

Texas Department of State Health Services

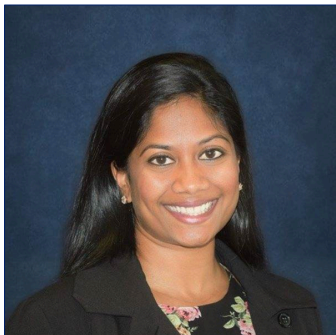
Perinatal Bereavement Care Initiative

Presenter Biographies



Jessica Phillips, MAS, BSN, RNC-OB, C-EFM, C-ONQS, C-OBE is a dedicated leader in maternal and neonatal healthcare with two decades of experience in clinical care, program development, and quality improvement. Currently serving as the perinatal program director at the Texas EMS, Trauma, and Acute Care Foundation (TETAF) and Texas Perinatal Services, she oversees statewide maternal and neonatal survey service lines, partnering with hospitals and healthcare professionals to elevate standards of care and improve outcomes for mothers and newborns across Texas. Jessica brings a robust

background in high-risk obstetrics, patient safety, and program implementation. An active voice in professional advocacy, Jessica serves on regional and national committees through the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric, and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN) and the National Certification Corporation (NCC), championing quality standards, public policy, and certification excellence.



Shruthi Arismendez, PhD is a seasoned public health professional with 20 years of dedicated service in maternal and child health. Dr. Arismendez's career spans academic research, program implementation, and policy advocacy focusing on maternal health and community-driven health solutions. Dr. Arismendez currently serves as the Maternal and Child Health Unit Director with Texas Department of State Health Services, where she leads multidisciplinary teams in designing evidence-based solutions for some of the most pressing challenges in maternal and child health today.



Dr. Terri Major-Kincade is a double-board-certified neonatologist and pediatrician with over 25 years of experience as a Clinician in Neonatology, Pediatrics, and Neonatal/Perinatal Palliative Care. She serves as Associate Professor of Pediatrics at UT Health Houston-McGovern Medical School, Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital and Medical Director for Pediatric Palliative Care. She holds an MD/MPH from UCLA School of Medicine, Pediatric Residency and Neonatology training from UT Southwestern and UT Houston, and Pediatric Hospice and Palliative Medicine training at Baylor College of Medicine/Texas Children's Hospital. Her national partnerships include Pregnancy Loss

and Infant Death Alliance and the Pampers Womb to World Advisory Board. Her research interests include identifying barriers to Perinatal and Pediatric Palliative Care, Provider-Patient Communication, and Navigating Moral Distress. Most recently she co-authored a chapter in the newest edition of the Handbook of Perinatal and Neonatal Palliative Care Guide for Nurses, Physicians and Other Health Professionals.



Catherine Quintana, BSN, RN, RNC-OB, CPLC is a Family Support Specialist Registered Nurse at Parkland Health in Dallas, Texas, with 19 years of experience in Labor and Delivery. For the past 11 years, she has provided specialized support to families experiencing complex perinatal outcomes, including pregnancy and infant loss. Catherine has also served as the Perinatal Bereavement Coordinator, leading efforts to ensure compassionate, evidence-based care for grieving families. She is certified in Inpatient Obstetrics, Perinatal Loss Care, and is a Resolve Through Sharing Certified Bereavement Coordinator. She is passionate about advancing bereavement care and equipping

healthcare teams to support families with empathy and dignity.



Tina Castellanos, MPA, IBCLC started her work in maternal and child health as a volunteer breastfeeding peer counselor. She later trained and practiced as a Certified Birth Doula, Childbirth Educator, and an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC), serving thousands of families in San Antonio and the surrounding area before moving on to work for Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS). Tina had the pleasure of working as Maternal and Child Health Strategist for DSHS Public Health Region 8 before joining the Perinatal and Infant Health and Safety Team. Tina draws from her experience working with mothers, babies, and families at the local, state, and national level as she continues to strive to support improvements in

maternal and child health.



Danielle Franck, BA is the U.S. Business Development Executive for Flexmort, where she leads national education and implementation of the CuddleCot to support families experiencing pregnancy and infant loss. Drawing from both her professional background in healthcare and her personal experience with loss, she brings a compassionate, practical approach to training that centers on the needs of families and clinical teams. She is deeply committed to improving bereavement care through education, advocacy, and meaningful bedside support.



Lindsay Lowery, MBA is an experienced executive with 15+ years leading growth, marketing, and community initiatives across the U.S. and Latin America. Her work focuses on supporting vulnerable populations facing food insecurity, infant loss, and housing instability. With a background in financial markets and nonprofit leadership, she brings a practical, grounded approach to building programs, strengthening donor relationships, and ensuring long-term sustainability. She is fluent in English and Spanish and holds an MBA in International Business from The University of Memphis and a BBA in Marketing from Southern Methodist University.



Nicole Purnell is a maternal health advocate based in North Texas. Her life was tragically changed in 2005 when preeclampsia and HELLP caused multiple organ failure, placenta abruption and resulted in the stillbirth of her son at 34 weeks gestation. She began volunteering with the Preeclampsia Foundation soon after and in 2018, joined the staff at the Preeclampsia Foundation as the MoMMA's Voices Coalition Program Director.



Jennifer Mikenas is a maternal health advocate based in Indialantic, FL, and the Program Manager of Training at MoMMAs Voices, a program of the Preeclampsia Foundation. In this role, she leads efforts to equip both healthcare providers and patient partners with the tools to collaborate in driving meaningful changes in maternal health. A former educator, Jennifer became a passionate advocate after the preventable stillbirth of her son in 2021. She now shares her story to support families navigating loss and to empower expectant parents with life-saving knowledge about stillbirth prevention. In addition to her work with MoMMAs Voices, Jennifer serves as a Count the Kicks Ambassador in Florida, volunteers with PUSH for Empowered Pregnancy and Measure the Placenta and is an active member of the Brevard County Fetal and Infant Mortality Review Committee.



Erika Spiers, LMT, MLD-C is a devoted mother of five and the Board President of The Mourning Forecast, a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting families through grief and loss. Her motherhood includes four children here on earth and her daughter, Glory Bee, who she lost to a missed miscarriage at 12 weeks. That loss deeply shaped her heart for bereaved families. Erika now honors Glory Bee's life through her advocacy and by creating space for honest, compassionate conversations around pregnancy and infant loss. Through both personal experience and leadership, she is committed to helping parents feel seen, empowered,

and supported in their own journey of grief and healing.



Katie Talman brings a deep personal perspective to conversations about grief and bereavement after losing her daughter, Everly, to stillbirth at 23 weeks and 3 days. In Everly's honor, Katie became involved in advocacy supporting bereaved parents, including efforts surrounding Everly's Law, which provides protection and compassionate bereavement support for families experiencing infant loss. Katie has also shared her story through multiple appearances on the All There Is with Anderson Cooper podcast, helping raise awareness about the realities of stillbirth and the support grieving families need.



Kossiwa Kabore is a Nationally Registered Certified Medical Assistant, a Community Health Worker, and the program manager of a nonprofit organization based in Dallas, Texas. She has experienced the devastating loss of two baby boys at 26 and 24 weeks gestation, with the causes still unknown. A survivor of postpartum depression, Kossiwa has also overcome severe anxiety and depression. Due to complications during pregnancy, she requires weekly hormone injections and a cerclage with each pregnancy. Through her personal journey, Kossiwa openly shares her story to raise awareness about the realities of traumatic pregnancy and delivery. She emphasizes

the importance of seeking support, prioritizing mental health, and embracing the strength it takes to be a resilient mother. Her hope is that her experiences offer comfort, inspiration, and a sense of hope to others facing similar challenges.



Kay Matthews, LCHW is a nationally recognized maternal mental health advocate, nonprofit founder, speaker, and licensed community health worker with more than a decade of leadership advancing culturally responsive care for Black and Brown birthing individuals. Founder and Executive Director of the Shades of Blue Project, a Houston-based organization created after the stillborn loss of her daughter and her own experience with undiagnosed postpartum depression. Brings a rare combination of lived experience, grassroots organizing, public policy

advocacy, community education, coalition building, program design, and entrepreneurial leadership.