

Community Collaborative Council Leadership

Mission

Unite healthcare professionals and volunteers to bridge medical system gaps by reducing healthcare disparities, strengthening the social fabric of support and empowering residents to lead healthier lives.

Community Collaborative councils



Domestic and Sexual Abuse Council



Elder Council



Heart Health and Wellness Council



Maternity Services Council



Palliative Care Council



Substance Use Services Council



Workforce Development Council



Youth Mental Health Council



Council objectives

- Ambassadorship and advocacy
- Community education and outreach
- Philanthropy
- Programmatic effort

Council leadership

- Hospital champion(s)
- Community chair(s)



Domestic and Sexual Abuse Council leaders

Rehana Rahman Kiani, Hospital champion

Rehana Rahman Kiani, MSW, LICSW is the domestic violence/sexual assault program manager at Mass General Brigham at Newton-Wellesley Hospital. Rehana is a bilingual, bicultural, trauma-informed mental health provider with clinical, consultative and program development experience in health care and public health settings. She currently co-chairs the Conference of Boston Teaching Hospitals (COBTH) Domestic Violence Council. Rehana coauthored an article on intimate partner violence and the COVID-19 pandemic. She is a certified rape crisis counselor, certified domestic violence counselor and has completed trainings in Intimate Partner Abuse Education Programs (IPAEP). Rehana is passionate about social justice, racial equity and closing the gap to access to mental health and health care.

Gladys Ortiz, Community co-chair

Gladys Ortiz has been an advocate for survivors of trauma throughout her professional life and currently serves as the state program manager in the Office for Refugees and Immigrants, and in April 2023 was appointed to the Governor's Advisory Council on Latino Empowerment. Originally from Colombia, Gladys worked as a domestic violence advocate for three decades before joining the Healey administration. Gladys developed specialized services and programs for immigrant survivors and supervised dozens of trained court advocate volunteers. She has facilitated support groups, legal training sessions, and educational events, offered testimony on Beacon Hill and in DC, and is a consummate community organizer. She lives in Newton. Gladys has two daughters who are also incredible advocates.

Laura Van Zandt, Community co-chair

Laura recently stepped away as executive director of REACH Beyond Domestic Violence, Inc. after 20 years with the organization. While at REACH, Laura wrote and spoke widely on domestic violence and healthy relationship promotion, engaging business, faith, and school audiences. Currently, Laura serves as the treasurer for World of Wellesley, a community-based organization that prioritizes educational programming in anti-racism, diversity, equity, and belonging. She has been a board member of the Waltham Rotary Club for ten years. Laura graduated from Cornell University with a BA in government and has an MBA from the Carroll School of Management at Boston College. She lives in Wellesley with her husband and has two children in college and a dog named Griswold.





Elder Council leaders

Jennie Wright, RN, Hospital champion

Jennie Wright BA, RN, CCM director of population health and continuum, Newton-Wellesley Physician Hospital Organization. A graduate of the Newton-Wellesley Hospital School of Nursing, Jennie's goal is to create a seamless support network for all patients, but especially our elders, as they transition across different healthcare settings. In 2012, she initiated ICMP, a complex care management program available to high-risk patients in primary care practices. She obtained the first Mass General Brigham population grant for serious illness conversation training, designed to guide patients in considering what matters most as they grapple with illness, now required for all medical specialists and primary care providers. Jennie also launched a care continuum approach across Newton-Wellesley linking inpatient with transitions and complex care management. She is a firm believer in right care, right place, and right time.

Debbi Cutler, LICSW, Community chair

Debbi Cutler, LICSW is the director of health and aging programs at 2Life Communities. She has more than 30 years of professional experience providing social work services, oversight, and supervision to clinicians working with older adults, as well as experience in program development and management in affordable, supportive senior housing. Prior to 2Life Communities, Debbi worked as a social work manager at Brigham and Women's Hospital and as the director of behavioral health at Hearth, Inc., an organization whose mission is to end elder homelessness. Debbi received her master's degree in social work from Boston University. She is a lifelong resident of Newton.





Heart Health and Wellness Council leaders

George Philippides, MD, Hospital co-champion

Dr. George Philippides received his undergraduate degree from Yale University. He then attended Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York where he graduated with Honors in clinical cardiology research. Dr. Philippides completed his internal medicine residency training at Boston City Hospital and completed his cardiology fellowship at Boston University. He became a staff cardiologist at Boston Medical Center in 1994.

Dr. Philippides was also the vice chair for clinical affairs and chief quality officer for the Boston Medical Center cardiovascular section. From 1997 to 2008, Dr. Philippides served as the director of the Boston Medical Center Coronary Care Unit. He has been a volunteer for the American Heart Association and has served as president of the AHA Founders Board. In July 2014 Dr. Philippides moved to Newton-Wellesley Hospital where he is now the chief of the division of cardiology and director of the Elfers Cardiovascular Center.

Daniel Destin, Hospital co-champion

Daniel is the manager of the Newton-Wellesley Hospital Shipley Fitness Center. He is also the fitness coach for the Elfers Cardiovascular Center. Since starting his career in 2004 at Newton-Wellesley hospital he has developed wellness programs for both employees and patients. Daniel has a degree in exercise physiology from the University of Massachusetts Boston and is a certified fitness trainer and credentialed Exercise is Medicine fitness professional for the American College of Sports Medicine. Daniel is a resident of the city of Waltham and is a member of the advisory board for the Waltham YMCA.

Beth Keane, Community chair

Beth is a nutritional therapy practitioner, outdoor enthusiast, and Reiki master. Her avid interest in health and wellness fuels much of her volunteer work, including the Cooking Matters project to end childhood hunger, the Reiki program at Brigham and Women's Hospital, and the Cardiovascular Health Council at Newton-Wellesley Hospital. Beth has BAs in Economics and French from Mount Holyoke College and a pre-motherhood career in software consulting which continues to serve her well in volunteer roles within her community's civic and educational organizations. Beth and her husband Brian live in Weston and have three grown children.





Maternity Services Council leaders

Lisa Dunn-Albanese, MD, Hospital champion

Dr. Dunn-Albanese received her Bachelor of Science in Engineering and worked at Delco Products Division of General Motors before starting medical school. She graduated from the Ohio State University College of Medicine in 1995, then did her residency in obstetrics and gynecology at the Brigham and Women's Hospital/Massachusetts General Hospital combined program. She completed her fellowship in Maternal Fetal Medicine (MFM) at Ohio State, then joined the faculty MFM practice there. In 2004 she moved back to Boston, where she joined the MFM division at Brigham and Women's Hospital. She has been seeing patients in the Newton-Wellesley Hospital MFM outreach program since 2004 and became the medical director of the program in 2013. She is an assistant professor at Harvard Medical school. She lives in Brookline with her husband and two children.

Erin Kelly, Community co-chair

Erin lives in Medway with her husband, Matt, and two children. She is the vice president of enterprise solutions at Kraft Analytics Group (KAGR), a strategy, technology, and analytics company focused on the sports and entertainment industry. Prior to KAGR, Erin spent 15 years in management consulting with deep expertise in the application of analytics, business intelligence, and data science across multiple industries, and most recently led Boston's data and analytics practice for Slalom. Erin joined the Newton-Wellesley Hospital Collaborative for Healthy Families and Communities in 2018, and serves as the co-chair for the Maternity Services Council, focused on increasing awareness and improving treatment of pregnancy-related depression. Erin is also a board advisor at Newton-Wellesley Hospital (2019).

Anne Steer, Community co-chair

Anne is the head of sales and client management and a member of the Management Committee for Congress Asset Management, a boutique privately owned asset management firm in Boston. Anne has been with Congress for eight years and has over 30 years of executive leadership experience with a focus on creating and implementing growth strategies for financial services organizations. She held senior leadership positions at State Street Corporation, Fidelity Investments, and Dwight Asset Management. She is chair-elect of the Board of Governors of the Money Management Institute and is a member of the Board's executive committee. Anne joined the Board of Overseers at Newton-Wellesley Hospital over ten years ago and is a member of the Newton-Wellesley Hospital Development Committee. Anne received her BA at Mount Holyoke College and her MBA at the Booth School at the University of Chicago. She lives in Weston with her husband, Ralph Sheridan, and is the proud mother of Quinn Sheridan, who was born at Newton-Wellesley Hospital in 1995.





Palliative Care Council leaders

Kosha Thakore, MD, Hospital champion

Dr. Thakore is the inaugural Sullivan Family chief of palliative care at Newton-Wellesley Hospital, as well as the co-director of diversity, equity and inclusion education. She has practiced hospital medicine and subsequently palliative care at Newton-Wellesley Hospital for 14 years. While at Newton-Wellesley, Dr. Thakore has been an influential force with program development and medical education and has been recognized multiple times for her work with palliative care and diversity, equity, and inclusion with Locke Teaching Awards and Pillars in Excellence Awards. She built and launched the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council at Newton-Wellesley; has designed and launched an upstander training program; piloted initiatives aimed at decreasing bias in hiring practices at the hospital; and was instrumental in developing a serious illness conversation training program at Newton-Wellesley Hospital that has trained over 300 providers and over 100 nurses with communication skills to effectively speak with patients with advancing illness. She has been named a Howland Master Clinician for her teaching efforts at Newton-Wellesley Hospital, and she has been recognized by the Newton-Wellesley Hospital Board of Trustees with the prestigious George L. White Award for her commitment to the hospital through her work with palliative care and diversity, equity and inclusion. In 2023 she was named by the Charles River Regional Chamber as one of the “50 Most Influential Business Leaders of Color.” Her drive comes from a dedication to improving the care of seriously ill patients and a desire to foster a healthcare system that values diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.

Cynthia Westerman, Community co-chair

Cynthia has lived in Wellesley for over 30 years, where she and her husband, Bill, raised their three sons (all born at Newton-Wellesley Hospital). She is grateful that Newton-Wellesley Hospital has been the family’s trusted resource for medical attention and treatment over all those years. She credits Newton-Wellesley Hospital for teaching each of them how to lead healthy lives. Professionally, Cynthia manages design and construction projects for educational institutions. She has also been an active volunteer in the local community as a town meeting member and involved in the building of the Wellesley Free Library and the new Wellesley High School, in addition to volunteer service at her alma mater, Wellesley College. Cynthia has served on the Palliative Care Council since its founding in 2017. She joined the Board of Advisors in 2019.





Substance Use Services Council leaders

Catharina Armstrong, MD, Hospital champion

Catharina Armstrong, MD MPH is associate director of the Newton-Wellesley Hospital Substance Use Services. Dr. Armstrong graduated from University College Dublin School of Medicine. She completed internal medicine residency training at Massachusetts General Hospital and a fellowship in infectious diseases at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center. Dr. Armstrong was awarded a master's in public health from Harvard Medical School in 2015. She is board-certified in internal medicine, infectious diseases and addiction medicine and is an assistant professor at Tufts University School of Medicine. She is the HIV and addictions medicine consultant at Framingham women's prison, where she cares for patients and leads education efforts in the field of infectious disease and addictions medicine. She is a member of the Continuing Medical Education (CME) board for American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM). Her clinical and research interests are in prevention and management strategies to engage and support high-risk groups with substance use disorders and infectious diseases, particularly those co-infected with Hepatitis B and C and HIV. She is the medical director for Windsor Mountain International Camp. She serves on the board of directors for the Boston Bulldogs, a non-profit wellness and running club established to provide an anonymous and safe community of support for all those adversely affected by addiction.

Alicia Abad, Community chair

Alicia Abad is an active volunteer for a variety of nonprofit, community, and educational organizations. She currently serves on the development committee for Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts and is an overseer for Newton-Wellesley Hospital. She has served on the Board of Directors of Planned Parenthood League of MA, Roxbury-Weston Programs, Inc., the Weston Parent Teacher Organization, and the Town of Weston Technology Committee. She is also a steering committee member for the Boston-based Invest to Elect group—a women's political giving circle. Alicia credits her early education by the Catholic Sisters of Charity; her father, chief of surgery at a hospital with a mission of ministry in healing; and her mother, a hospice volunteer, with instilling in her the importance of giving back to society and causes which promote health care and social justice. A former software consultant in the technology industry, Alicia holds a BS in business administration and computer information systems from Western New England University. A native of New Jersey, Alicia lives in Wellesley and has two sons.





Workforce Development Council leaders

Beth Downie, Hospital champion

Beth Downie has served as chief information officer of Newton-Wellesley Hospital since 2011. Beth started her career at Newton-Wellesley Hospital in 1999 as an applications analyst, assumed increasing levels of responsibility and was promoted to chief information officer in 2011. Beth has more than thirty years of health care IT experience. In addition to her 24 years at Newton-Wellesley Hospital she had worked at two Massachusetts based healthcare software vendors as well as two Massachusetts community hospitals. Beth became the chair of the Workforce Development Council in the fall of 2019 after assisting the Newton-Wellesley Hospital community benefits team with some workforce development events. She has a passion for helping students and employees develop skills to guide them on their career journey. Beth holds a BA degree in psychology from Stonehill College. She is a member of the Health Information and Management Systems Society.

Phara Boyer, Community chair

Phara Boyer is the director of corporate partnerships and workforce development at Mass Bay Community College. Her professional experience spans 20+ years in higher education with a focus on career/job readiness, placement and training. She has a background in education, non-profit management, workforce development and program management, brings an understanding of individual student/client needs and works towards enhancing support systems that provide equitable access to all opportunity.





Youth Mental Health Council

Elizabeth Booma, MD, Hospital champion

Dr. Elizabeth Booma is the Michael S. Jellinek chief of child and adolescent psychiatry at Newton-Wellesley Hospital. Dr. Booma grew up in Houston, TX. She earned a BA in psychology from Emory University and received her MD from Weill Cornell Medical College. She trained in adult, adolescent and child psychiatry at the combined Massachusetts General Hospital/McLean residency and fellowship programs. Following graduation, she was a staff psychiatrist at McLean Hospital for several years and joined Newton-Wellesley Hospital in the fall of 2015 as the director of the child psychiatry consultation-liaison service. She was appointed chief of the division and director of The Resilience Project in October 2018. Her areas of expertise include psychopharmacology, psychiatric emergencies, and systems of care. She is also a clinical instructor at Harvard Medical School.

Marissa Friedman, Community co-chair

Marissa Friedman is an Emmy award-winning journalist and bestselling author who specializes in health and environmental reporting. She has led international reporting projects on preventable childhood illness, pandemic preparedness, and climate change, among other topics, and is thrilled to join the Council to strengthen community access to youth mental health services. Marissa is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism, where she was a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Fellow in science and health writing. Marissa joined the Newton-Wellesley Advisory Board in 2023 and lives in Waban with her husband and three young children.

Anne Perkin, Community co-chair

Anne lives in Wellesley with her three children. She was a vice president at Goldman Sachs Asset Management, where she worked with endowment and foundation clients, including many large hospital systems. Anne is a volunteer at Family Promise MetroWest, an organization that aids local families facing temporary homelessness. With three children ranging from elementary age to young adult, the work of the resilience council is especially meaningful to her. Anne received her BBA from the University of Michigan and an MBA from Columbia University. She grew up in Newton, and both she and her daughter were born at Newton-Wellesley Hospital. Anne joined the Board of Advisors in 2023.

