

# THE CROSSING BRIDGES SUMMIT MARCH 18, 2021

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**Psychological Influences  
on Black Women's Health**

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**PennState**  
Greater Allegheny

# Message from Jacqueline Edmondson Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer

We are starting our fourth year of the Crossing Bridges Summit. The purpose has always been for our campus to be a catalyst for change as we work to bridge racial divides in the Mon Valley.

Our events in the year ahead are particularly timely as we take up questions about Black women's health that were raised in the Pittsburgh Inequality report issued by researchers at the University of Pittsburgh last fall. There's a heightened awareness in our communities about racism and inequity that provides an important context and urgency to our work.



We look forward to engaging our campus and community partners in courageous conversations as we determine actions that will bring positive changes in the region.

## Crossing Bridges Pillars

**Speaker Series:** The Speaker Series brings prominent figures to campus, to offer different perspectives on questions of race and racism in the United States and the Mon Valley.

**Summit Talks:** Summit Talks occur after each speaker. Faculty, staff, students and community members join discussion leaders to consider each speaker's major points. Participants identify actionable items Greater Allegheny will pursue as it works to be an agent for positive change.

**Unity Talks:** These student-led campus-based discussions focus on topics that emerge from student dialogue about race and racism. Unity Talks engage students, faculty, and staff in honest dialogue about issues that concern students.

**Visiting Scholar:** The Visiting Scholar Series brings intellectuals, artists, activists and others to campus for a yearlong engagement to include teaching, community outreach, research, and/or creative performance. Dr. Tom Poole, a civil rights scholar with extensive work in educational equity is the current Visiting Scholar.

**Task Force on Racial Equity and Justice:** Our Task Force on Racial Equity and Justice is responsible for examining curriculum and programming and making recommendations to ensure that all members of the campus community develop an understanding of racial justice, racism, and its impact on society.

## Event Agenda

Welcome from Dr. Jacqueline Edmondson  
Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer

Student Spoken Word Reading  
Ke'ira Williams

Moderator Introduction  
Dr. Johnathan White

Panel Discussion  
Raven Davis, MSW; Dr. Kathi Elliott, DNP, MSW, CRNP;  
Dashawna Fussell-Ware, LSW; and Dr. Stella Onuoha-Obilor, DrPH, MD, MPH, CPHQ

Live Question & Answer Session  
Submit your answers via [watch.psu.edu/crossingbridges](https://watch.psu.edu/crossingbridges)

Closing

# Featuring



## **Raven Davis, MSW - Panelist**

*Health Enrollment Unit Supervisor, Allegheny County - Children, Youth and Families*

Ms. Raven Davis currently serves as supervisor of the Health Enrollment Unit at Allegheny County's Office of Children, Youth, and Families (OCYF). She is a Pittsburgh native and graduate of Brashear high school. Ms. Davis earned her Bachelor of Social Work from Slippery Rock University and later earned her Master of Social Work from The University of Pittsburgh. She began working at OCYF in 2013 as a direct service caseworker, and later transitioned to the agency's Health Enrollment Unit in 2017. The vision of the Unit is "the seamless collaboration with CYF staff, community professionals, and families, to ensure the holistic health needs of children and families involved with OCYF". In her work, Ms. Davis' goal is to ensure that children and youth have access to needed medical and behavioral health services, while also case planning to remove the frequent barriers that serve as deterrents to wellness. In her free time, she enjoys Zumba fitness, a good book, and attending the outdoor summer festivities the 'burgh has to offer!



## **Dr. Kathi R. Elliott, DNP, MSW, CRNP - Panelist**

*Chief Executive Officer, gwen's girls*

Dr. Kathi R. Elliott is the CEO at Gwen's Girls whose mission is to empower girls and young women to have productive lives through holistic, gender-specific programs, education and experiences through afterschool, school, and community-based programming throughout Greater Pittsburgh. Gwen's Girls was founded by Dr. Elliott's late mother, Commander Gwen Elliott. Dr. Elliott earned a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree from Chatham University, and completed dual master's degrees in nursing and Social Work from The University of Pittsburgh. She has over 20 years' experience in social service, community, and individual mental health treatment. Her career began as a victim advocate at the Center for Victims, mostly within the juvenile justice system. Dr. Elliott is a visionary leader. She has spearheaded the formation of the Black Girls Equity Alliance, a collaboration of over 75 practitioners, researchers, system administrators, and other stakeholders committed to addressing systemic inequities in the juvenile justice, child welfare, education, and health care systems. She is most proud to be the mother of two adult children and a grandmother of a 1 year old granddaughter.



## **Dashawna J. Fussell-Ware, LSW - Panelist**

*Doctoral Fellow, Steel Smiling*

Ms. Dashawna (duh-SHAW-nuh) Fussell-Ware (Fuh-SUL-where) is a doctoral fellow for the Center on Race and Social Problems at the University of Pittsburgh and Steel Smiling, Inc. a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the mental health of Black and Brown Pittsburghers. She is a proud native of Miami, Florida, and received her Bachelor of Arts, with honors, in Psychology with minors in English and Human and Social Development from the University of Miami. She earned her Master of Social Work with a certificate in non-profit management from the University of Georgia and is currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work. Dashawna's current research focuses on promoting mental health literacy among Black, Latinx, and Hispanic children, adolescents, and transition-age youth as a pathway to eliminating mental health disparities. Her ultimate career goals are to conduct groundbreaking research that erases mental health disparities for Black, Latinx, and Hispanic youth as well as serve communities of color through partnerships with resource-rich academic institutions.



## **Dr. Stella Onuoha-Obilor, DrPH, MD, MPH, CPHQ - Panelist**

*Vice President of Clinical Quality, Highmark Health*

Dr. Stella Obilor (Oh-Bee-Lor) serves as the Vice President of Clinical Quality for Highmark Health. Her MD is in medicine and surgery, and she also holds a masters and doctorate in Public Health. She is a certified professional in Healthcare Quality and a Certified Case Manager.

Dr. Obilor is a transformational, motivational, servant leader who is passionate about quality health care. She is a loving wife and proud mother of 4; ages 14, 13, 11, and 8. She says, "Improving the numbers fuels my passion because behind every data point in Health Care is a human story!"



## **Ke'ira Williams - Student Speaker**

*Biobehavioral Health Major, Penn State Greater Allegheny*

Ke'ira Williams is a student at Penn State Greater Allegheny studying BioBehavioral Health and Psychology. As the Psychology club president, Ke'ira has worked to raise mental health awareness. She is active in several other campus clubs including the Book Club, Black Student Union and Health Science Club. Ke'ira plans to become a psychiatrist, creating a comfortable and safe experience for her patients by providing them with the understanding, patience and care they deserve. In her spare time, she enjoys drawing and writing and reading poetry.

# Moderator



## Dr. Johnathan White

*Assistant Teaching Professor of History, Penn State Greater Allegheny*

Johnathan White was born in Norfolk, VA. He earned his MA and doctorate in History from the University of Pittsburgh. His dissertation examines the plight of black jazz musicians in Pittsburgh before and after integration. In particular, he examines oral testimonies to understand how collective memory interprets and reifies the past. Dr. White has been employed at Penn State Greater Allegheny since 2007. He has taught a variety of courses in history, African-American studies, black arts, and leadership development. He co-founded the Study of Hip-Hop Conference and the Stewart and Jones Scholar Leadership Program. Dr. White is engaged in community affairs as a board member of the Langston Hughes Poetry Society. Furthermore, he served as director of the Full Armor Institute, which focuses on mentoring young black men, at Mt. Olive Baptist church. He has created and conducted several black history workshops along with seminars on educating black men and living a vibrant lifestyle that synthesizes faith and the pursuit of social justice.

# Upcoming Events

## Summit Talks

Saturday, March 20, 2021 | 10:00 a.m.

Register here: [greaterallegheny.psu.edu/register-summit-talks](https://greaterallegheny.psu.edu/register-summit-talks)

Join us as we consider our panelists' points and identify actionable items to bring about change.

## Speaker Series

Watch Live: [watch.psu.edu/crossingbridges](https://watch.psu.edu/crossingbridges)

Thursday, April 15, 2021 | 3:00 p.m.

**Political influences on Black Women's Health**

Panelists will focus on political and policy factors that influence black women's health.

# Thank You

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