

PRESENTER BIOS



Dr. Candace Knight, PhD, RN is an associate professor at the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Nursing, where she is the director of the Nurse-Family Partnership of Central Alabama (NFPCA) and teaches maternal child health nursing in the undergraduate and accelerated master's program. She has over 25 years of experience in maternal child health nursing. Dr. Knight's areas of expertise and research include perinatal stress and its impact on pregnancy and birth outcomes and social determinants of health. Her current work relates to maternal child health and academic-community partnerships. In her role as director of Nurse Family Partnership of Central Alabama, she has overseen the initial implementation and expansion of the NFP program in Jefferson County and has grown the program to the current eight counties serving over 650 clients in 5 years. The outcomes generated by the team at NFPCA have impacted the mental and physical health of these families in a profound way, improving the preterm birth, breastfeeding, and employment rates of these clients to a rate better than the state and county levels even among women experiencing social and economic adversity.



Holly Horan, PhD, is an assistant professor in the Department of Obstetrics at Gynecology, Global and Rural Women's Health Program at the University of Alabama at Birmingham's School of Medicine. She is also a birth and postpartum doula and a perinatal health advocate. Dr. Horan's research foci include maternal stress and birth outcomes, perinatal substance use, and collaborative perinatal care with an emphasis on the inclusion and recognition of doulas as members of the maternity care. She conducts research in the contiguous United States and Puerto Rico in collaborations with doulas, midwives, physicians, and other allied professionals. Dr. Horan previously served as the program coordinator for the Community Doula Program, a Medicaid-funded program providing doula services to priority populations in three counties in Oregon and is the former (2021-2023) President of the Board of Directors for the Birthwell Community Doula Project in Birmingham, Alabama. She is also an on-going collaborator with the VitAL Program and the Department of Obstetrics at Gynecology at the University of Alabama. Dr. Horan provides training on trauma-informed care and patient-centered care for perinatal healthcare clinicians, support professionals, and researchers.



Monica Acoff, MSW, LICSW is a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker. She received a bachelor's degree and studied master's-level counseling at Troy University. She received a master's in social work from the University of Alabama. Her practicum/internship studies focused on work with children/adolescents and brief intensive treatment for adults experiencing psychological episodes. She has worked in both community and facility settings. In addition, she has extensive experience with families, couples, and individuals coping with trauma experiences.



Megan Aucutt joined Healthy Birth Day, Inc. and Count the Kicks as the Associate Director of Programs in 2019, and became the Director of Programs in 2021. Megan is a graduate of the University of Northern Iowa with a bachelor's in history and an emphasis in global health. She has over 10 years' experience with nonprofits and governmental work; with a focus on grant writing and reviewing, coalition building and educational program development. Her true passion is maternal and child health; she oversees the organization's grant program and works with Count the Kick's state partners to ensure implementation of the program in each of the partner states. A focus of Megan's is working closely with app developers to ensure the Count the Kids' app continues to be user friendly. Megan believes that knowledge truly is power. She used the Count the Kicks App during her pregnancies and has three healthy children. She is proud to be part of such an important organization with a powerful mission of saving babies.



Dr. Derek M. Griffith is a Founding Co-Director of the Racial Justice Institute, Founder and Director of the Center for Men's Health Equity, Member of the Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center, and Professor of Health Management & Policy and Oncology. He is the Chair of Global Action on Men's Health and on the Board of Directors of the Men's Health Network. Trained in psychology and public health, Dr. Griffith's program of research focuses on developing strategies to achieve racial, ethnic and gender equity in health. He specializes in interventions to promote Black men's health and well-being and interventions to address racism in organizations and to mitigate the effects of structural racism on health. Dr. Griffith is a contributor to and editor of three books – *Men's Health Equity: A Handbook* (Routledge, 2019), *Racism: Science and Tools for the Public Health Professional* (APHA Press, 2019), and *Health Promotion with Adolescent Boys and Young Men of Color: Global Strategies for Advancing Research, Policy, and Practice in Context* (Springer, 2023). He has been interviewed for and quoted

in national news outlets such as *Ebony*, *NPR*, *The Washington Post*, and *The New York Times*. Dr. Griffith has provided expert review of reports from the World Health Organization and others. He is the author of over 150 peer-reviewed manuscripts, and he has been the principal investigator of research grants from the American Cancer Society, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and several institutes within the National Institutes of Health. Dr. Griffith serves on the editorial boards of several public health and men's health journals, and he has been a guest editor of journal special issues or supplements on African American men's health, men's health equity, qualitative approaches to health equity research, and other topics. He has received four noteworthy honors: (a) Tom Bruce Award from the Community-Based Public Health Caucus of the American Public Health Association in recognition of his research on “eliminating health disparities that vary by race, ethnicity and gender”, (b) he was named a Fellow of the American Academy of Health Behavior for his significant contributions to the field of health behavior research, (c) he was named one of 1,000 Inspiring Black Scientists in America_by the Cell Mentor’s Community of Scholars, and (d) a citation from the president of the American Psychological Association, “For his extraordinary leadership in addressing the impacts of racism on the health and well-being of the nation and specifically for African American and Latino men”.