

Western MA Policy Forum: Speaker Bios & Photos

D.A. Anthony D. Gulluni



District Attorney Anthony D. Gulluni was sworn into office as Hampden District Attorney in January 2015. He is a life-long Springfield resident who attended local schools, including Western New England University, from which he earned a bachelor's degree in 2003 and juris doctorate in 2007. He has promoted his vision of safer communities by innovative and significant investment in community building and outreach, crime prevention and education, and by focusing efforts on the smart prosecution of violent offenders. The Hampden District Attorney's Office has engaged with many community-based organizations, including Roca, the Healing Racism Institute of Pioneer Valley, and the YWCA to broaden its reach and provide equitable services to all communities in need. His office has also initiated many of its own programs to engage youth, prevent crime, help people overcome addiction, and promote social and racial equity in criminal justice.

Sheriff Cocchi



Sheriff Nicholas Cocchi is a highly decorated corrections professional whose skills, competence and thorough understanding of the corrections processes and duties of Sheriff of Hampden County exceeds the high benchmarks necessary to keep our community safe and return offenders to our streets as productive and contributing members of our society. Sheriff Cocchi rose through the ranks in the sheriff's department, ultimately ascending to assistant superintendent before being elected as the 16th sheriff of Hampden County. Sheriff Cocchi is committed to the study, research and review of the best practices in corrections and rehabilitation. He vows to never forget that simple acts of human kindness and compassion for our fellow man.

Senator John Velis



Senator John C. Velis was first elected to the Massachusetts State Senate in a special election in May of 2020 to represent the 2nd Hampden and Hampshire district. Prior to his time in the Senate, John had served as the Representative for the 4th Hampden district in the Massachusetts House of Representatives since 2014. As a United States Armed Services Veteran, he certainly has the criteria to be Chairperson of Joint Committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs. He also services the community and state well as Vice Chair of the Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities Vice Chair, and Vice Chair of the Joint Committee on Mental Health, Substance Use and Recovery. He cares about addiction prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery.

Representative Lindsay Sabadosa



Lindsay Sabadosa has been the State Representative for the 1st Hampshire District since 2018. She is passionate about equity, health care as a right, affordable housing, reproductive justice, and criminal justice reform. She believes substance misuse is a public health issue that requires a community-based public health response.

Helen R. Caulton-Harris



Helen Caulton-Harris is the Commissioner of the Division of Health and Human Services for the City of Springfield and the first Black woman to hold the title of Commissioner of the Division of Health and Human Services. In that capacity she is, in part, responsible for the direct supervision of the Springfield Department of Health and Human Services and Health Services for the Homeless, a 330 Federally Funded Health Center. She has played a prominent role in developing policy for the health and human services needs of underserved populations on the local and national level

Ashley Jediny



Ashley Jediny is the Program Coordinator for the Rapid Response and Connection Team at the Hampden County Sheriff's Department. Ashley coordinates the Hampden County Addiction Taskforce (HCAT). Ashley has been with the department since July 2021. Ashley earned her master's degree in Social Work from Springfield College and has experience working in the public schools, court system, and mental health field.

Della Blake



Serves as the Black Addiction Counselor Education program (BACE) chairperson and is the founder for the Black Behavioral Health Network (BBHN). Also serves as a MOAR Board Member.

Dallas Clark



Dallas Clark is a graduate of the Phoenix House who has a transformed life in recovery. Dallas L. Clark is the Western Mass Outreach Coordinator for The MassSubstance Use Helpline at Health Resources in Action and he is a recovery coach!

Shalonda Mabry



A native of Springfield MA, Shalonda Nicholson-Mabry is the FIRST Steps Together Coordinator at Square One, where she oversees home-based family support to individuals who are parenting while in recovery. The peer recovery programs which supports parents and helps them create stable, nurturing environments for their children while in recovery. The mission of her department is to break cycles of domestic violence, opioid addiction and promote nurturing and attachment, practice effective parenting skills, and ensure parents have a solid understanding of healthy child development. Shalonda is inspired by her two children along with her mother who is deceased to her addiction.

Garry Porter



Garry A. Porter is an experienced Mental Health Practitioner, founding member, and partner of The African Diaspora Mental Health Association. With more than 30 years working in the public sector for Hampden County Sheriff's Department; Department of Children and Families (DCF), Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), Behavioral Health Network (BHN), Center for Human Development (CHD) and the Massachusetts Trial Court as a Probation Officer, Garry has amassed an Afrikan/Afrocentric knowledge base, and is considered an expert in Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome. Garry believes in and embraces the principals of Pan Africanism.

During his career, Garry has embraced the difficult task of engaging his employers, coworkers and others in understanding Racism, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Implicit and Explicit Bias, Racial and Ethnic Disparities, and led the charge in undoing racism. Garry has oftentimes put his career in jeopardy and not shied away, while the charge against police brutality. Garry is the recipient of a bachelor's degree in computing from London South Bank University, a master's degree in social work from Springfield College, and several Post Masters certificates.

Peter Babineau



Peter Babineau is the Senior Regional Manager for Learn to Cope in Western Massachusetts. He is a person in long term recovery and the dad of a young man affected by substance use in his life. Peter's experience includes work as a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Addiction Counselor, Substance Use Educator, and curriculum supervisor. Peter considers himself a Harm Reduction advocate and activist as well as an ally to people who use drugs, those in recovery, and those of us that love them. He is responsible for adding two new groups which include Still Learning and Still Coping and LTC en Español.

Kathi Cotugno



Kathi Cotugno is the DART (Drug Addiction and Recovery Team) Coordinator under Hampshire HOPE. She helps facilitate this police officer training process on drug use and addiction with assistance on their post overdose outreach calls. Kathi knows too well about the pain of losing a loved one to an overdose. Her experience and knowledge of how to assist is a plus to her team and the community.

Pedro Alvarez



Pedro Alvarez, Tapestry's Assistant Director to Urban Health, educates individuals using drugs with overdose prevention and safer decision-making skills. The training consists of how to use naloxone, harm reduction practices, screening and counseling for HIV and STDs. A lot of outreach is done when Tapestry goes out to homeless encampments. He is an example of how Tapestry builds trusting relationships with people to use helpful resources.

Daniella Grimaldi



Daniella Grimaldi is the Program Manager of Goodwin House, a co-occurring young men's (13 to 17) residential service. It serves young men in the grips of substance use and mental health challenges. She is a teacher by profession, accustomed to the struggles for all ages. She is very proud to help young males in a structured environment which is enhanced by mental health and educational support.

Julie Gagne



Julie Gagne is a vivacious women in recovery, who has grown from the desperation of living with addiction. She currently is the Valor Peer Recovery Support Center Director, where she mentors many in recovery. Located in Springfield, Valor Peer Recovery Support Center, a Gandara Center program, is a safe place where people from different backgrounds, life experiences and gender identities come together. Volunteers and staff work to build a judgement-free community that is peer-driven, recovery-centered and embraces all pathways of recovery.

Debra Flynn-Gonzalez



Debra Flynn-Gonzalez began her career in social work as a mental health clinician performing outreach work in Holyoke 24 years ago before her personal background in recovery led her to work with the recovery community. She launched the first peer recovery program for pregnant and parenting women in Holyoke and led the program for eight years. She has been the Program Director at Hope for Holyoke, a peer recovery support center under Gandara Center, for 7 years. Here she is with former Representative Aaron Vega, when she received the Massachusetts Unsung Heroine Award.

Gary Pratt



Gary Pratt is Director of Rural Recovery and founder of Smash the Stigma 413, and South County Recovery Center (SCRC), for which he is also the Director. The SCRC will bring in a fulltime recovery coaches. The purpose of the center's staff is to accompany folks on their road to recovery, help them understand what it takes and how to do it, and how to connect with resources, such as rehab centers, counseling or support groups.

Kirsten Doherty



Kirsten Doherty came to MOAR with strong facilitation, fundraising, writing, and research skills. She turned those skills in her role of SOAR- Speaking Out for Addiction Recovery Coordinator – building an active connection with recovery community support centers across the state. To top that, she is coordinating a SAMHSA grant, titled The PAREnt Project. The Project supports low-income families in early recovery who, because of their addiction, have mandated child welfare and/or justice engagement. It will prioritize underserved and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color families). The goal is to build the parents recovery skills with peer recovery coaching while learning to navigate the system.

Kevin McCarthy



Kevin McCarthy is a person in long term recovery who, after 20 years in Sales Management and training, found his passion as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and recovery advocate. He specializes in the treatment of clients with co-occurring disorders, focusing their challenges with housing and the stigma of being in recovery. As the MOAR board President, he uses his expertise to facilitate systemic change in recovery treatment, through legislation change,

Trevor Dayton



As the Outreach Coordinator for the Northampton Recovery center, I am daily reminded of the strength and resiliency of people seeking recovery. Substance Use Disorder affects far too many people, people who deserve the dignity of an understanding, non-judgmental environment that supports people at all stages of their recovery. At the Northampton Recovery Center, we strive to provide just that type of place, a place you don't just come to, but a place you belong. We are proud of the work Trevor does for MOAR>