



POLICY & RELATED PANELISTS

Biographies



Dr. Abdul El-Sayed

Dr. Abdul El-Sayed is a physician, epidemiologist, and public servant. He serves as director of Wayne County's Department of Health, Human & Veterans Services and health officer for the county, serving 1.8 million residents of Michigan's largest and most diverse county under Chief Executive Warren Evans. Abdul hosts Crooked Media's award-winning "America Dissected" podcast, attracting tens of thousands of weekly listeners to go beyond the headlines to explore the intersection between health and society. His three books include "Healing Politics," calling for a politics of empathy to cure our epidemic of insecurity, and "Medicare for All: A Citizen's Guide" with Dr. Micah Johnson. Abdul holds academic appointments at the intersection between public health, public policy, and politics at the University of Michigan Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, the FXB Center for Health & Human Rights at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Wayne State University, and American University, and has over 100 peer-reviewed publications. He is formerly a commentator at CNN, health director for the city of Detroit, and a candidate for governor of Michigan in 2018. His work has been featured in the New York Times, Washington Post, The Guardian, and he is a sought-after media commentator and keynote speaker at international conferences, gala events, and university commencements. He's a proud member of the National Writers Union, AFT Locals 477 and 6244, SEIU Local 500, and the AAUP.



Kenisha Coon

My name is Kenisha Coon and I have lived experience of trauma and resilience of the child welfare system. I have my Bachelors and Masters of Psychology. I have a Post-Masters teaching certificate in Psychology and I have a DEI in the workplace certification. I am currently a Policy and Legislation Analyst, as well as Antiracism and DEI work within the state, such as facilitating conversations, training, creating strategic plans, and consulting. I am a graduate of the Minority Professional Leadership Development Program and I have collaborated with AdoptUSKids, National Adoption Association, and NACAC to bring racial awareness and equitable training and education to the child welfare scene. In my personal life, I run a DEI consulting Business, Kenisha Coon Consulting and a calligraphy business, Lettering by Kenisha. I volunteer in several communities where I focus on expanding and education of Race Equity and DEI learning to those who may not have had the space to be courageous. By day you will find me trying to dismantle the disparities of black and brown youth in the child welfare system and teach other lessons toward becoming anti-racist in everything that I do. By night, I am lettering, doodling, and creating to make folks happy and to nurturing my own mental health. I recently have written a book, And Then She Persisted. It Is the story of overcoming generation trauma, abuse, and neglect. It is the story of standing up against racism. It's a story of advocacy, passion, allyship, and surrendering to stepping into one's purpose. I am a consultant, a speaker, an ally, an activist, a writer, a mom, and a wife.



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Patti Kukula

Patti Kukula is the Executive Director of the Detroit Public Safety Foundation. The Foundation is the official charity for the Detroit Police and Fire Departments. Ms. Kukula has been director since 2017 and is responsible for increasing funding for the Foundation from \$550,000 a year to 3.7 million in 2021. Major accomplishments include over \$1 Million dollars for the DPD Co-response Mental Health Crisis Intervention funding, over \$450,000 for support of DPD Homicide for the Project Zion search for murder victim Zion Foster, and donation of treadmills and stationary bicycles for 39 DFD Fire houses. Major funding has been raised for DPD Mentoring programs (called sisterhood and brotherhood) and Drive to Thrive operating in 7 Detroit Public Schools and CitiCamp for DPS Junior High schools. Ms. Kukula has been involved in Detroit and Wayne County communities for over 30 years. Her public service work included appointments by Wayne County Executive Ed McNamara, Mayor Mike Duggan and her elected service as a former Grosse Pointe Woods City Councilmember. Ms. Kukula has a Bachelor of Science degree in Occupational Therapy and a Master of Public Administration. She was a Crain's 40 under 40 awardee, participant in Leadership Detroit and has many other awards.



Toycia Collins

Toycia Collins has conducted both city-wide and statewide research and evaluation projects focusing on vulnerable populations who have had varying levels of interaction with the Criminal Justice System, including formerly incarcerated persons released from corrections and juvenile offenders. She is currently the Project director for the WSU Educational Transition Coordination Program, and a Policy Analyst and Educator at the Rouge School District, where she is responsible for working with students on a variety of policy and education-related concerns. She received her MS in Criminal Justice from Wayne State University in 2017 and is currently working on her doctoral dissertation.