77th Anniversary of the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights Law Against Discrimination

Mental Health in the Black Community: Recognition, Recovery & Resilience

AGENDA
April 13, 2022

Welcome Opening Statement – Matthew J. Platkin, Acting Attorney General
Opening Remarks – Rachel Wainer Apter, Director, New Jersey Division on Civil Rights
Moderator – Patricia D. Williamson, Community Relations Specialist, NJ Division on Civil Rights
Keynote Speaker – Dr. Jonathan Holloway, President, Rutgers State University

Student Advocate Moment:
Faustina Owoh, Rutgers University Student, President, Scarlet NAACP Branch

Panelists:
• Dave Ellis, Executive Director, New Jersey Office of Resiliency
• Dr. Barbara Agyeman Prempeh, Psy.D., Founder and Owner, B. Resilient, LLC.
• Rev. Danté R. Quick, Ph.D., Senior Pastor, First Baptist Church of Lincoln Gardens
• Dwana M. Young, MPA, Child Advocacy Leader

Speakers
• Valerie L. Mielke, MSW, Assistant Commissioner, Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services, NJ Department of Human Services
• Major Brian Polite, Commanding Officer, Office of Employee Relations and Community Outreach, New Jersey State Police

Questions and Answers

Closing Remarks
Jonathan G. Green, J.D., Lead Community Mediator, Community Relations Unit, NJ Division on Civil Rights
On February 3, 2022, Governor Phil Murphy nominated Matthew J. Platkin to be the 62nd Attorney General of New Jersey, and he assumed the role of Acting Attorney General on Monday, February 14, pending his Senate confirmation.

Prior to becoming Acting Attorney General, from January 2018 to October 2020, Platkin served as Chief Counsel to Governor Murphy. As Chief Counsel, Platkin oversaw an office of attorneys that advised the Governor on all legal matters, including legislation, executive orders, administrative regulations, and litigations. He also was responsible for coordinating with the Attorney General’s Office on civil matters, including affirmative litigations, and oversaw judicial and prosecutorial nominations.

As Chief Counsel, Platkin spearheaded a number of policy initiatives, including gun safety and the expansion of voting rights, and played a critical role in the negotiations of three approximately $40 billion annual state budgets. In addition, Platkin played a critical role in guiding New Jersey through the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, overseeing the drafting of pandemic-related executive orders and workforce policy reforms for state government employees to maintain government services. He also contributed to the State’s successful defense of pandemic-related actions in dozens of litigations in state and federal court.

From October 2020 to February 2022, Platkin served as a partner at Lowenstein Sandler in the White Collar Criminal Defense and Business Litigation practice groups, and also served on the firm’s Pro Bono Committee. He is admitted to the bar in New Jersey and New York.

Platkin began his policy career at the Brookings Institution in Washington D.C., advising members of Congress on job growth and economic recovery following the 2008 financial crisis. Following graduation from law school, Platkin practiced law at Debevoise & Plimpton in New York City, where he focused on internal investigations and civil and criminal matters before the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of New York, the U.S. Department of Justice, the New York Department of Financial Services, and various regulatory agencies.

Platkin was born and raised in New Jersey, growing up in Morris County, and graduated from Madison High School. He received his Bachelor of Arts from Stanford University, and his Juris Doctor from Stanford Law School, where he was an editor of the Stanford Law Review.
Rachel Wainer Apter became the Director of the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights on October 15, 2018. As Director, she has re-envisioned and re-shaped the Division to act strategically to protect the civil rights of all New Jersey residents. She previously served as Counsel to the Attorney General, advising on civil rights and immigration matters and leading the New Jersey team that defeated a preliminary injunction motion by Texas and seven other states to end Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA).

Prior to joining the Attorney General’s Office, Rachel worked at the American Civil Liberties Union on cases concerning the right to be free from discrimination, reproductive freedom, voting rights, and other federal constitutional questions. She served as counsel in Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission, which considered whether a baker who refused to sell a wedding cake to a same-sex couple on religious grounds was exempt from Colorado’s anti-discrimination laws. Rachel also argued and won a disability discrimination appeal and led a task force regarding investigations of sexual harassment and sexual assault on college campuses.

Prior to the ACLU, Rachel worked in the Supreme Court and Appellate practice at Orrick, Herrington and Sutcliffe, where she briefed and argued cases in federal and state courts.

Rachel, who grew up in Rockaway, New Jersey, graduated from the University of Pennsylvania and received her law degree from Harvard Law School. After law school, Rachel served as a law clerk for Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg on the United States Supreme Court, Judge Robert Katzmann on the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, and Judge Jed Rakoff on the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York.

Rachel lives in Englewood with her spouse and children.
Patricia D. Williamson is a Community Relations Specialist in the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights. Patricia is the unit’s lead on programming initiatives for race and religion. She is based in Trenton, and her primary counties are Somerset, Warren, Monmouth, Middlesex, Mercer, Burlington, and Camden. Prior to this position, Patricia was the New Jersey Counts Project Director at the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice. Patricia led the Institute’s work to ensure a complete and accurate count of New Jersey’s urban communities in the 2020 Census. Patricia was part of the Census 2020 NJ Coalition, and convened a sub-coalition of African American community-based organizations, non-profits, and institutions (such as clergy). Patricia worked for over 20 years as a systems engineer in the optical networking at AT&T, Telcordia Technologies, and Lucent Technologies. She was also an adjunct professor at Bloomfield College.

Patricia has plenty of voluntary experience in civic engagement and social justice. She is currently the Eastern Region Social Action Coordinator of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated. She is leading the advocacy arm of the 147 sorority chapters between Maine and DC, the US Virgin Islands, Germany, the Arabian Gulf, and southern and western Africa.

Patricia resides in central New Jersey. She earned a BA in Mathematics from Hampton University, an MS in Computer Science from Howard University, and an MA in Education and Human Development in the Educational Technology Leadership Program at The George Washington University.
Jonathan Holloway, a U.S. historian, took office as the 21st president of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, on July 1, 2020. He also serves as a University Professor and Distinguished Professor.

Prior to accepting the presidency of Rutgers, Dr. Holloway was provost of Northwestern University from 2017 to 2020 and a member of the faculty of Yale University from 1999 to 2017. At Yale, he served as Dean of Yale College and the Edmund S. Morgan Professor of African American Studies, History, and American Studies.

President Holloway’s scholarly work specializes in post-emancipation U.S. history with a focus on social and intellectual history.


Dr. Holloway, who began his academic career at the University of California, San Diego, received a bachelor’s degree with honors in American studies from Stanford University and a Ph.D. in history from Yale University.

He serves on boards of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History and Culture, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Universities Research Association, the Institute of International Education, and the Academic Leadership Institute. In April 2020, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy appointed him to the Governor’s Restart and Recovery Commission, and in May 2020, New Jersey Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin appointed him to his Economic Advisory Council.

Dr. Holloway is an elected member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Society of American Historians. He is a Fellow of the Council on Foreign Relations.

He is married to Aisling Colón. They have a daughter, Emerson, and son, Ellison.
Dave Ellis serves as the first Executive Director of the New Jersey Office of Resilience, coordinating statewide efforts to prevent, protect against, and heal from the effects of adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs. The Office of Resilience was created in 2020 to host, coordinate and facilitate statewide initiatives to raise awareness of ACEs of and create opportunities to address ACEs through grassroots and community-led efforts, technical assistance, and strategic support for organizations pursing this work in New Jersey.

Community engagement has been a core component of New Jersey's plan to address ACEs.

Dave is a national leader in providing trainings and facilitating conversations regarding toxic stress in the lives of young children and the lasting impacts of ACEs and generational trauma. He has worked with both families and organizations to prevent ACEs and advance research and survey efforts. His prior experience in several Minnesota government initiatives also included facilitating community dialogues and public-private partnerships to promote wellbeing across Minneapolis. He has also worked as a lead trainer and facilitator on ACEs with the New Jersey Education Association.

https://www.nj.gov/dcf/resilience.html


---

Dave Ellis can be reached at http://www.daveellisconsulting.com/

Dave.Ellis@dcf.nj.gov
Valerie Mielke is the Assistant Commissioner for the New Jersey Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) in the Department of Human Services and serves as the Single State Agency (SSA) for Substance Abuse and the State Mental Health Authority (SMHA) as designated by the US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The Division is responsible for the coordination, administration, management and supervision of the community public mental health system, and is also responsible for regulating, monitoring, planning and funding substance abuse prevention, treatment and recovery support services. Ms. Mielke holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Fairfield University and a Master of Social Work degree from Rutgers University.

Valerie currently serves (as Past President) on the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD) Board of Directors and served as President from 2019-2021. NASMHPD’s goal is to advance national, state and local mental health policy. Additionally, Valerie serves as a board member of the National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors (NASADAD) Public Policy Committee. NASADAD’s goal is to advance national, state and local addiction policy.

Valerie was recently appointed to the National Justice Counts Steering Committee which is being led by The Council of State Governments Justice Center. This is a new national consensus-building initiative designed to improve the availability and utility of criminal justice metrics/data that can drive budget and policy decisions. Valerie also serves on the US DHHS, SAMHSA National Judicial Task Force to Examine State Courts’ Response to Mental Illness.

---

Assistant Commissioner Valerie Mielke can be reached at DMHAS@dhs.nj.gov 1-800-438-4352
My name is Faustina Owoh, and I am a senior double majoring in Political Science and Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies with a minor in International and Global Studies. I am an Institute for Women’s Leadership Scholar at the Institute for Women’s Leadership at Rutgers University, and the President of 3 organizations here on campus: Scarlet NAACP, BlueFoot PrintProject and TRIOTA Honor Society. I transferred to Rutgers-New Brunswick in 2019 and have fallen more in love with the university every year. I am also on the Executive Committee for the New Jersey State Youth and College NAACP Division as the Youth Employment Chair. I am a human rights advocate and have spent most of my college years collaborating with different organizations at Rutgers university New Brunswick and Newark campuses. I am currently working on starting a community fridge with the BlueFoot Print Project in the New Brunswick Area with hopes of bringing the project back to life. After I graduate in May, I will be taking a gap year and then I will be pursuing a law degree.

---

Faustina Owoh can be reached at faustinaowoh@gmail.com
Major Brian Polite
Commanding Officer, Office of Employee Relations and Community Outreach, New Jersey State Police

Major Brian Polite is a 21 year veteran with the New Jersey State Police. He currently serves as the Commanding Officer of the Employee Relations and Community Outreach Section which focuses on enhancing both the external outreach to New Jersey’s communities and internal outreach to the New Jersey State Police enlisted and civilian personnel.

The section is responsible for weaving community engagement into the fabric of the daily encounters of the New Jersey State Police 4,000 enlisted and civilian members. The section also provides services to both enlisted and civilian employees to support their physical, mental, and emotional health and well-being. The section also oversees the Diversity and Inclusion Unit, which is tasked with a variety of internal and external functions such as creating annual training for enlisted and civilian personnel, developing strategic plans to create inclusive and respectful workplaces, and assisting with recruiting with community outreach efforts.

As the lead community outreach representative, Major Polite works with community organizations throughout the state to initiate proactive dialogue between law enforcement and the community. He also works closely with the Attorney General’s office and community leaders throughout the state in developing community engagement and recruitment strategies to increase diversity within the New Jersey State Police.

Major Polite holds a Bachelor’s degree from Kean University and a Master’s degree from Seton Hall University.
Dr. Barbara Agyeman Prempeh, a native of Ghana, West Africa, is a Licensed Psychologist and Certified School Psychologist. She received her Psy.D. in Clinical and School Psychology from Kean University, MA in Educational Psychology from Kean University, MA in Forensic Psychology from John Jay College of Criminal Justice, and BS in Psychology from her beloved undergraduate alma mater, Howard University.

Dr. Prempeh has a passion for educating others on the impact of trauma, and helping children, adolescents, and young adults develop resilience in the face of adversity. Dr. Prempeh is a Psychology Supervisor at Children's Specialized Hospital overseeing psychological services across the Hamilton and New Brunswick locations. Dr. Prempeh is the founder and owner of B. Resilient, LLC, a psychological private practice that works to build resilience individually through therapeutic services, and collectively through consultation and training. In addition to her clinical experience, Dr. Prempeh has ten years of experience in academia teaching undergraduate and graduate psychology courses. She currently serves as a Clinical Specialist at Montclair State University teaching graduate level courses, supervising psychoeducational evaluations, and coordinating practicum experiences for students, all within the School Psychology program.

Dr. Prempeh has conducted presentations at conferences and to organizations on numerous topics including, trauma, juvenile justice, racial/cultural issues, resilience, and trauma-informed practices. Specifically, she is the co-developer and co-facilitator of a curriculum for police officers and community members that focuses on understanding trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), in addition to providing trauma-informed approaches. Dr. Prempeh also co-facilitated a training to teachers and administrators in the Newark public school system on school-based trauma-informed practices. Dr. Prempeh is the current Vice President of the New Jersey Chapter Association of Black Psychologists.

---

Dr. Prempeh can be reached at www.bresilientllc.com
The Reverend Danté R. Quick, Ph.D., was elected to serve as the fourth senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Lincoln Gardens in Somerset, New Jersey on May 22, 2021.

Prior to joining FBCLG, Pastor Quick served Friendship Missionary Baptist Church in Vallejo, California, for more than 10 years. He began his pastoral ministry there on Aug. 1, 2010 and was installed as Senior Pastor on Aug. 7, 2011. After his arrival, the church had extraordinary growth, both spiritually and numerically. Only eight weeks into his tenure, Reverend Quick and the Friendship family were featured on the front page of the Times-Herald as "one of the largest African-American congregations in Vallejo."

Pastor Quick was born and reared in Washington, D.C. He relocated to Atlanta to attend Morehouse College where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science with a concentration in Pre-Law. While at Morehouse, he was one of the first recipients of the William H. Cosby Grant for Landmark College's gifted-dyslexic student program.

Pastor Quick accepted his call to ministry under the Pastorate of the Reverend Dr. Aaron L. Parker of the Zion Hill Baptist Church in Atlanta. In response to his commitment to serve God, Pastor Quick received a Master of Divinity with a concentration in Theology from Princeton Theological Seminary in Princeton, New Jersey. He was the recipient of the Jean Anne Swope and James L. Mechem Prize in Christian Ethics. He served as the President of the Association of Black Seminarians, an organization that represents all Princeton seminarians of the African Diaspora. Pastor Quick also served on numerous student/faculty committees and as a Graduate Chaplain for the African-American students at Princeton University. Pastor Quick published his first article entitled, "The Relevance of Race," in The Princeton Theological Review and is a contributor to The African-American Lectionary.

Pastor Quick has served both the church and the academy in several capacities. In 2006 he was called to serve New Liberation Presbyterian Church in San Francisco, which experienced phenomenal growth in attendance and internal love. In addition, Pastor Quick served as a Policy Analyst for ITC/Faithfactor, a Presidential Initiative of the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta. In that capacity, he developed and delivered training materials and programs to aid African-American churches and leaders in engaging in community development programming.

Secularly, Pastor Quick has served in the offices of Mayor Marion Barry, Congressman John Lewis and Governor Zell Miller. He also served as the Legislative Representative for the Atlanta Board of Education. In these capacities he has addressed audiences at the National Conference of Black Mayors, The World Conference of Mayors and the National Conference of Black Men. He also served as the Special Programs Administrator for the Fulton County District Attorney in Atlanta.
Pastor Quick relocated to the Bay area to pursue a Ph.D. in Philosophical and Systematic Theology at the Graduate Theological Union, as well as African-American Studies. Upon his acceptance, he was awarded the President’s Award and the William Randolph Hearst Scholarship. His studies are focused on the theology of Howard Thurman and the political philosophy of Ralph Bunche en route to the construction of an African-American political theology. He was the first appointed Howard Washington Thurman Teaching Fellow at the American Baptist Seminary of the West where he was responsible for teaching Constructive and Systematic Theology and Ethics. Pastor Quick was also one of only 12 Ph.D. students selected as a Walbash/Teagle Religious Educator Fellow at the Graduate Theological Union. He also served as the student representative to the Graduate Theological Union Board of Trustees.

On September 8th, 2017, Pastor Quick was conferred with his Ph.D. in Philosophical and Systematic Theology with a focus on African American Studies from the Graduate Theological Union, University of California at Berkeley.

Pastor Quick is the proud parent of Alexander Danté and Kennedy Danielle.

---

Rev. Dr. Quick can be reached at http://www.fbcsomerset.com
For over 16 years, Dwana M. Young has been a remarkable leader in child advocacy, policy, and community engagement. Driven by her innate passion for equity and justice, she takes pride in servicing our New Jersey residents with knowledge and excellence.

Dwana has been recognized by local universities, private and public organizations for her extraordinary commitment in the advocacy of New Jersey’s at-risk children and families and Native American Indigenous Communities.

---

Dwana Young can be reached at http://www.daveellisconsulting.com/
Jonathan G. Green, J.D. serves as Lead Community Mediator for the Community Relations Unit for the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights. He is a community advocate, who engages in matters of human rights and civil rights with experience in social services, mediation, education, and social justice.

Jonathan worked as a social justice strategist, developing strategies for effective civic demonstrations, in collaboration with other community members/partners. Additionally, he spent three years as an educator, teaching grades 6 through 12, with an emphasis on social justice.

Jonathan was previously certified by the State of Florida Supreme Court in circuit civil mediation. He has experience through the Florida Department of Children & Families, in investigating child abuse & maltreatment. He is also experienced in providing outpatient, wrap-around services for adolescents experiencing behavioral and substance abuse issues. Additionally, Jonathan received mediation training from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Services.

Jonathan earned his J.D. from the Southern University Law Center, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in 2016. As a law student, Jonathan served in the mediation clinic providing alternative dispute and conflict resolution. Jonathan also has a Master of Science in Criminal Justice from the Troy University (2012) and a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice from the University of South Alabama (2009). Jonathan has been a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., since 2005.