



AZPHA
Arizona Public Health Association

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

FROM CRISIS TO CARE:
Improving Outcomes in Arizona's
Behavioral Health System

Friday, May 1, 2026

**Desert Willow
Conference Center**

4340 E Cotton Center Blvd,
Phoenix, AZ 85040

www.azpha.org



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TITLE



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2026 AGENDA

Friday, May 1, 2026

TIME	SESSION	LOCATION
7:30 a.m.	Registration, Breakfast & Poster Session	Foyer
9:00–9:15 a.m.	Welcome, Opening Remarks & Legislative Updates	Cottonwood
9:15–10:15 a.m.	<p>PLENARY KEYNOTE Introduction By: Minnie Andrade, CEO, Molina Healthcare</p> <p>Public Health Under Siege: Building the Next Generation Health System</p> <p>Georges C. Benjamin, MD Executive Director, American Public Health Association</p>	Cottonwood
		
10:15-10:25 a.m.	Break & Poster Session	
10:25–11:35 a.m.	<p>BREAKOUT SESSION Policy, Advocacy & Systems Change</p> <p>A Statewide Medicaid Initiative to Advance Behavioral Health</p> <p>Taylor Vaughan, MPH; William Riley, PhD; George Runger, PhD Arizona State University</p>	Cottonwood
10:25–11:35 a.m.	<p>BREAKOUT SESSION Population-Specific Needs: Serious Mental Illness</p> <p>Innovative Partnerships: Advancing Member Engagement through Peer Support at the Navigator Level and Assertive Community Treatment</p> <p>Adonis Deniz Jr.; Noemi Zaragoza, Mercy Care Sergio Mendez, Center for Health and Recovery</p>	Chia



TIME	SESSION	LOCATION
10:25–11:35 a.m.	BREAKOUT SESSION Crisis System & Court-Ordered Evaluation & Treatment Transforming Crisis into Hope: Innovative Mobile Crisis Solutions in Arizona Michele Russell , La Frontera Tenasha Hildebrand , Mercy Care	Ocotillo
10:25–11:35 a.m.	BREAKOUT SESSION Maternal Mental Health & Perinatal Care Improving Perinatal Behavioral Health Access in Rural Northern Arizona: A Medicaid Pilot Program Matthew Martin , Arizona State University Catherine Dobler , AHCCCS Nina Russin , DBH Arizona State University	Desert Star
10:25–11:35 a.m.	BREAKOUT SESSION Artificial Intelligence & Behavioral Health Charting a Course for Digital Health in Arizona: The Arizona Digital Health Pathways Report Matthew Buman, PhD; Stephanie Carpenter, PhD; Fang Yu, PhD Arizona State University Laura Goetz, MD , HonorHealth Jeremy Greene, MS , Phoenix VA Healthcare System	Brittlebrush
11:35 a.m. –12:55 p.m.	Lunch & Poster Session	
12:00–12:45 p.m.	LUNCH & LEARN SESSION: Responding to Black Overdose Disparities Through Harm Reduction, Lived Experience, and Trusted Community Response Shomari Jackson , South Mountain WORKS RJ Shannon , Arizona African American Council on Harm Reduction Monte Adams , Arizona African American Council on Harm Reduction	Ocotillo



TIME	SESSION	LOCATION
1:00–1:50 p.m.	BREAKOUT SESSION Policy, Advocacy & Systems Change Clozapine: Hope for a New Beginning Rachel Streiff, Arizona Mad Moms	Cottonwood
1:00–1:50 p.m.	BREAKOUT SESSION Population-Specific Needs: Serious Mental Illness From Lived Experience to Measurable Outcomes: Co-Designing Solutions for People with Serious Mental Illness Roshini Moodley Naidoo, MBChB, MPH, MBA; William Riley, PhD, Arizona State University Beth Darling, MD, Valleywise Health Veronica Welch, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona Health Choice Frances Musgrove, Parent and Legal Guardian, Arizona Mad Moms Patient Advocacy Group	Chia
1:00–1:50 p.m.	BREAKOUT SESSION Integrated Care & Community Well-Being Trauma Recovery Centers in Arizona: Implementation in Practice Yevheniia Varyvoda, PhD, University of Arizona Heather Brady, LPC, CODAC Health, Recovery & Wellness Maria Navarrete, LMSW, Chicanos por la Causa	Ocotillo
1:00–1:50 p.m.	BREAKOUT SESSION Maternal Mental Health & Perinatal Care Maternal Mental Health – Community Doula Access Shannon Alexander, AdvCD(DONA), University of Arizona	Desert Star



View the Digital Program
 Learn more about our 2026 presenters by scanning the QR code.



TIME	SESSION	LOCATION
1:00–1:50 p.m.	BREAKOUT SESSION Artificial Intelligence & Behavioral Health Public Health Technology: Past, Present, Future <i>Moderator:</i> Dean Jyoti Pathak, PhD , Arizona State University Rebecca Sunenshine, MD , Arizona State University Susan Robinson, MPH , Arizona Department of Health Services Theresa Cullen, MD , Pima County Health Department	Brittlebush
1:50–2:00 p.m.	Break & Poster Session	
2:00–2:50 p.m.	BREAKOUT SESSION Policy, Advocacy & Systems Change Beyond Healthcare: Coordinating Housing, Behavioral Health, and Community Services to Improve Outcomes for Arizonans with SMI Alex Demyan , Contexture Ty Rosensteel , Solari	Cottonwood
2:00–2:50 p.m.	BREAKOUT SESSION Policy, Advocacy & Systems Change Comparing Treatment Approaches for Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome Marisa Domino , Arizona State University Catherine Dobler , AHCCCS Barbara Cuadras , AHCCCS	Desert Star
2:00–2:50 p.m.	BREAKOUT SESSION Population-Specific Needs: Serious Mental Illness Helpers for Behavioral Health (HBH) Tobacco Cessation Violet Perez-Siwik, MD , University of Arizona Chant Sullivan , University of Arizona Jonathan Brinks , University of Arizona	Chia



AzPHA Abstract Review Committee

We extend our sincere thanks to the conference review committee for their time, expertise, and thoughtful selection of this year's breakout sessions.

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TIME	SESSION	LOCATION
	BREAKOUT SESSION Integrated Care & Community Well-Being	Ocotillo
	Designing Integrated Care Outside Traditional Settings: Early Findings from Terros Health’s Portable Clinical Care Pilot Jessica Varney, MPH, Terros Health Vanna Champion, MD, Terros Health	
2:00–2:50 p.m.	BREAKOUT SESSION Artificial Intelligence & Behavioral Health	Brittlebush
	Crafting Data - Driven Digital Twins for Precision Glucose Control Hassan Ghasemzadeh, PhD, Arizona State University Public Health has a data problem — and AI might fix it (or make it worse) Onicio Batista Leal Neto, PhD, University of Arizona	
2:50-3:15 p.m.	Break	
3:15–4:30 p.m.	CLOSING PLENARY PANEL Where Do We Go From Here? Strengthening Arizona’s Behavioral Health System for the Next Decade <i>Moderator: Carmen Heredia, MSW, Sonora Strategy Partners; former AHCCCS Director</i> Alisa Randall, AHCCCS Jess Howard, LMSW, Solari Crisis and Human Services Minnie Andrade, Molina Healthcare Charles Sullivan, ABC Housing Corporation Dede Yazzie Devine, MBA, Lived Experience Advocate	
4:30 p.m.	Closing Remarks	Ocotillo





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2026 Poster Presentations

LGBTQ+ Students Experiences and Provider Perspectives on LGBTQ+-Affirming Care Delivery at a University Campus Healthcare Facility in Northern Arizona

Jeffersson Santos, PhD, RN; Brettania O'Connor PhD; Carl Dindo PhD; Julie Baldwin PhD; Amanda Pollitt PhD

Evaluating Empathy and Crisis Response of AI Chatbots in Adolescent Suicide Risk Scenarios: A Public Health Analysis

Seth Turner OMSIV; Dr. Tiffany Hughes PhD, MPH, MBA, FGSA; Dr. Lawrence Sands DO MPH; Dr. Felicia Trembath PhD MPH

Lost in Translation: Benchmarking the Safety of LLM Chatbots for Multilingual Therapeutic Support

Lucia Feldman; Dr. Jeffersson Santos; Dr. Pooja Chitre; Amalia Bratsanos; Daria Turico; Aysa Yslasgruber; Dr. Jyotishman Pathak

Mental and Behavioral Health Profiles of Justice-Involved Individuals: Insights from the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS)

Kamyab Keshtkar; Marisa Domino; Tiffany Lemon

Barriers to Culturally-Centered Care Delivery for Native Americans and Sexual and Gender Minorities Seeking Behavioral Health Care in Northern Arizona

Jeffersson Santos, Amanda Acevedo-Morales, Lillian Jones, Carolyn Camplain, Stephanie Babbitt⁵, Chesleigh N. Keene⁶, Tara Bautista⁷ and Julie A. Baldwin⁸

Does the Ruler Change the Result? How Different Measures of Rurality Affect Estimates of PrEP Awareness, Willingness, and Uptake Among Arizona HIV-Negative MSM

Angelo A. Nawar; Alyssa Robillard; and Angel B. Algarin

Trends in postpartum depression in Arizona: A Descriptive Analysis of Arizona Medicaid Data from 2015-2025

Pooja Chitre; Cheuk Hei Cheng



We Need Your Feedback!
Spend a few minutes sharing your thoughts in our post-conference survey.





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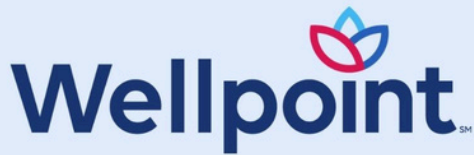
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NOTES





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