

Speaker Bios



EMILIE AMUNDSON
DCF Secretary

Appointed by Governor Tony Evers in January 2019 and confirmed by the Senate in February 2020, Wisconsin Department of Children and Families Secretary Emilie Amundson is responsible for statewide and county administered programs that assist children and families, including child welfare, early care and education, and child support. Since joining DCF, Secretary Amundson has successfully led the department in transforming the state's child welfare system; stabilizing and growing the early care and education field; and building stronger, innovative partnerships at the local, state, and federal levels. Prior to her appointment to DCF, Secretary Amundson served as the chief of staff at the Department of Public Instruction where she advanced multiple statewide and cross-agency efforts related to K-12 public education. Secretary Amundson received her undergraduate degree from UW-Madison, her Master of Education Policy from Harvard Graduate School of Education and has completed coursework toward a Ph.D. in Literacy Studies at UW-Madison. She is the proud spouse of a teacher and the proud mom of two elementary school-aged children.



KIRSTEN JOHNSON
DHS Secretary-
Designee

Kirsten Johnson has over 20 years of experience as a public health leader in complex local, state, national, and international organizations. She joins the administration after previously serving as the health commissioner for the city of Milwaukee following her appointment in January 2021. Prior to serving the city of Milwaukee, Kirsten led the Washington Ozaukee Public Health Department for more than a decade as the director and health officer, overseeing the merger of the two counties' health departments and later leading a multi-county pandemic response as well as various other public health and health equity initiatives. Kirsten has her master's degree in public health from Tulane University of Public Health and Tropical Medicine and holds certifications as a public health professional and certified education specialist.



MARCIE RAINBOLT
Government Affairs
Associate, WCA

As a member of the WCA Government Affairs team, she handles the issue areas of County Organization and Personnel, and Judicial and Public Safety. Marcie was appointed by Governor Walker to the 911 Subcommittee. In addition, she staffs the Personnel, Finance and County Organization Steering Committee, and the Judicial and Public Safety Steering Committee. Prior to joining WCA, Marcie served as a staff member in the Wisconsin State Legislature for 12 years. She received a Bachelor of Science in Social Work from Winona State University and a Master of Science in Social Work from the University of Wisconsin – Madison. Marcie grew up in La Crosse County and enjoys visiting her family who still lives there. In her spare time she enjoys chasing after her twin sons and two dogs as well as spending time with her husband.



CONNIE M. CHESNIK
DFES Division
Administrator

Connie M. Chesnik received both her undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Connie has worked as an attorney for the State of Wisconsin for many years and is a frequent lecturer on family law issues. She is currently the Administrator of the Division of Family and Economic Security in the Department of Children and Families where she oversees Wisconsin's child support, refugee and employment programs. Connie is a member of the State Bar of Wisconsin, and serves on the Board of Directors for the National Child Support Enforcement Association. She is the 2021 recipient of the Virginia Hart Special Recognition Award presented by the Governor to an unsung heroine in State service.

Speaker Bios



**REP. PATRICK
SNYDER**

District 85

Pat grew up in Milwaukee during the sixties and seventies then lived in Iowa. He has a communications degree from the University of Iowa. He returned to Wisconsin in November 2000 and became the morning radio host on AM 550 WSAU. Pat left his radio career to enter politics. He first ran for State Assembly in 2012 but came up short. He worked as the Outreach Director for Congressman Sean Duffy. In 2016 he ran again, won the 85th Assembly seat and has been reelected since. He currently serves on the Assembly Committees on Children and Families and Family Law. Pat met his wife Shawn while attending the University of Iowa. They have been married for 38 years. Shawn is a R.N. in the Aspirus Dialysis Unit. They have two married children, Amy, an elementary school teacher in Weston and Daniel, a quality assurance analyst with Epic Software in Verona.



SEN. JESSE JAMES
District 23 -
Altoona

Jesse James is a lifelong resident of the Eau Claire Area. He served in the U.S. Army for six years before attending Chippewa Valley Technical College, where he studied police science. Jesse worked as a full-time police officer before being appointed as Police and Fire Chief of Altoona in 2013. In 2019, Jesse was inaugurated as Representative for Wisconsin's 68th District. He was appointed to serve as Chair of the Substance Abuse and Prevention Committee, Republican Caucus Secretary, and was an appointee to the State Council on Alcohol and other Drug Abuse (SCAODA). Jesse is proud of his work in the Assembly, which includes legislation passed to protect children, fight the opioid epidemic, and support law enforcement. In January 2023, Jesse was inaugurated as 23rd District Senator and appointed to be Chair of the Senate Mental Health, Substance Abuse Prevention, and Children and Families Committee. Jesse was appointed to SCAODA again and is also honored to serve on the Council on Military and State Relations. Jesse lives in Altoona with his wife Vicki, with whom he runs a small business. They have four children and two beautiful grandchildren. Jesse still works as a cop in the village of Cadott, and is the only active law enforcement officer in the Wisconsin Legislature.



REP. DONNA ROZAR
District 69 -
Marshfield

Born in Lancaster County, PA and raised in Orange, VA, Representative Rozar moved to Marshfield, WI in 1988 when her husband, Ed, joined the Marshfield Clinic as a cardiothoracic surgeon. A graduate of the Virginia Baptist Hospital School of Nursing in Lynchburg, the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, and Viterbo University in LaCrosse, She has worked as an emergency room and medical-surgical registered nurse. She retired as a nurse educator from the UW Eau Claire College of Nursing in May 2020. She also was employed as a clinical instructor for Marian University in Fond du Lac. She continues to be employed by the Marshfield Clinic as a casual cardiac medical-surgical clinical RN. Representative Rozar has served as a Wood County Board Supervisor since 2000. Serving in a variety of leadership positions, she is currently chair of the Health and Human Services Committee. A graduate of Leadership Marshfield, she was the 2000 alumni of the year. Dr. and Representative Rozar have 5 children and 5 grandchildren. Dr. Rozar is deceased, having died from complications of occupationally acquired HIV infection in 1993.



CLAIRE PAPROCKI
Brown County

Claire Paprocki is the Communications Specialist for Brown County Public Health. Paprocki graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2011 and shortly after began her print journalism career as a reporter in Mitchell, South Dakota. Paprocki has spent the last 10 years interweaving her communications background into the health insurance industry and public health sector. She started with Brown County Public Health in January of 2020 at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and was quickly thrust into the local and national spotlight as she helped BCPH navigate through uncharted waters. Paprocki lives in De Pere with her husband Jeff and dog Charlie. Although in the heart of Packer Country, she is undoubtedly one of the Minnesota Vikings biggest fans.

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LINDA CONLON
Oneida
County

Linda Conlon, MPH, BAN, RN is the Health Officer/Director of the Oneida County Health Department. She has been in this position for over 21 years and was previously a Public Health Nurse for 6 years. As the Director of a local health department, she works to shape the community so that everyone has what they need for optimal health. Linda has served as president of the Wisconsin Association of Local Health Departments and Boards (WALHDAB) and the Wisconsin Public Health Association (WPHA). Linda works closely with a variety of sectors to secure the conditions in our communities that promote health and wellness and improve the underlying social and economic factors that affect the health of everyone in the community. Internally, she has built a strong multi-disciplinary team and has led that team through initial Public Health Accreditation in 2015 and Re-accreditation in 2020. Linda is the past co-chair of the WPHA/WALHDAB Joint Policy and Advocacy Committee.



**WENDY P.
HENDERSON**
DSP Division
Administrator

Wendy Henderson is the Administrator for the Division of Safety and Permanence at the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families. She began her career over 20 years ago as an advocate and attorney representing low-income families in special education cases. After a decade at nonprofit child and family related organizations, she joined the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families in 2009 as a child protection performance analyst, working with counties to develop local strategic improvements in their child protection work. In 2013 Wendy became the first Director of Youth Services, a position she has held until her appointment in March 2019 to lead the state child welfare division. Wendy has managed the WI DCF's efforts to improve outcomes for youth in and at-risk of system involvement in the areas of education, housing, employment, well-being and permanent connections. As the state child welfare director, Wendy has successfully partnered with counties and tribes to reduce the children in both out of home and congregate care, and to expand supports for children being served with their families. Wendy brings a collaborative approach to state policy work, rooted in a deep belief that partnership is the best way to improve outcomes for the children and families of Wisconsin. She is committed to ensuring that the voices of those effected by state policies are incorporated into policy development. Wendy earned a BA with high honors from Wesleyan University and a law degree from Northeastern University School of Law.



VICKI TYLKA
North Central
Health Care

Vicki Tylka is North Central Health Care's (NCHC) first Managing Director of Community Programs, a position that was created to achieve excellence in collaboration with the Social Services Departments and partners in Langlade, Lincoln, and Marathon Counties. NCHC is a unique and comprehensive provider of 51.42 based services including community treatment, outpatient, regional crisis stabilization facilities and inpatient behavioral health units for youth and adults. Vicki is known to counties and our State Departments for her leadership on the WCHSA Executive Board and being a chair of the Children Youth and Families PAC for many years in her former role as Director of Marathon County DSS.



LISA CHARBARNEAU
Oneida County

Lisa Charbarneau is the Human Resources Director/Administrative Coordinator with Oneida County. In this role, Lisa is responsible for personnel and labor relations matters as well as the duties of Loss Control Coordinator. Lisa has more than thirty years of experience as a Human Resources Professional in the public sector and ten years in the private sector. She has served as Chair and Board Member for several local, State and Federal HR Organizations.

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JOHN ELLIOT
Walworth County

John Elliott is currently the Deputy Administrator for the Division of Safety and Permanence for the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families. In this role, he is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Division. The Division of Safety and Permanence is responsible for oversight of the child welfare and youth justice systems delivered through Wisconsin counties and Tribes. His responsibilities include: Oversight of the Child Welfare Professional Development System, eWisACWIS case management system, leading major division strategic initiatives and overseeing the operation functions of the division. John is an experienced leader in strategy development and execution, policy development and implementation, research and leading large-scale projects in large complex public/private organizations. John, was also adopted as an infant in the state of Michigan. He is married to attorney who represents parents in CHIPS cases in Dane county and is the proud father of two daughters.



PAULA WINTER
Dunn County

Paula Winter is the current Director of Dunn County Human Services. She held the role of director of Human Services Departments for the past 17 years (Dunn, Pepin, and Buffalo Counties). Paula is a Certified Social Worker and a graduate of the Viterbo University Servant Leadership Master's Program. Paula has worked in the field of Social Work since 1992. Paula is married to Larry and has three adult daughters who bless her life tremendously. Paula's greatest professional joy comes from leading system changes (macro and micro), cultural renovations, and building teams, and individuals.



ELIZABETH ALDRED
Waukesha County

Elizabeth Aldred, has served as the Director of Health and Human Services for Waukesha County for close to three years. With a strong focus on partnership, accountability, and self-determination, she has worked alongside her team to improve critical services to transform the system of care. Prior to joining Waukesha County, Liz dedicated 14 years to public service in Walworth County. She served as the Director of Health and Human Services for six years and as the Superintendent of Public Institutions for three of those years. With a background as a licensed clinical social worker, she has worked in every component of health and human services, including serving as an interim public health officer, and nursing home administrator. Liz holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of New Hampshire and a master's degree in social work from the University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration. She is also certified as an Intermediate Clinical Supervisor for Substance Use Services and holds JCI certification in the State of Wisconsin, demonstrating her commitment to professional growth and excellence. Liz is a long-time resident of Walworth County with deep roots in both Walworth and Waukesha Counties. She finds joy in running and is an avid reader. As a proud mother of two college-age daughters, she understands the importance of balancing personal and professional responsibilities. Her philosophy as a leader centers around doing the right thing through trust and transparency.



CARLO NEVICOSI
Walworth County

Carlo currently serves as the Director of the Walworth County Department of Health and Human Services and also as the Walworth County Superintendent of County Institutions for the county's nursing home. He has worked for Walworth County for over 20 years. He began his career in child protective services, transitioned to behavioral health services, and ultimately found his way into leadership. He has had opportunities to lead as Supervisor of Mental Health Programming, Manager of Behavioral Health Services, Deputy Director, and now Director. His career highlights include the development of innovative partnerships with the courts, law enforcement and schools all in the context of a fiscally conservative county.

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JILL CHAFFEE
Lutheran Social
Services

Jill has over 25 years of experience in the human services field. Early in her career, she provided direct county-based social work services as well as substance use services and mental health psychotherapy. With a foundational understanding in the provision of both public and private sector services, she has spent the last 20 years of her career in the area of human service administration. At LSS, Jill leads the community-based services team. Services include a variety of mental health and substance abuse services as well as foster care, public adoption, and various service facilitation programs. The community-based budget is approximately 30 million dollars with approximately 330 employees. She received her Bachelor of Arts and Master of Social Work degrees from the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor.



**SAMANTHA
FERYANCE**
Lutheran
Social Services

Samantha has over 10 years of experience in the mental health field. She started her career as a sexual assault advocate then transitioned to working as a case manager with individuals experiencing persistent and severe mental illness. Following these experiences, Samantha began her tenure at Lutheran Social Services working in several children's programs as a therapist and service facilitator. After shifting to a leadership position, her passion was to develop helpful tools and training materials to increase the knowledge and comfort of direct employees in their service provision. Through her current position, Samantha has assisted in creating agency resource guides, training plans, and focuses on program trainings to support employee development.