

## Listening to Families, Improving Outcomes: Community Insights on Infant Mortality

September 15, 2026 | 2:00-3:00 pm



### SPEAKER BIOS

**Maleka James**, MPH, CD, serves as the Infant Mortality Initiatives Manager at Dayton Children's Hospital's Center for Community Health, where she leads collaborative efforts to improve maternal and infant health outcomes across Montgomery County. She serves as the convener of Roots To Rise Dayton: Nurturing Moms and Babies, a community-driven initiative focused on advancing equitable maternal and infant health through cross-sector collaboration, community voice, and data-informed action. Maleka brings expertise in community engagement, collective impact, maternal and child health systems improvement, and community-based maternal support strategies. She contributes to local and statewide efforts to advance maternal and infant health through leadership and advisory roles with the Ohio Children & Youth Advisory Council, Groundwork Ohio's Maternal & Young Child Health Advisory Council, and the Ohio Collaborative to Prevent Infant Mortality, working to strengthen systems of care and improve outcomes for mothers, babies, and families.

**Crystal King**, MPH is the Senior Coordinator of Community Health Initiatives at the Health Council of Northwest Ohio where she leads Queens Village Toledo and co-leads the Partners for Change Initiative. Her work focuses on improving maternal and infant health outcomes and addressing racial disparities across Northwest Ohio. Crystal holds a bachelor's degree in biology from Bowling Green State University and a Master of Public Health from the University of Toledo with a concentration in Public Health Policy and Law. She collaborates with healthcare systems, policymakers, community organizations, and residents to create community-driven strategies that improve outcomes for local families. Crystal is committed to addressing the root causes of health disparities and ensuring all families have access to the support and opportunities needed to thrive.

**Christine Sander**, MHA, is Senior Director of Community Wellness at Nationwide Children's Hospital, leader of the hospital's Pediatric Vital Signs initiative, and director of the Ohio Better Birth Outcomes Collaborative. Her success in building partnerships and driving population health strategies has helped to reduce infant mortality in central Ohio, and her work now includes broadly improving child outcomes in other Ohio regions. Christine leads the Pediatric Vital Signs initiative, an effort to measure and improve child outcomes across eight metrics: prematurity/infant mortality, kindergarten readiness, teen pregnancy, suicide, obesity, high school graduation, child mortality and preventive health. Christine guides the efforts of dozens of teams now involved in this project. The Ohio Better Birth Outcomes Collaborative brings together some of the state's largest health care systems and federally qualified health centers to improve the delivery of health care to women and families, with a special focus on quality improvement science.

**Richard Stacklin** is the Senior Director of Community Impact, Continuous Improvement, Evaluation, and Sustainability for First Year Cleveland. He joined First Year Cleveland in October 2023, bringing two decades of data analytic experience. Prior to working at FYC, he was the lead maternal and child health data analyst at the Cuyahoga County Board of Health for nearly 15 years. Richard previously was an adjunct instructor at Kent State University, where he taught a graduate-level research methods course. Richard holds a B.A. and M.Ed. from Kent State University, as well as a GIS certificate from Cleveland State University.