

# Kelly Garcia

DIRECTOR OF IOWA  
HEALTH AND HUMAN  
SERVICES (IHHS)



Praised for transformative leadership, Kelly Kennedy Garcia serves as the Director of the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (IHHS). Governor Kim Reynolds appointed Garcia to oversee the state's social services agency in November 2019. She was unanimously confirmed by the Iowa Senate on Feb. 26, 2020. Later that year, Garcia was asked to serve as interim public health Director. As a dual director, Garcia led the agency's pandemic response, while shepherding consolidation to a single health and human services structure. Two years later, Kelly leads Iowa's largest agency, with a commitment to transparency and accountability. The key to this success is building strong teams, transforming the agency's business processes and driving home on a human-centered strategic vision.

Before moving to the Hawkeye state, Garcia led improvements in organizational structure, program management, and policy development in the great state of Texas, including serving in several executive positions at the Texas Health and Human Services Commission. Garcia has more than 20 years of experience in program evaluation and budget, planning and policy development. Garcia is a graduate of The University of Texas at Austin and received her MPA from The Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University. She was a member of the Governor's Executive Development Program sponsored by the LBJ School of Public Affairs and has been acknowledged as a distinguished alumnus. She is married to attorney Dan Garcia, and they have two children.

# Dr. Stephen Hunter

M.D., PH.D.  
UNIVERSITY OF IOWA  
HOSPITALS & CLINICS



Dr. Hunter was born and raised in Utah. He attended the University of Utah for 12 years where he received his Bachelor of Science degree in Materials Science & Engineering, his Ph.D. in Pharmaceutics and then his M.D. degree.

During his tenure at the University of Utah, Dr. Hunter worked with the artificial heart research team within the Division of Artificial Organs and was part of that team in 1982 when Dr. Barney Clark became the first human to be implanted with a total artificial heart. Following medical school Dr. Hunter came to the University of Iowa for his residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology, followed by a fellowship in Maternal-Fetal-Medicine. Following completion of his fellowship, Dr. Hunter remained on staff at the University of Iowa where he has held many leadership positions including Director of the MFM Fellowship, Director of the MFM Division and Vice Chair for Obstetrics.

Dr. Hunter has also served as the Co-Director of the Iowa Statewide Perinatal Care Program for the last 19 years, as well as serving on many state and national committees dealing with maternal healthcare. He is also the Principal Investigator of the current 5-year, 10-million-dollar Maternal Healthcare Initiative grant from HRSA. He has also authored several articles, and recently served as Guest Editor for the journal Clinics in Obstetrics and Gynecology, where the topic was maternal healthcare in rural America.

Still his favorite titles remain husband, father and especially grandpa (PaPa). During his free time he enjoys his two hobbies, photography and recreational shooting, especially extreme long-distance shooting.

# Lastascia Coleman

CNM, ARNP, MSN, FACNM– UNIVERSITY OF IOWA HOSPITALS & CLINICS



Lastascia Coleman CNM, MSN, ARNP, FACNM, is a Clinical Associate Professor at the Carver College of Medicine at the University of Iowa. She is the Program Director for the Nurse-Midwifery Education Program at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics. She is a co-investigator on HRSA 19-107 Innovations in Maternity Care Grant for the state of Iowa. She is a fourth-year Ph.D. student at the University of Iowa College of Public Health in Health Management and Policy. She also serves on the Maternal Mortality Review Board and the Medicaid Maternal Health Taskforce for the state of Iowa. She was chosen to join the fifth cohort of the Robert Wood Johnson Health Policy Research Scholars program. She served as a research fellow for the ACNM Workforce Study.

# Dr. Heather Rouse

PH.D.– ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY STUDIES AND DIRECTOR OF I2D2– IOWA'S INTEGRATED DATA SYSTEM FOR DECISION-MAKING



Heather Rouse is an Associate Professor of Human Development and Family Studies at Iowa State University. She is also founder and Director of Iowa's Integrated Data System for Decision-Making (I2D2). Rouse's training and experience spans three U.S. states, including formal education from the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education where she received her Ph.D. in School, Community, and Clinical Psychology before serving as a research-policy fellow in Philadelphia's Deputy Mayor's Office. Heather has been actively engaged in early childhood research for over two decades in collaboration with state and local partners, with expertise in areas including early education, child welfare and homelessness, preschool access, Head Start, home visiting, and access to health care.

She teaches courses on child and family policy, early childhood programs and policy, and infant mental health, and also serves on her department's graduate education committee which supports the training and curriculum development of graduate students. The work she and her team have done with I2D2 is recognized nationally as a model in the development and use of integrated data systems to advance strategic planning, including invitations from the National Academy of Sciences, Health Research Services Administration, and the Administration for Children and Families.

# Dr. Joel Wells

D.O. – WAYNE COUNTY  
HOSPITAL & CLINIC SYSTEM



Dr. Wells has been practicing “full scope Family Medicine” in Corydon since graduating from Family Medicine residency in 1989. Originally from neighboring Plano, Iowa (population 70), and a graduate of Seymour Community High School, Dr. Wells attended Northeast Missouri State University and received his medical degree from the Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine in 1986. He completed his internship at Warren General Hospital, Warren, Ohio, followed by his residency at Barberton Citizens Hospital in Barberton, Ohio. He continues to serve Wayne County and surrounding communities for the last 34 years.

During his career at Wayne County Hospital, he was in private practice for his first 22 years and then as an employed hospital physician the last 13. He has practiced obstetrics as a two-person Family Practice partnership, a three-person group, 12 years solo, a CNMW-Family Practice combo, and now a six person group with five Family Physicians and one CNMW. He has always provided inpatient hospital care, ER care, supervision of mid-level providers, and provided C-section and epidural services. He no longer provides epidural services as of 2020.

His intention when he attended college in Kirksville was to be a high school science teacher, but his career plans went awry. His heart has always been in education and he has always enjoyed precepting medical students. In 2014 he started teaching Family Medicine residents which developed into a part-time position with the MercyOne Family Medicine residency. He started training their residents in Corydon where they are immersed in a true “rural experience.” He helped Wayne County Hospital develop a one-year FP/OB fellowship in 2018. They now have produced three graduates who all practice high volume obstetrics and do C-sections in their current practices. He still continues to mentor Medical students, CNMW students, PA and NP students.

Dr. Wells and his wife, Bonita, have two grown children and live in Corydon. Outside of work he enjoys supporting local community events, flying, farming, woodworking, and spending time with his four grandchildren.

# Julia D. Interrante

PH.D., MPH – UNIVERSITY OF  
MINNESOTA RURAL HEALTH  
RESEARCH CENTER



Julia D. Interrante, Ph.D., MPH, is a Research Fellow and Statistical Lead at the University of Minnesota's Rural Health Research Center. She holds a MPH in Epidemiology from Emory University and a Ph.D. in Health Services Research from the University of Minnesota.

Her research examines the effects of policy on maternal health outcomes and on access to maternity care services, with specific focus on geographic and racial equity, and includes topics such as disparities in severe maternal morbidity and mortality, changing access to rural maternity care, and the impact of payment policies on maternal and postpartum care.

# Robert Kruse

M.D., MPH, FAFP– STATE  
MEDICAL DIRECTOR, IHHS



Robert Kruse serves as the State of Iowa Medical Director and Division Director of Public Health.

Prior to joining IHHS, Dr. Kruse served as the Medical Director of Occupational Health at MercyOne in Des Moines. Kruse is board certified in Family Medicine and completed his residency training program at Rutgers University. He has a Masters of Public Health with a concentration in Environmental and Occupational Health and is a Fellow of the American Academy of Family Physicians. He has held a teaching appointment as Assistant Professor at Rutgers University's Robert Wood Johnson Medical School in the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health in Central New Jersey.

# Elizabeth Matney

STATE MEDICAID  
DIRECTOR, IHHS



Elizabeth Matney serves as the Director of Iowa Medicaid where she oversees Iowa's \$6 billion Medicaid program, which serves more than 700,000 Iowans each year. She most recently served as health policy advisor for Gov. Kim Reynolds, where she worked closely with the legacy DHS and the Iowa Department of Public Health programs on a broad range of critical issues.

Elizabeth holds a master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from Drake University and a bachelor's degree in Psychology and Philosophy from Texas State University. Her previous experience includes serving as Medicaid managed care director, Medicaid quality assurance director and her early experience includes direct care as a Medicaid provider and work at a women's shelter.

# Monica Goedken

VIOLENCE PREVENTION  
COORDINATOR, IHHS



Monica Goedken is the Violence Prevention Coordinator and Rape Prevention & Education Program Director with Iowa Health and Human Services (IHHS). In her role at IHHS she oversees state and federal grants while collaborating with stakeholders engaged in sexual violence prevention strategies. Additionally, she provides training and technical assistance from the public health approach that improve systems response to survivors of intimate partner and sexual violence. Monica oversees the Child Protection Center state contracts, IHHS appropriation for sexual violence prevention, Rape Prevention & Education (RPE) program and STOP VAWA/VOCA project at IHHS. She also has experience with the Preventative Health and Health Services Block Grant - Sex Offense Prevention Program.

Over her 15+ years in victim services and public health she has served on advisory groups, councils, and task forces. Most recently she has been involved with the Iowa Domestic Abuse Death Review Team, Maternal Mortality Review, Iowa Abuse in Later Life CCR, Home Visiting Advisory Group, Project Catalyst, Dependent Adult Protective Advisory Council, Quarterly Leadership Institute, and Advisory Council on Brain Injury. Prior to being at IHHS Monica was with the Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV) where she was a Training and Program Development Specialist and the HEAT (Housing and Economic Justice Advocacy Today) AmeriCorps Program Director. She provided victim advocate certification training, facilitated Seeking Safety with survivors who were experiencing incarceration, hosted a Speakers Bureau, was involved in public health initiatives, and provided technical assistance to victim advocates across the state.

Monica started her career at ACCESS (Assault Care Center Extending Shelter & Support) where she was the Volunteer Coordinator, Domestic Abuse Advocate, and Sexual Abuse Advocate. She was involved with Story County SART (Sexual Assault Response Team), facilitated sexual assault support groups, and worked directly with survivors in emergency shelter, criminal legal settings, medical settings, and campus settings. During this time she also provided respite care to children with intellectual and cognitive disabilities and was a substitute teacher for Head Start.

# Lindsey Jones

MHA- TITLE X FAMILY  
PLANNING DIRECTOR, IHHS



Lindsey M. Jones, MHA, serves as IHHS' Title X Family Planning Director, overseeing 56 counties throughout the state, at the State of Iowa Department of Health and Human Services. The Title X program is dedicated to family planning\* and related preventive health services. Lindsey has been at IHHS for 13 years, the last five years in the Title X Family Planning Program. As a leader for the Title X program, Lindsey's curiosity and desire to learn has continued to help the agency and contracted entities stay in front of the changing landscape accessing reproductive health services.

Lindsey is a mom of three kids. In her free time she enjoys spending time with her family, trying new restaurants and traveling.

\*Family planning includes a broad range of services related to achieving pregnancy, preventing pregnancy, and assisting women, men, and couples with achieving their desired number and spacing of children.

# Nicole Newman

R.D., L.D., CLC- STATE WIC  
BREASTFEEDING COORDINATOR,  
IHHS



Nicole Newman is a registered dietitian and Certified Lactation Counselor (CLC) that has served as the State of Iowa WIC Breastfeeding Coordinator at the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (IHHS) for the past seven years. Prior to taking on her current role, she worked as a State WIC Nutrition Consultant at IHHS. She began her career in community health serving WIC families at local WIC agencies, where she found her passion for educating and supporting breastfeeding families and assisting them in meeting their breastfeeding goals. She serves on the Iowa Breastfeeding Coalition, has been greatly involved in the creation of the Iowa Breastfeeding Strategic Plan and is a member of the planning committee for the Annual Iowa Breastfeeding Conference. Nicole and her husband have three children and a dog, and love to spend their time traveling or at their family cabin whenever possible.



# Stephanie Trusty

R.N., BSN- MATERNAL MORTALITY  
REVIEW COMMITTEE  
COORDINATOR, IHHS



Stephanie Trusty R.N., BSN, is a Nurse Clinician at the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services. She has over 20 years of inpatient hospital experience, including staff nursing in Neonatal Intensive Care and Labor and Delivery, Obstetrics clinical educator (both internal staff nurses and outreach to rural hospitals) and two years in management roles. Her work at IHHS is focused on reducing maternal morbidity and mortality.

Trusty is the Project Director for three grants for the IHHS, the CDC Preventing Maternal Deaths: Supporting Maternal Mortality Review Committees grant, CDC statewide Perinatal Quality Care Collaboratives grant and HRSA's AIM Capacity grant and the AIM state lead coordinator for Iowa. She coordinates the Maternal Mortality Review process for the IHHS. She is on the leadership team for the Iowa Maternal Quality Care Collaborative. She provides ongoing quality improvement coaching to nine birthing hospitals to implement and sustain perinatal quality collaboratives. Trusty is on the leadership team for Iowa's HRSA funded Maternal Health Innovation Grant. She is the Department coordinator for Iowa's Regionalized System of Perinatal Care, a model to support the delivery of risk-appropriate coordinated care for Iowa's birthing hospitals.

# Hannah Rivas

FAMILY OUTREACH DIRECTOR,  
NINE2THRIVE



Hannah Rivas has over 15 years of experience providing support services to children and families in Iowa. She has been with EveryStep for the last 10 years and currently serves as the Family Outreach Director overseeing several public health initiatives. Hannah has a bachelor's degree in Psychology from Iowa State University. Hannah enjoys volunteering on the Dallas County Children's Advocacy Committee and the Volunteer Iowa Commission. In her free time, she enjoys gardening, crafting, cooking and spending time with her husband, 2-year-old daughter, and infant son.

# Stephanie Cassady

COORDINATED INTAKE &  
REFERRAL MANAGER, NINE2THRIVE



Stephanie Cassady has over nine years of dedicated service in the nonprofit sector. While at EveryStep, Stephanie has been committed to implementing programs that provide support to those who need it the most. She currently serves as the Coordinated Intake & Referral Manager overseeing our local intake program and Nine2Thrive™ program. Stephanie is passionate about helping people. Her focus has been on children and families. Stephanie holds an MPA from Upper Iowa University and a bachelor's degree in Child and Family Studies from Northwest Missouri State University. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her husband and four children.

# Christine Tucker

HEALTH EQUITY COORDINATOR,  
*HEALTHY BIRTH DAY, INC.*



Christine Tucker is a graduate of the University of Northern Iowa, with a bachelor's degree in English for Secondary Education. Having worked in multiple childcare settings during college, she developed a passion early on for supporting families and educating them about child safety. After teaching middle school literature and language arts, she used her background in education to fuel her work at local nonprofits serving the community by facilitating groups on career readiness, financial literacy, healthy relationships, parenting, and postpartum support. She is a certified Community Health Worker and also received her Child Passenger Safety Technician certification in 2022.

In Christine's work with expectant parents, she has seen the empowering impact of the *Count the Kicks* program and is honored to work with the *Healthy Birth Day, Inc.* team as a Health Equity Coordinator. In her role she connects with community-based organizations and birthworkers across the United States to support work being done to improve maternal child health outcomes. She also facilitates *Count the Kicks* training sessions and baby showers.

# Jazzmine Brooks

IHHS DOULA PROJECT +  
RURAL BLACK DOULA



Jazzmine “Rural Black Doula” Brooks is a scholar, certified full spectrum doula, and RYT 200 Hatha Yoga of the Himalayan Tradition and SomaYoga Therapy Instructor in Central Iowa.

Jazzmine believes in empowering Black, Indigenous, and folks of color through community, support, and resource sharing. Powered by the desire to address Black women and infant maternal health, she encourages space for people to control their narratives and share their own stories. Jazzmine is the founder and Executive Director of Jai Olive Wellness. Jai Olive Wellness, a 501(c)(3), provides a cooperative space to mobilize communities and coalition-build to improve health outcomes and center the culture and needs of diverse families in rural communities through education, services, and partnership.

She also organizes a national summer book club (Lotus Sisters), Kindred, a movement, restorative healing, and connection space, and is the host of the Rural Black Doula Chronicles and the Being Olivia podcast. Jazzmine is currently a liaison for a doula project that supports Black families and co-creating a doula project to serve immigrant and refugee families.

Jazzmine is currently a Ph.D. student in Human Development and Family Studies at Iowa State University. She serves as the new Director for Healthy Incentives at Iowa Healthiest State Initiative. She spends quality time with her partner, Jordan, puppies Brie and Bleu, plants, and being a soft Black woman in these streets.

# PJ West

MIECHV DEPUTY DIRECTOR/EARLY  
INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS



Patricia (PJ) West is the Deputy Director of Iowa's Health and Human Services Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visitation (MIECHV) program. PJ has worked within the family support arena for over 25 years, having started her career at a local community action agency in southwest Iowa as the FaDSS Coordinator, with a small caseload of families.

In her current role at IHSS, she provides program management at the state level and to local MIECHV contractors. PJ oversees many projects, and training family support professionals is one of her favorites. She has a true passion for helping professionals understand their own "stuff" before they can successfully help others with theirs. She never wants anyone to forget what it's like to walk up to a family's door, knock, and to have families let you in, to become a part of their lives.

PJ serves on several councils specific to family support programming in Iowa, on a multitude of committees representing Iowa family support and continues to serve on her local school board and daycare board.

PJ has an incredible passion for family support programming, and simply helping people. She lives in a small town in southwest Iowa with her two daughters and all of their pets.