



Born to Thrive

Maternal and Infant Survival and Equity Summit
SOUTHEASTERN PA

September 19 | Subaru Park

Welcome

I am delighted to welcome you to the 2025 Born to Thrive: Southeastern PA Maternal and Infant Survival & Equity Summit.



For more than 85 years, Nemours Children's Health has dedicated itself to advancing the well-being of children and families. Our founder, Alfred I. duPont, believed that "it is the duty of everyone in the world to do what is within his power to alleviate human suffering."

Today, this philosophy continues to guide our mission as one of the nation's largest integrated pediatric health systems.

Our vision extends beyond providing world-class healthcare; we strive to create an environment where every child can achieve the highest level of health and well-being. Achieving that vision requires more than medicine—it demands a comprehensive, collaborative effort. That's why we are also committed to addressing the social, economic, and demographic factors that influence health outcomes.

The theme for this summit, "Well Beyond Medicine," reflects this holistic approach. Investing in child health offers the greatest opportunity for transforming the well-being of future generations. Healthy habits established during childhood yield enduring benefits, ensuring that healthy children mature into healthy adults.

On behalf of our nearly 10,000 Nemours Associates, and the one million children living in Southeastern PA, I invite you to support our ambitious vision to shift from improving the health of one child at a time to enhancing health one generation at a time.

Thank you for joining us.

Laura Kowal

Interim President, Delaware Valley
Executive Vice President & General Counsel
Nemours Children's Health

About PA Black Maternal Health Caucus

The PA Black Maternal Health Caucus was formed in 2023 with state Reps. Morgan Cephas, D-Philadelphia, Gina H. Curry, D-Delaware, and La'Tasha D. Mayes, D-Allegheny serving as co-chairs.

Building on the momentum of legislative victories and the increasing need for attention to maternal mortality and morbidity issues, particularly amongst Black families, the caucus intends to boldly address the disturbing trends of Black maternal mortality and morbidity in our Commonwealth through strategic, intersectional legislation and policy; create a collaborative, representative and action-oriented legislative and policy space for Pennsylvania legislators, advocates and stakeholders; introduce, advance and pass the Pennsylvania MOMNIBUS — a legislative package making critical investments and policy changes to improve maternal health outcomes in Pennsylvania.



About Nemours Children's Health

Nemours Children's Health is one of the nation's largest multistate pediatric health systems, which includes two free-standing children's hospitals and a network of more than 70 primary and specialty care practices, including 15 Pennsylvania primary and specialty care locations. Nemours Children's seeks to transform the health of mothers and children by adopting a holistic health model that utilizes innovative, safe, and high-quality care, while also caring for the health of the whole child beyond medicine.

Nemours Children's also powers the world's most-visited website for information on the health of children and teens, [KidsHealth.org](https://www.kidshealth.org).

Agenda

8:30 a.m. // Registration/Breakfast

9 a.m. // Welcome Remarks

- **Laura Kowal, MPT, JD**, Interim President, Delaware Valley and Executive Vice President, General Counsel, Nemours Children's Health
- **Jordan Harris**, Majority Appropriations Committee Chair
- **Joanna McClinton**, Speaker of the House, Pennsylvania House of Representatives

9:30 a.m. // Listening Session

The Listening Session will offer an opportunity for cabinet members to share their insights and experiences about the growing maternal and infant health crisis in Pennsylvania. Share your own perspectives about the conditions and systemic barriers that are denying moms and children the right to live full, healthy lives.

Moderator: Laura Kowal, MPT, JD, Interim President, Delaware Valley and Executive Vice President, General Counsel, Nemours Children's Health

- **Valerie A. Arkoosh, MD, MPH**, Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Human Services
- **Debra L. Bogen, MD, FAAP, FABM**, Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Health
- **Latika Davis-Jones, Ph.D., MPH, MSW**, Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs
- **Michael Humphreys**, Commissioner, Pennsylvania Insurance Department

10:45 a.m. // Panel Discussion: Well Beyond Medicine

About 80% of what affects a child's health takes place in their home, school and community, outside hospital and medical settings.

Therefore, to effectively address healthcare, we must also focus on the root causes of poor health and health disparities. This panel discussion will examine the social, economic, and health care barriers impacting families and focus on the need to address the social, economic, behavioral, and environmental factors that affect children and families every day to go Well Beyond Medicine.

Moderator: Kara Odom Walker, MD, MPH, MSHS, Executive Vice President and Chief Population Health Officer, Nemours Children's Health

- **Meg Frizzola, DO, FAAP**, Senior Vice President, Chief Medical Officer, Nemours Children's Health, Delaware Valley
- **Katherine Deans, MD, MHS**, Surgeon-in-Chief, Nemours Children's Health
- **Tim McDermott**, President, Philadelphia Union
- **Inella Ray, MEd**, Director, Parent Advocacy & Engagement, Children First

11:30 a.m. Break

Noon // Breakout Sessions

Improving Maternal and Birth Outcomes: A Pathway to Improvement

Improving maternal and birth outcomes requires a multifaceted approach, including increasing access to quality care, addressing social drivers of health, and strengthening health care systems. Providing individualized care in a supportive setting is important for managing the health of both mothers and fetuses, particularly during high-risk pregnancies. This session will examine how structural and systemic factors affect maternity care experiences and outcomes. The discussion will consider models for perinatal care that include integrated support, smoother transitions between health and social services, and increased community awareness.

Location: Primepoint Club Main Room

Moderator: Senator Maria Collett, Senate Minority Caucus Chair and Chair of the Senate Aging and Youth Committee

- **Katherine Deans, MD, MHS**, Surgeon-in-Chief, Nemours Children's Health

- **Eric P. Bergh, MD**, Maternal-Fetal Medicine Specialist, Nemours Children's Health
- **Ashley Elizabeth Wilkerson, MD, FACOG**, Attending Physician, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Advanced Delivery Program, Nemours Children's Health
- **Joanne D. Craig, MS**, Chief Impact Officer, Foundation for Delaware County

Leveraging Data and Evaluation to Close Health Equity Gaps

Maternal health outcomes are shaped by a range of factors beyond clinical care, including social and nonmedical influences that significantly impact pregnancy and postpartum experiences. Employing a data-driven approach to equity allows health systems to leverage advanced predictive tools for equity-focused initiatives, resulting in substantial and measurable improvements informed by objective data. This session will analyze key social drivers central to maternal well-being, with particular attention to optimizing maternal and child health, strengthening family support, and improving both quality and accessibility of prenatal and postpartum care. Participants will be encouraged to adopt equity-driven strategies that prioritize a comprehensive vision and accountability in advancing maternal and child health.

Location: Primepoint Club Board Room

Moderator: Representative Tim Briggs, Chairman, House Judiciary Committee

- **Rachel Thornton, MD, PhD, FAAP**, Vice President, Chief Opportunities and Outcomes Officer, Nemours Children's Health
- **Sudha Raman, MD, MBA, MS, HQS, FAAP**, Medical Director, Nemours Specialty Care Network
- **Melissa Patti, MSW LCSW**, Director, Maternal and Infant Health Initiatives, March of Dimes
- **Aasta Metta, MD, MPP**, Director, Division of Reproductive, Adolescent, and Child Health (ReACH), Philadelphia Department of Public Health

Surveillance for Sickle Cell Disease

Surveillance for Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) in children is crucial for early diagnosis, improved health outcomes, and effective resource allocation. This data is also crucial to understanding the prevalence, geographic distribution, and health care utilization patterns of individuals with SCD, informing public health interventions and research efforts.

Location: Primepoint Legends Lounge

Moderator: Representative Greg Scott, Secretary of the House Insurance Committee

- **David Brousseau, MD, MS**, Pediatrician-in-Chief and Chair, Pediatrics, Nemours Children's Health
- **Stephanie Howe Guarino, MD MSHP, FAAP, FACP**, Medical Director, Sickle Cell and Transformative Therapies, Nemours Children's Health
- **Sophie Lanzkron, MD, MHS**, Director, Division of Hematology, Cardeza Foundation for Hematologic Research, Thomas Jefferson University

1 p.m. // Lunch and Learn: Food Is Medicine

Research shows that Food is Medicine. Food can help prevent, manage, and treat diseases; lower health care costs, and improve health outcomes. Poor nutrition leads to chronic illnesses such as diabetes, obesity, and heart disease, among others. Children are impacted the most by food insecurity, affecting their academic performance and future opportunities. Hungry children struggle to focus, learn, and grow into thriving adults. This panel will discuss the connection between access to healthy food and the social drivers of health, ways we can reduce the prevalence of chronic disease, and issue a call to action to end hunger in Pennsylvania.

Moderator: Representative Gina Curry, Co-Chair of the Pennsylvania Black Maternal Health Caucus

- **Kara Odom Walker, MD, MPH, MSHS**, Executive Vice President and Chief Population Health Officer, Nemours Children's Health
- **Thao-Ly Phan-Vo, MD**, Medical Director, Healthy Weight and Wellness Clinic, Nemours Children's Health
- **Loree D. Jones-Brown**, Chief Executive Officer, Philabundance

- **Caryn Long Earl**, Director, Bureau of Food Assistance, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture

2:15 p.m. // Breakout Sessions

Caring for Mom: Postpartum Supports

During the initial weeks and months following childbirth, parents experience considerable physical, emotional, and lifestyle transitions. This session seeks to provide insight into strategies and technologies intended to improve the postpartum experience and promote well-being after birth. The discussion will examine collaborative efforts among doulas, health care practitioners, lactation consultants, and health programs, emphasizing effective approaches to integrating support within established care frameworks, reducing obstacles to access, and implementing a coordinated, multidisciplinary model for assisting mothers and families.

Location: Primepoint Legends Lounge

Moderator: State Representative Liz Hanbidge, Vice-Chair of the House Children & Youth Committee

- **Ashley Elizabeth Wilkerson, MD, FACOG**, Attending Physician, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Advanced Delivery Program, Nemours Children's Health
- **Kristen Littleton, IBCLC**, Lactation Consultant Supervisor, Nemours Children's Health
- **La Toya R. Martin, BD, CBE, DFB, CPST**, Doula, Voices Within U, LLC
- **Theresa Pettaway, PCD DONA**, Executive Director, Pettaway Pursuit Foundation

The Transformative Effect of AI and Technology

Health care and technology increasingly intersect. Technological developments are changing health care by impacting patient outcomes, efficiency, and access to care. Robotic surgery provides greater precision, dexterity, and control for complex procedures, which can result in smaller incisions, reduced blood loss, and shorter recovery times. As technology continues to evolve, the medical field is poised for even more significant breakthroughs in the future. This session

will examine how technology contributes to developments in medicine, health care, and consumer wellness.

Location: Primepoint Club Main Room

Moderator: State Representative Danilo Burgos, Chairman, House Consumer Protection, Technology and Utilities Committee

- **Alfred Atanda Jr., MD**, Chief, Center for Sports Medicine, Department of Orthopedic Surgery, Nemours Children's Health
- **Aaron Eckhauser, MD**, Chair, Cardiac Services, Nemours Children's Health, Delaware Valley
- **Christine Perez, PhD, RN**, Maternal Health Clinical Lead, Philips
- **Kimberly Seals Allers**, Creator, Irth App

Partnering for Impact: Sharing Knowledge, Creating Health

Building healthier generations requires close collaboration among health care providers and community groups. Panelists will present strategies for better communication, care continuity, and patient transitions, sharing insights from efforts to foster shared responsibility for maternal and child health. The discussion aims to identify challenges and explore practical solutions.

Location: Primepoint Club Board Room

Moderator: Representative Dan Williams, Chairman, House Human Services Committee

- **Yvette Santiago, MS**, Director, Community Engagement, Nemours Children's Health
- **Fran Held**, Founder and Executive Director, Mitzvah Circle
- **June Messam, MD**, Co-Founder and President, Every Child Counts, Inc.
- **Tracy Tucker**, President, Rho Chi Community UPLIFT, Inc. and Stork's Nest Coordinator, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., Rho Chi Zeta Chapter
- **Jacqueline Jenkins, MSN, RN, CNOR**, Director, Perioperative Services & SPD, Nemours Children's Health
- **Shanique Kilgallon, MD, FAAP**, Pediatric Anesthesiologist, Nemours Children's Health

3:15 p.m. // Panel Discussion: Leveraging Public Policy to Promote Maternal and Child Health

Alongside high-quality medical care, it's essential to establish an ecosystem that fosters the health of our children. Achieving these objectives requires collaboration between the health care sector, community stakeholders, and government partners. Building on the themes of the summit, this panel discussion will explore strategies for advancing health equity and ensuring that all families have access to the care and outcomes they rightfully deserve.

Moderator: Meghan Walls, PsyD, Associate Vice President of External Affairs for Delaware Valley, Nemours Children's Health

- **Lieutenant Governor Kyle Evans Gay**, State of Delaware
- **Kara Odom Walker, MD, MPH, MSHS**, Executive Vice President and Chief Population Health Officer, Nemours Children's Health
- **Representative Mike Schlossberg**, Majority Whip, Pennsylvania House of Representatives
- **Representative Morgan Cephas**, Chair, House Government Oversight Committee and Co-Chair, Pennsylvania Black Maternal Health Caucus
- **David Saunders**, Director, Office of Health Equity, Pennsylvania Department of Health
- **Sarah Lawver**, Senior Director, State Advocacy
The Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania

4 p.m. // Closing Remarks

The current structure of the nation's health care system does not consistently meet the needs of all individuals. It is essential we advocate comprehensive health reforms, promote awareness of the challenges confronting families, and advance policies designed to deliver meaningful, long-term benefits for future generations.

- **Representative Gina Curry**, Co-Chair, Pennsylvania Black Maternal Health Caucus





Presented by:



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