Georgetown University, where she earned her MBA. While in graduate school, she worked in marketing research with Anheuser-Busch Companies in St. Louis. Before graduate school, Jennifer also worked in marketing and management for Sheraton and Marriott.

Jennifer has received many civic and achievement awards including the 2019 Presidential Rank Award, the Accenture Women in Government "Rising Leader" award, and the Diet Coke/*Glamour* magazine "Women at Their Best" award. Jennifer lives in Washington, DC, with her husband.



GeMar Neloms directs RETAIN TA, the programmatic TA provider for the Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury or Illness Network (RETAIN) demonstration project. In this role she oversees the development and delivery of capacity-building services to RETAIN state grantees who seek to improve labor force retention and reduce long-term work absences that occur when a worker acquires an injury or illness affecting their ability to work. Ms. Neloms also directs training for the National Reporting System (NRS) for Adult Education where she serves as a subject matter expert and leads the design and implementation of training and TA resources to assist states on integrating data for program management, improvement, and accountability. Her tenure at AIR has also included leading key initiatives focused on integrating employability skills and work-based learning into career readiness efforts for states and local entities. In addition, she provides strategic planning and professional development coaching on adult learner, career and workforce development topics. Prior to AIR, Neloms worked for and provided consulting services, professional development, and content expertise to organizations and associations focused on workforce development, health, and youth development. Ms. Neloms earned her master's degree in public administration from Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Public Administration and her bachelor of arts degree from Oberlin College.



Lori Collins is a Senior Technical Assistance Consultant, American Institutes for Research. With 25 years of experience in the public workforce system, Lori's expertise lies in facilitation of strategies ranging from big ideas to operational practice. A former Vice President with Goodwill Industries of Kentucky and Director of the Division of Workforce and Employment Services for Kentucky, Ms. Collins has also held positions with local workforce investment boards and nonprofits providing direct services to universal and focused populations

including individuals with disabilities. She has extensive experience in workforce development policy and practice, program planning, integration of multiple programs for a shared vision, and employer engagement strategies. Since joining AIR, Ms. Collins has worked on projects regarding governance of the local workforce system and has provided training to multiple workforce system stakeholder groups regarding their roles and responsibilities. Ms. Collins has a Master of Rehabilitation Counseling from the University of Kentucky and a Bachelor of Arts from Georgetown College.

Plenary Session

A New Normal: What Long COVID May Mean for Workforce and Healthcare

Panelists: Brandy Farrar, MS, PhD, Managing Director, Health, AIR

Greg Vanichkachorn, MD, MPH, Director, COVID Activity Rehabilitation Program, Mayo Clinic

Moderator: Mona Kilany, PhD, Deputy Director, RETAIN TA



Brandy Farrar, MS, PhD, is a Managing Director in the Health Payer Innovation, Transformation and Support program at AIR. Dr. Farrar is an expert qualitative and mixed methodologist with extensive experience evaluating the implementation, effectiveness, and viability of innovative programs designed to improve the skills, job quality, and upward mobility of healthcare workers. For example, she has evaluated: cross-sector collaborations designed to test work-based learning approaches to training frontline healthcare workers (FLWs);

innovative workforce development programs for FLWs developed by high-performing hospitals and health systems; support for service programs targeting nurse faculty; and strategies for expanding the clinical training opportunities for advanced practice registered nursing students. In addition, Dr. Farrar led the American Hospital Association's Changing Workforce Task Force, which was designed to explore health care workforce challenges, identify future trends, and recommend policy and advocacy changes. In addition to health work force, Dr. Farrar's areas of research focus include health equity, behavioral health, and health insurance. Dr. Farrar received her doctoral and master's degrees in Sociology from North Carolina State University. She received her bachelor of arts degree in Sociology and African American studies from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



Greg Vanichkachorn, MD, MPH is an occupational and aerospace medicine physician at the Mayo Clinic. Among the hats he wears, he is the Section Chief for Transportation Medicine and the Medical Director for Mayo's first program for COVID long haulers, the Covid Activity Rehabilitation Program. He also the host of Mayo Clinic's aerospace medicine podcast, called Clear Approach. Prior to his work at Mayo, he practiced in northwest Montana for nearly a decade, helping injured workers recover their function and lives. Dr. Van

graduated from Cornell University and then pursued his doctorate at Virginia Commonwealth University. He completed residency first in family medicine with VCU and then in occupational medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. He also obtained a Master's in Public Health from the University of Washington in Seattle. Outside of medicine, he is an avid fly fisherman, an Ironman triathlete, and a private pilot.



Mona Kilany, PhD, is a Senior Researcher at the American Institutes for Research, with experience in mental health services and disability research. Her focus is on improving care coordination for people with multiple chronic health conditions. Dr. Kilany currently serves as the deputy project director and state technical assistance liaisons for Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury or Illness Network (RETAIN), which provided guidance and best practices on stay-at-home/return-to-work strategies to states. She also led the

development of AIR's Knowledge Hub on Partnering for Better Chronic Pain Management and Safer Opioid Use to support primary care clinicians, specialists, people with disabilities who are taking opioids for the long term to manage musculoskeletal pain. Additionally, Dr. Kilany has expertise as a mixed-methods evaluation researcher, with experience in data collection, management, Medicaid claims data analysis, dissemination, and developing plain language research results. She holds a PhD and an MSPH degree from the Department of Health Policy and Management at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a BS degree in psychology from Arizona State University.

Plenary Discussion

Job Accommodations from Multiple Lenses: Strategies and Considerations for Business and Healthcare

Panelists: Glenn Pransky, MD, M.Occ. Health, Associate Professor, University of Massachusetts Medical School

Deborah J. (DJ) Hendricks, EdD, Executive Director, Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

Moderator: Joseph Ashley, RhD, Principal, Ashley Consulting, LLC, former Assistant Commissioner, Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)



Glenn Pransky, MD, M.Occ. Health, is an associate professor in the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health at the University of Massachusetts Medical School and a visiting lecturer at the Harvard School of Public Health and the University of Massachusetts/Lowell. He is also a senior editor for the Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation and founding director of the Center for Disability Research at the Liberty Mutual Research Institute for Safety from 1999 to 2017. His research group conducted scientific investigations on disability prevention strategies, enhancing recovery in musculoskeletal disorders, work disability in older workers, and methods to achieve safe and sustained return to work. Prior to joining Liberty Mutual, Dr. Pransky directed the Occupational and Environmental Health Program at the University of Massachusetts, overseeing research activities and training in occupational health. In 1995, he was a visiting scholar at the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research in Washington, DC, focusing on health services research. Dr. Pransky has produced more than 120 peer-reviewed scientific publications and book chapters, and frequently presents at international scientific conferences. Dr. Pransky received his MD from Tufts School of Medicine and his MSc in occupational health from the Harvard School of Public Health. He is board-certified in occupational medicine and internal medicine.



Deborah J. (DJ) Hendricks, EdD is the Director of the Center for Disability Inclusion at West Virginia University. Dr. Hendricks began her work at WVU in 1979 and has worked on the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) project since its inception in 1983. She now also serves as the Executive Director for that program, which has approximately 30 employees. Over the past 5 years, she has taken on the additional role of managing the Data Security Team for JAN. JAN is a grant funded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability

Employment Policy. She has a specialty Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree in Statistics with a doctorate in Educational Psychology. In addition to her work with JAN, Dr. Hendricks loves to teach both undergraduate and graduate level courses in Statistics for the John Chambers School of Business and Economics.



Joseph Ashley, RhD, CRC as an individual who is blind, brings his personal experience with disability and expertise on program accessibility to workforce systems development. Currently he is the Owner and Principal of Ashley Consulting, LLC., recently serving as a Co-Principal Investigator on a NIDILRR funded research grant, Vocational Rehabilitation Return on Investment, through the University of Richmond. Additionally, Dr. Ashley serves as a Subject Matter Expert on two Department of Labor funded grant initiatives, RETAIN (Retaining

Employment and Talent After Injury or Illness Network) and ASPIRE (Advancing State Policy Integration for Recovery and Employment). Dr. Ashley also serves as a member of the RSA VRTAC-QM grant Advisory Group at the Interworks Institute at San Diego State University and on the Advisory Board for the RSA Innovative Fund grant The Vocational Evaluation Forensic Certificate (VEFC) program at Auburn University. He obtained his Doctor of Rehabilitation from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, and received his Master's in Rehabilitation Counseling from the University of South Carolina. Dr. Ashley has over 30 years' experience planning, directing, and managing programs for people with disabilities. He is experienced in developing and administering statewide programs that develop, promote, and provide opportunities and services for people with disabilities in program areas including vocational rehabilitation, workforce development, assistive technology, Social Security Administration/Ticket to Work, Partnership Plus, Transition to Work and Pre-ETS services. Dr. Ashley also led efforts to integrate Career Pathways System Development and cross workforce systems alignment, including conceptualizing the Career Pathways vision. He led the implementation that included both VR agencies, workforce partners, community colleges and business partners to create a service to meet business needs in high-demand occupations. Dr. Ashley has provided numerous presentations over the last 30 years on vocational rehabilitation and workforce service delivery programs, developing career pathways for individuals with disabilities, business engagement, Vocational Rehabilitation Return on Investment, and workforce program collaboration and system alignment. Dr. Ashley uses collaborative approaches to establish sustainable programs that braid and leverage resources that address identified service needs.

Role-Based Discussion Groups

Return-to-Work Coordinators (RTWCs), Nurse Navigators + TA Liaisons

Facilitator: Kirsten Firminger, PhD, State Liaison, RETAIN TA, Senior Researcher, American Institutes for Research



Kirsten Firminger, PhD is a principal researcher at the American Institutes for Research with 20 years of experience understanding patient perspectives and engagement in healthcare systems, measurement, transparency, and research. Currently, Dr. Firminger serves as a state technical assistance liaison for Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury or Illness Network (RETAIN), which provided guidance and best practices on stay-at-home/return-to-work strategies to states. In addition, she co-creates and directs work focused on shared measurement as a strategy to align systems with communities to advance equity. For the PCOR Translation Center, she leads a team of 25 staff making comparative effectiveness research results understandable for lay and technical audiences. Dr. Firminger draws on her qualitative and mixed-method training and skills to actively and equitably engage people with both lived and learned experience. She is experienced in inclusive project design, focused on collaboration, partnership, power sharing, accountability, and transformational relationships. She earned her Ph.D. in critical social psychology from the City University of New York and her B.A. in psychology and anthropology from the University of Michigan.

Providers and Healthcare partners

Facilitator: Elena Soles, PT, DPT, CAFS, Clinical Subject Matter Expert, RETAIN TA, Researcher, AIR



Elena Soles, PT, DPT is a Researcher in the Payer Innovation, Transformation and Support Health program at American Institutes for Research (AIR). She provides clinical expertise across projects at AIR relating to health policy, healthcare utilization, disability and employment services, access to health care services, and evidence-based healthcare practices. Dr. Soles supports Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury or Illness Network (RETAIN) as a subject matter expert and back-up state liaison, having worked with individuals in a clinical setting to support stay-at-home/return-to-work goals. She has a breadth of research experience focusing on provider-decision making, health disparities, healthcare services, and program evaluation. She leads stakeholder engagement efforts to inform health policy reform and lends expertise to evaluating the impact of policy on health care outcomes. She works with AIR’s multi-disciplinary clinical team to evaluate clinical practice guidelines and make recommendations for treatment coverage of high-risk conditions. Dr. Soles synthesizes current research to present on best practices in health services while integrating a biopsychosocial framework.

State Directors

Facilitators: Derek Shields, MA, PMP, President, ForwardWorks Consulting, Inc., Leslie Dawson, MA, CRC, NCC ADA Specialist, Sedgwick; Former State Administrator, Business Relations Program, Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services



Derek Shields, MA, PMP is a certified Project Management Professional and the President of ForwardWorks Consulting. With over 25 years of experience in disability inclusion and accessibility, Mr. Shields has trained hundreds of organizations and thousands of individuals on disability inclusion strategies, worked with multinational employers, global accommodations and domestic violence programs, wounded warrior transition services, vocational and rehabilitation projects for Social Security beneficiaries and veterans, mentoring communities, and other initiatives to improve inclusion for youth and adults with disabilities. Mr. Shields has developed a network of public and private sector partners, including relationships with disability inclusion policy experts, the assistive technology industry, vocational rehabilitation, mental health and workforce development systems. He has also developed partnerships with employee assistance, Tribal partners, homeless organizations, disabled veterans and veteran service organizations to help advance return to work opportunities for adults with disabilities. Mr. Shields received his Master’s in Management and Disability Services from the University of San Francisco School of Management and his BA in International Relations from Bucknell University.



Leslie Dawson, MA, CRC, NCC recently retired from 28 years of service with the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services where she served as the State Administrator of the Vocational Rehabilitation Service's Business Relations Program. While in this role, Leslie was responsible for developing and maintaining state and national business partnerships and assisting companies with their disability, equity and inclusion programs, to including consulting on the recruitment, employment, and retention of individuals with

disabilities. Leslie currently works as an ADA Specialist with Sedgwick where she assists in managing requests for reasonable accommodations, facilitates the return to work of disabled workers and coordinates leave of absence programs and accommodations. Leslie continues to provide disability and employment related trainings on topics such as Disability Etiquette and Awareness, ADA, Return to Work/Stay at Work initiatives, and ADA and Leave of Absence. Leslie has over 20 years' experience working with businesses to retain workers with injuries, illnesses and disabilities in the workplace. Leslie received her master's degree in Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling from the University of Alabama and is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor.

Evaluation Liaisons and Data Staff

Facilitator: Christina Jones, Data Architect, RETAIN, Principal Data Scientist, AIR



Christina Jones is a principal data scientist in the Technical Solutions program at American Institutes for Research (AIR). Her primary interests are in data acquisition, administrative data, and data-driven decision-making. She has managed an extensive portfolio of small- to medium-sized grants and contracts. She manages a team of data science staff and acts as lead for AIR's Data Science group where she works with the TS leadership team to strategize and implement data science recruiting, project management, professional development

and business development. She is the current project director for PatentsView and task lead for DAQAS II. Previously, she has acted as data engineer, server administrator, and data manager for UMETRICS grant projects, a big data initiative that combines administrative data collected from internal university systems, public science research grant funding data, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office patent data, and scientific publications to describe federal investments in research. She has extensive experience in designing and implementing administrative data collection processes, building data platforms for research use, and conducting quality control (QC) and QA review for data collection and management. Ms. Jones holds a master's in business administration from George Mason University.

Workforce Partners, Business Development and Community Engagement Coordinators

Facilitator: Ashley Clark-Purnell, Subject Matter Expert and State Liaison, RETAIN TA, TA Consultant, AIR



Ashley Clark-Purnell is a Technical Assistance Consultant with AIR (formerly a part of Maher & Maher). Ashley has over 6 years of professional experience in workforce and training development. Since starting with AIR, Ashley has worked on Federal and State projects focused on training and content development and providing technical assistance. Prior to joining AIR, Ashley worked for The State of California as the Disability Employment Initiative Traveling Disability Resource Coordinator, collaborating with local and regional offices on

developing and implementing state and federal grants. As a trainer, Ashley developed and presented trainings to target the needs of local and regional areas. Training topics have included Customer Service, Human Centered Design, Business Engagement, and more focused trainings on serving special populations. She also spent two years with the Sacramento Employment & Training Agency, serving as the liaison for the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI), the California Disability Employment Accelerator (DEA) grant, Social Security's Ticket to Work program, and the Strong Workforce Grant at Sacramento City College.

Ashley holds an MA in Interdisciplinary Studies with focuses on International Relations and Economics from the University of Oklahoma and a BA in Psychology and Sociology from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

Plenary Session

Communicating about RETAIN to Legislators

Speaker: Anton C. Bizzell, MD, President and CEO of The Bizzell Group, LLC

Moderator: Lisa Jacobs, Program Manager, The Bizzell Group, LLC



Dr. Anton C. Bizzell, MD, has more than 25 years of combined clinical, research, health services, policy, and management experience with private and public organizations and federal agencies within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). He also serves as a U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation board member and advises the Foundation's [Sharing Solutions Campaign](#) as a nationally recognized substance abuse and mental health expert. He has extensive experience leading and collaborating with health

professional and community organizations in the fields of primary care, mental health, and substance use disorders.

He received his B.A. in biology from the University of Virginia, his M.D. from the University of Virginia School of Medicine, and his postgraduate training in family medicine from Howard University Hospital in Washington, D.C.



Lisa N. Jacobs is a program manager with more than 25 years of experience in strategic communications, marketing, branding, and public relations. She and her teams develop award-winning communications campaigns to support public health initiatives at the state and federal levels for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), The U.S. Department of Labor, and the National Institute on Drug Abuse. A highly motivated, creative, and versatile communications professional with a diverse background in health

care, publishing, insurance, banking, real estate, and more, she combines big-picture strategy with exceptional attention to detail to help clients bring their big ideas to fruition. In her role as a program manager for Retaining Employment and Talent After Illness/Injury Network (RETAIN) for The Bizzell Group, she oversees the development, dissemination, and evaluation of communications that amplify the benefits of RETAIN to state and federal stakeholders.

Plenary Session

Exploring the Role of Behavioral Science in Outreach and Recruitment

Presenter: Todd Rogers, PhD, Professor of Public Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government; Faculty Director of the Behavioral Insights Group

Moderator: Elena Soles, PT, DPT, CAFS, Clinical Subject Matter Expert, RETAIN TA, Researcher, AIR



Todd Rogers is Professor of Public Policy at Harvard, and Chief Scientist at EveryDay Labs. He is a behavioral scientist specializes in the science of writing for busy people. Todd has co-founded two social enterprises. First, the Analyst Institute which focuses on improving voter communications. He serves on the Analyst Institute’s board. Second, EveryDay Labs which partners with school districts to reduce student absenteeism. He is Chief Scientist (unpaid), co-founder, and equity holder at Everyday Labs.

Todd is faculty director of the Harvard Behavioral Insights Group, faculty chair of the HKS executive education program Behavioral Insights and Public Policy, and director of the Student Social Support R&D Lab. He also serves as Senior Scientist at ideas42, and Academic Advisor at the Behavioural Insights Team.

Strategy Round Tables

Sustainability and Continuous Quality Improvement in Action

Facilitator: Amy Landesman, MA, President, Amy Landesman Consulting



Amy Landesman Consulting provides an array of services to community-based organizations and the public sector including program design and implementation; staff training, curriculum design and facilitation strategies; management coaching, leadership development and team building; and meeting facilitation, retreats and conferences. She has developed and led customized in-person and virtual staff trainings for clients on topics such as employer engagement, participant retention, career pathways, sector strategies, job seeker preparation, performance management, and staff supervision. Amy has facilitated convenings for multi-site and multi-provider organizations to address strategic planning, asset mapping, and focus group assessments. She has developed customized webinars and has presented at state and national conferences, as well as organization staff retreat events. She previously served as the Executive Director of Workforce Professionals Training Institute (WPTI), a non-profit training and technical assistance organization devoted to strengthening the field of workforce development. Under her leadership, WPTI tripled its training staff, created scores of training workshops, and developed customized training and consulting packages for organizations within and outside of the New York City metropolitan region. During this time, she was an Advisory Board Member for JobsFirstNYC and the NYC Labor Market Information Service.

Prior to WPTI, she was the Director of Training & Technical Assistance at NADAP. While at the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University (CASA), she developed and conducted trainings for BizLink, a national project that linked employers with social service providers, and co-produced a series of training manuals and a video for employers who have hired individuals in recovery. While working at the Postgraduate Center for Mental Health, Center for Urban Community Services and Veritas, she was the Director of several housing and employment programs for individuals with mental illness, substance abuse and homelessness.

Amy completed the Columbia University Business School Senior Leadership Program for Non-Profit Professionals. She received her Bachelor's degree in Psychology from SUNY-Albany and her Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from New York University.

Business/Employer Engagement in RETAIN

Facilitator: Joseph Quick, Senior TA Consultant, AIR; Former Manager. Talent Program and Acquisition, Michigan Economic Development Corporation and Michigan Workforce Development Agency



Joe Quick is a Senior Technical Assistance Consultant in the Workforce Program Area at American Institutes for Research (AIR). He has 14 years of experience in the public workforce and economic development systems, spanning work at the federal, state, and regional and local levels. In his role at AIR, Joe provides project direction, client management, and subject matter expertise to federal and state and regional clients through training design and delivery, technical assistance, coaching, strategic planning facilitation, and resource development to support innovation, change management, strategic planning, and continuous improvement in economic and workforce development systems. His areas of expertise include workforce development and economic development strategy, demand-driven business services and engagement; sector strategies and career pathways; training design and delivery; work-based learning and apprenticeship; talent attraction and retention; strategic planning and facilitation; interagency collaboration; economic resiliency; diversity, equity, inclusion, and access (DEIA); industry recognized credentials; skills-based hiring; CTE programming and industry alignment; and occupational licensing, among others. Joe has provided technical assistance to 40+ states. He currently serves as a TPM Academy® Faculty Member and TPM Fellow for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Talent Pipeline Management® (TPM) initiative.

Prior to AIR's acquisition of Maher & Maher, in 2020, Joe was a Senior Consultant with Maher since 2019. Before joining Maher full-time, Joe was an independent consultant and owner of J. Quick Consulting, LLC. Previous to consulting work, he served in increasingly senior positions at the Michigan Works! Association, Michigan Talent Investment Agency, and Michigan Economic Development Corporation. These roles included significant staff, program, and project management, including design and launch of Michigan's Pure Michigan Talent Connect job board and labor exchange website and launch and direction of multiple talent attraction, acquisition, and retention programs and services. He also led marketing and outreach efforts to align talent efforts with the Pure Michigan campaign, tracked talent metrics and intelligence efforts, launched one of the country's first government sponsored virtual career fair programs, led large-scale national recruitment events, and negotiated millions of dollars in business growth and retention incentives during the Great Recession. Joe has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Anthropology from Michigan State University and works remotely from Dallas, Texas.

Shifting Focus from Pain to Function

Facilitator: Maja Jurisic, MD, CPE, Vice President and National Medical Director at Concentra Medical Center



Maja Jurisic, MD, CPE, has been a practicing physician for 42 years. She earned her Doctor of Medicine at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, completed an emergency medicine residency at Wright State University, and later pursued occupational medicine training at the Medical College of Wisconsin. She became Board Certified in both Emergency Medicine and Occupational Medicine.

She believes that people find significant meaning in their lives through their work and for the past 31 years has focused her occupational medicine practice on helping patients smoothly renormalize their lives after the disruption of a work-related injury. As the workers' compensation arena has many stakeholders, Dr. Jurisic has been active in bringing together employers, payers and clinicians in her state (Wisconsin) to become better partners in helping patients navigate the process of return-to-work.

Dr. Jurisic was the first author of American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM) Position Statement. The Personal Physician's Role in Helping Patients With Medical Conditions Stay at Work or Return to Work and is also the author of numerous guidance documents and learning modules for her thousand plus work colleagues on topics that are particular and peculiar to their practice (e.g., avoiding medically unnecessary disability, writing appropriate work restrictions, etc.).

Dr. Jurisic's passion for the past 15 years has been using what we are learning from the neurosciences about pain to figure out a better way forward when taking care of patients who do not improve as anticipated. She persuaded her employer to move away from the visual analog pain scale after the initial injury visit, as it takes a complex experience that has emotional, spiritual, genetic, epigenetic, evolutionary and psychological dimensions and reduces it to a single number on a ten-point scale. By conflating nociception, pain and suffering, that reductionist approach is not useful to understanding patients in the context of their environment. Instead, she has been teaching clinicians to embrace a holistic approach to guide patients at risk for delayed recovery to a good outcome.

DEIA Strategies in Action in RETAIN

Facilitator: **Trenita Childers, PhD, Senior Researcher, American Institute for Research**



Trenita Childers is a senior researcher at the American Institutes for Research. Dr. Childers has extensive experience in research on social determinants of health and health equity in both U.S. and international settings. Currently, her work focuses on capacity building to support collaborative partnerships, improving outcomes for historically marginalized populations, and making research results understandable to broad audiences. Dr. Childers serves as co-project director for the Health Equity for Afghan Refugees (HEAR) project

where she leads project work in collaboration with two community-based organizations. In her book, *In Someone Else's County: Anti-Haitian Racism and Citizenship in the Dominican Republic*, Dr. Childers uses ethnography to connect race, labor, and immigration. Previously, Dr. Childers was a Peace Corps volunteer in the Dominican Republic.

She holds a Ph.D. from the Department of Sociology at Duke University and a B.A. in Sociology from Davidson College.

Using Data for Continuous Quality Improvement

Facilitator: **Christina Jones, Data Architect, RETAIN, Principal Data Scientist, AIR**

Partnering with State and Local Government to Promote RETAIN

Facilitators: Katia Albanese, Project Director, State Exchange on Employment & Disability (SEED), Concepts, Inc.

Caitlin Hochul, MBA, Project Manager, State Exchange on Employment & Disability Mental Health Initiative, Concepts, Inc.

Michael Reardon, JD, MPP, Supervisory Policy Advisor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), US Department of Labor (DOL)



Katia Albanese is a communications and government affairs professional with 20 years of experience conceptualizing and implementing public education and awareness campaigns with a niche focus in the disability policy arena. She boasts extensive expertise in project management and strategic communications and is uniquely skilled at forging effective public/private partnerships to leverage resources and amplify messages around key inclusive employment policy issues at the federal, state and local levels, including career

readiness, return-to-work/stay-at-work strategies, accessible and emerging technologies, transportation, federal and state employment, entrepreneurship, procurement and veterans' affairs. Katia has been working with the U.S. Department of Labor in support of workforce development initiatives since 2002. She currently leads the Concepts team in support of several efforts, including the State Exchange on Employment & Disability (SEED), which is directed out of the Office of Disability Employment Policy. Her responsibilities include developing, overseeing and expanding the initiative; multi-faceted project implementation; and intricate collaboration among diverse organizations, subject matter experts, policymakers and key stakeholders.

Katia has received several awards for her services in support of federal initiatives, including the Secretary of Labor's prestigious Award of Excellence, and is a member of the National Association of Government Communicators.

Katia graduated from the American University in Washington, DC with a Bachelor of Science in business administration with a concentration in finance.



Caitlin Hochul, MBA serves as the director of communications and policy at Concepts Communications and is responsible for supporting national, state and local outreach campaigns and implementing public engagement strategies. Caitlin provides strategic management, communications and policy expertise on a number of contracts sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (DOL/ODEP), including ePolicyWorks and the State Exchange on Employment & Disability (SEED).

Additionally, Caitlin leads the recently-launched SEED Mental Health Initiative, a federal-state-local collaboration that aims to support state and local policymakers and other stakeholders as they respond to their communities’ mental health needs during and following the pandemic.

Caitlin received a master of business administration from the University of Maryland and graduated with a bachelor of arts in international affairs from the University of Mary Washington.



Michael Reardon, JD, MPP, is a Supervisory Policy Advisor for the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) at the U.S. Department of Labor. He directs ODEP’s Employment Supports Policy Team, which addresses a wide range of issues affecting the employment of people with disabilities, including transportation, housing, accessible technology, personal assistance and health care. He previously served as the Disability Program Manager for the Department of Transportation’s Office of Civil Rights and as a Policy Advisor for the

Presidential Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities. He came to Washington, D.C. from Columbus, OH where he was Director of the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Alliance, a state-level advocacy organization for people with disabilities.

He has a Masters in Public Policy from Ohio State University where he also attended law school.

Plenary Session

Update on Evaluation Findings by Mathematica

Facilitator: Yonatan Ben-Shalom, PhD, RETAIN Evaluation Lead, Principal Researcher, Mathematica



Yonatan Ben-Shalom, Ph.D., a Principal Researcher at Mathematica's Center for Studying Disability Policy, specializes in policies and programs related to the employment and income of people with disabilities, particularly those who acquire disability in adulthood such as workers and veterans. Since joining Mathematica in 2009, Ben-Shalom has worked on a range of projects in disability, labor, and health. Currently, he leads evaluation technical assistance for the Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network (RETAIN), a demonstration that tests promising early interventions for improving the labor force participation and retention of people who recently sustained injuries and disabilities. From 2013 to 2016, he directed the U.S. Department of Labor's Stay-at-Work/Return-to-Work Policy Collaborative, which was instrumental in the development of RETAIN. Ben-Shalom has also served as principal investigator for numerous studies funded under the Social Security Administration's Disability Research Consortium and the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research's Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers. Ben-Shalom, a member of the National Academy of Social Insurance (NASI), has published widely in journals such as *Demography*, *Health Affairs*, *Health Services Research*, and the *Social Security Bulletin* and coedited special journal volumes for the *Journal of Disability Policy Studies* and the *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*. He has also written commissioned book chapters in *The Oxford Handbook of the Economics of Poverty*, *SSDI Solutions: Ideas to Strengthen the Social Security Disability Insurance Program*, and *Investing in America's Workforce: Improving Outcomes for Workers and Employers*.

State Peer-to-Peer Exchange

Facilitators: Kirsten Firminger, PhD, State Liaison, RETAIN TA, Principal Researcher, American Institutes for Research

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Wehmah Jones, PhD is a principal researcher at the American Institutes for Research (AIR) with more than 18 years of experience designing, implementing, and managing research projects that focus on improving the developmental, educational, and health outcomes of youth and adult populations. Dr. Jones has methodological expertise in program evaluation, qualitative and mixed-methods research design, and implementation science. Her research and evaluation interests include mental health, youth development, school

improvement, and educational and health equity. Dr. Jones also provides tailored and universal technical assistance (TA), facilitation and resource development to various education- and health-related capacity building projects. This includes her role as a state liaison and technical assistance provider for the Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury or Illness Network (RETAIN) project, a U.S. Department of Labor-led demonstration project designed to increase employment retention and reduce long-term absences of individuals who acquire or are at risk of developing disabilities that inhibit their ability to work. Her additional TA expertise focuses on building district and school capacity to support students' social and emotional development, improve conditions for teaching and learning, and foster equitable learning environments. She also co-leads cultural and linguistic competence capacity building at AIR and engages in comprehensive action planning, resource development, and organization-wide training to support the integration of cultural and linguistic competence into all policies, practices, and projects.

Dr. Jones has a Ph.D. and a master's degree in Counseling Psychology from Virginia Commonwealth University.