



# **District of Columbia Lactation Commission Annual Report to the Mayor**

## **December 2017**

The cover photo is courtesy of the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC).

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## Acronyms

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AAP	American Academy of Pediatrics
APHA	American Public Health Association
BS	Bachelors of Science
CHA	Community Health Administration
CHAI	Child Health Advocacy Institute
CHES	Certified Health Education Specialist
CHIP	Children's Health Insurance Program
CLC	Certified Lactation Counselor
CLS	Clinical Laboratory Scientist
CRECH	Center for Research on Ethnicity, Culture and Health
CSHE	Center for School, Health and Education
DC	District of Columbia
DCBFC	DC Breastfeeding Coalition
DCHR	Department of Human Resources
DCLC	District of Columbia Lactation Commission
DHCF	Department of Health Care Finance
DHS	Department of Human Services
DOH	Department of Health
EPSDT	Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment
FAAP	Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics
FABM	Fellow of the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine
FNS	Food and Nutrition Service
GWU	George Washington University
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IBCLC	International Board Certified Lactation Consultant
JD	Juris Doctorate
LDN	Licensed Dietitian and Nutritionist
MD	Medical Doctor
MPH	Master's in Public Health
MS	Masters of Science
MSN	Masters of Science in Nursing
NC	North Carolina
OSSE	Office of the State Superintendent of Education
OWH	Office on Women's Health
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
RDN	Registered Dietitian
SECDCC	State Early Child Development Coordinating Committee
SIDS	Sudden Infant Death Syndrome
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
WIC	Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children

## **I. Introduction**

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The District of Columbia (DC) Lactation Commission (DCLC) is a new Commission. The DCLC was originally enacted as a result of D.C. Law 20-121, the “Breastmilk Bank and Lactation Support Act of 2013.” The Commission was formally established on December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016 by the authority of the Mayor of the District of Columbia (Mayor’s Order 2017-177).

The establishment states the purpose and functions of the Lactation Commission are as follows:

- 1) The Commission shall make recommendations to the Mayor of the District of Columbia and the Department of Health (DOH) regarding legislative, programmatic, and policy ways to improve the District's strategies in reducing infant mortality and increase infant and child health outcomes through promotion, awareness, and support of breastfeeding and lactating mothers.
- 2) The Commission will produce an annual report of legislative, programmatic and policy recommendations after examining issues germane to the purposes of the Commission, which shall include but not be limited to:
  - a) Recommendations for a library of comprehensive and current breastfeeding and lactation educational material.
  - b) Recommendations for a process to collect and store donated breastmilk.
  - c) Provide outreach and education regarding the availability of donated breastmilk and the breastfeeding and lactation services available in the District of Columbia.
  - d) Guidance on the establishment and staffing of a breastfeeding support hotline.

## **II. Report**

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From April 2017 to December 2017, the District of Columbia Lactation Commission, a diverse group of leaders and professionals representing sectors including business, education, government, medical, non-profit, public, and private came together to organize the Commission and to begin its review of current District activities that support breastfeeding, lactating mothers, and their families. Additionally, the DCLC has created bylaws that will ensure that the Commission operates within the Board of Ethics and Government Accountability and Office of Open Government guidelines.

This inaugural 2017 Annual Report provides information about the Commission’s structure and the make-up of its members. There are no recommendations being put forth at this time.

The Commission recognizes the repeal of D.C. Law 20-121 “Breastmilk Bank and Lactation Support Act” effective December 13, 2017 and will continue to operate under the Mayor’s Order 2017-177, the “Establishment of the Lactation Commission.”

During 2018, the Commission will review at a minimum, recommendations for: a library of comprehensive and current breastfeeding and lactation educational material; outreach and education regarding the availability of donated breastmilk; breastfeeding and lactation services available in the District of Columbia; and guidance on the establishment and staffing of a breastfeeding support hotline. Due to the repeal of D.C. Law 20-121, recommendations for a process to collect and store donated breastmilk will not be developed. The Commission will continue to direct its efforts in supporting breastfeeding, lactating mothers and their families in the District of Columbia. The 2018 report will include a discussion of these topics and any recommendations being put forth by the Commission.

### III. The Commission Structure

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The District of Columbia Lactation Commission currently consists of sixteen (16) members made up of public and government representatives. All members were appointed by Mayor Muriel Bowser. The terms of office for members range from one to three years. The Commission currently meets once a month and has elected a chair. Commission members are volunteers and do not receive a salary or an expense allowance. In 2017, membership was as follows:

Eleven (11) public members:

- Two Neonatologists or Pediatricians: Dr. Jennifer Tender and Dr. Sahira Long
- Two Social Service or Community Outreach Experts: Angela McClain (Chair) and Gina Caruso
- Two Public Health Experts: Dr. Amira Roess and Kanika Harris
- Two Persons with Background in Breastfeeding and Lactation Studies: Noelene Jeffers and Gwendolyn West
- One Obstetrician/Gynecologist: **This position is vacant.**
- Two Consumer Members: Lauren Propst-Riddick and Christina Stowers

Five (5) District of Columbia Government representatives from the following agencies:

- Department of Health (DOH): Paulette Thompson and Emily Woody (Alternate)
- Department of Health Care Finance (DHCF): Colleen Sonosky
- Department of Human Services (DHS): Quamiece Harris
- Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE): Chibu Anyanwu
- Department of Human Resources (DCHR): **This position is vacant.**

To respond to the establishment, the Commission members formed three sub-committees: 1) Breastfeeding Education and Library; 2) Human Milk Bank; and 3) Lactation Support Services and Hotline. Each Commissioner voluntarily selected which sub-committee on which to serve.

Members of the Breastfeeding Education and Library Sub-Committee include:

- Commissioner Jennifer Tender (Committee Chair)
- Commissioner Gwendolyn West
- Commissioner Angela McClain

Members of the Human Milk Bank Sub-Committee include:

- Commissioner Gina Caruso (Committee Chair)
- Commissioner Lauren Propst-Riddick
- Commissioner Jennifer Tender

Members of the Lactation Support Services and Hotline Sub-Committee include:

- Commissioner Noelene Jeffers (Committee Chair)
- Commissioner Sahira Long
- Commissioner Amira Roess

#### IV. Commission Members' Biographies

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The DC Lactation Commission is made up a diverse group of leaders and professionals representing sectors including business, education, government, medical, non-profit, public, and private. Pictured below are some of the Commission's public members at their swearing-in ceremony on December 19, 2016. Following the picture are brief biographies of each public member and government representative.



**Commissioner Jennifer Tender, MD, IBCLC, FAAP**  
*Neonatologists or Pediatricians*



Dr. Jennifer Tender is a Board Certified Pediatrician and Lactation Consultant. She is the Program Development Chair of the DC Breastfeeding Coalition (DCBFC) and the Breastfeeding Coordinator for the DC Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Her research interests include identifying barriers to breastfeeding among DC DOH Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) clients and improving breastfeeding education for pediatric residents.



**Commissioner Sahira A. Long, MD, IBCLC, FAAP, FABM**

*Neonatologists or Pediatricians*



Dr. Sahira Long is a Board Certified Pediatrician and Lactation Consultant, and a Fellow of the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine (FABM). She is a graduate of the George Washington University School of Medicine, where she is an Associate Professor of Pediatrics. She is Medical Director for Children's Health Center—Anacostia, a community-based pediatric medical home owned and operated by Children's National Health System in medically underserved Southeast Washington, DC. She also directs the Children's National East of the River Lactation Support Center.

Dr. Long has served as president of the DCBFC since its inception in 2004. She is a member of the Board of Directors for Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere and the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine. She has been involved in breastfeeding advocacy on the national, state and local level. Dr. Long participated as a panelist during the US Surgeon General's Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding and is featured as an expert in the Office of Woman's Health (OWH) *It's Only Natural* campaign ([www.womenshealth.gov/itsonlynatural](http://www.womenshealth.gov/itsonlynatural)) to improve breastfeeding rates among African Americans.

**Commissioner Angela McClain, Chair**

*Social Service or Community Outreach Expert*



Angela McClain is currently the Business Development Advisor for ChildFund, a non-profit organization whose work focuses on child protection and rights. She leads international teams to collaborate and design innovative programs. With over fifteen years of experience in business development, she has secured more than \$431 million in grants and contracts and formed strategic partnerships with community-based organization, non-governmental organizations, corporations, foundations, government agencies and private donors to support programs in a variety of sectors including maternal child health. Angela is a member of the DCBFC. She holds a Master's of Business Administration degree with a focus on management from Strayer University in Washington, DC and a bachelor's of arts degree in political science from Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte, North Carolina (NC). She has two children, both of whom were breastfed.

**Commissioner Amira Roess***Public Health Expert*

Dr. Amira Roess is an Infectious Disease Epidemiologist and an Assistant Professor in the Department of Global Health at the George Washington University School of Public Health. She obtained her Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) from Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health and her Master's in Public Health (MPH) from Rutgers University. Her career has focused on using epidemiological and evaluation methods for health disparities and infectious diseases epidemiology research to ultimately build the evidence to inform interventions. Her subject matter expertise includes breastfeeding behaviors, development of antibiotic resistance, and infectious disease emergence and transmission. She is a board member of the DCBFC and has participated in various breastfeeding education initiatives with several partners including at George Washington University (GWU) and the DC WIC Program.

**Commissioner Kanika Harris***Public Health Expert*

Dr. Harris joined the Center for School, Health and Education (CSHE) at the American Public Health Association (APHA) as a consultant in 2015 and has a wealth of expertise in social determinants of health and health disparities. Dr. Harris brings innovative approaches and a social-culturally relevant lens to investigating current health issues. At CSHE, Dr. Harris assists in facilitating the professional development and technical assistance program designed for school based health center leaders and their school partners in addressing barriers for youth at risk for high school dropout and adverse health outcomes. Prior to joining the CSHE, Dr. Harris served as a research fellow at the Center for Research on Ethnicity, Culture and Health (CRECH) in Ann Arbor, Michigan. At CRECH, Dr. Harris led several research projects both domestically and internationally that focused on women's health, birth outcomes, and HIV prevention for women of color and vulnerable populations. Dr. Harris's research background includes designing and testing cognitive intervention models that address risk-taking behaviors for minority populations.

Dr. Harris received her Doctoral degree in Health Behavior and Health Education from the University of Michigan. She also received her MPH with a concentration in International Health from Morehouse School of Medicine. Dr. Harris has been certified as a doula since 2007 and volunteers in this capacity by assisting mothers in the Washington DC area with the information and support through the childbearing years and beyond.

**Commissioner Noelene K. Jeffers**

*Person with Background in Breastfeeding and Lactation Studies*



Noelene Jeffers is a Certified Nurse Midwife with a Bachelor's of Science (BS) degree from Georgetown University and a Master's of Science in Nursing (MSN) from Yale University. Ms. Jeffers practices full-scope midwifery at Unity Health Care in Washington DC. She has dedicated her career to providing quality midwifery care in a variety of settings including freestanding birth centers and tertiary care hospitals. She is a current PhD student at Johns Hopkins University and a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Future of Nursing Scholar. Before she joined Unity Health Care, Ms. Jeffers was the Interim Director of Midwifery at the Community of Hope Family Health and Birth Center where she served as the lead on the

Baby-Friendly Steering Committee and implemented a breastfeeding clinic staffed by nurse-midwives and lactation consultants. Ms. Jeffers is the President and Board Chair of the International Center for Traditional Childbearing, a nonprofit dedicated to achieving birth equity for African American families.

**Commissioner Gwendolyn West**

*Person with Background in Breastfeeding and Lactation Studies*



Gwendolyn West is an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) and Perinatal Educator. She provides direct services in clinical, public health, and private settings. Her focus is on bringing community outreach and organizing, program development, and professional training to local government, community health care organizations, and hospitals. She has dedicated herself to community health by educating families toward healthy birth outcomes, on the importance of breast milk as the first food, and on managing nutritional health through the life cycle.

Gwendolyn's work has earned recognition from the US Department of Health and Human Services/ Office on Women's Health, the DC WIC Program, the International Center for Traditional Childbirth, and Medela, Inc. She has participated in multiple boards, panels, research projects, and presentations at such institutions as Georgetown University, Carolina Global Breastfeeding Institute at the Gillings School of Public Health, the New Jersey College of Medicine and Dentistry, University of Maryland, University of the District of Columbia, Office of the State Superintendent for Education, the DC Breastfeeding Coalition, and Howard University Hospital. She is the mother of eight children, all of whom were breastfed.

### **Commissioner Lauren Propst-Riddick**

*Consumer Member*



Lauren Propst-Riddick is currently a Senior Manager in accounting for Marriott International, Inc. at their headquarters located in Bethesda, Maryland. She manages a team responsible for providing business support such as budgeting, billing, and invoicing for the Digital Services department. Her previous roles at Marriott have focused on treasury accounting services as well as corporate and statutory reporting. Lauren also has experience in project management, leading collaborative teams, and managing stakeholder relationships. Prior to Marriott, Lauren was a member of the internal audit department at The Washington Post Company. She began her career in public accounting where she spent five years in the Big Four at both PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP and KPMG LLP. Lauren has over 12 years of accounting and finance experience.

Lauren is an active member of the Xi Zeta Omega chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated and participates on the Membership and Social & Welfare sub-committees. In addition, she holds a Bachelor's of Arts degree in Economics from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a Master's degree in Accounting from The George Washington University. She is a native of North Carolina and currently resides in Washington, DC with her husband and two children, both of whom were breastfed.

### **Commissioner Christina Stowers**

*Consumer Member*



Christina Stowers is an Account Supervisor at The Hannon Group, a woman-owned communications and market research firm specializing in public health and clean energy communications. She supports the U.S. Department of Energy where she manages internal and external communications outreach to state and local governments. Prior to joining The Hannon Group, Christina provided program support for an environmental nongovernmental organization focusing on agriculture, environment, and public health policy issues. She also served as an advocate for environment and agriculture policy by researching and analyzing legislative and regulatory activity and key policy developments (both domestic and international) in addition to assisting with state and federal level public awareness campaigns. Christina is a Pennsylvania native, grew up on a small family dairy farm, and has a serious case on wanderlust. She lives in Washington, D.C. with her husband and son, who she is currently breastfeeding.



**Government Representative Paulette Thompson, MS, RDN, LDN, CLS**

*Department of Health (DOH)*



Ms. Thompson is a Supervisory Public Health Nutritionist at DOH in the Community Health Administration (CHA) and Nutrition Coordinator for DC WIC. In this capacity she is responsible for the development and management of nutrition and breastfeeding education programs, policies and procedures for DC WIC. Prior to this position, Ms. Thompson served as Breastfeeding Coordinator for WIC. Ms. Thompson has also worked for Prince George's County Department on Aging, the US Department of Agriculture and Stop and Shop/Giant Food, LLC as Health and Wellness Manager. She received her Bachelor of

Science degree in chemistry from St. Olaf College and her Master of Science (MS) degree in nutrition from the University of Maryland College Park. She is a Registered Dietitian, Nutritionist (RDN) and a Licensed Dietitian/Nutritionist (LDN) in both the District of Columbia and the state of Maryland.

**Government Representative Alternate, Emily Woody, MPH, IBCLC, RDN**

*Department of Health (DOH)*



Emily Woody currently holds the position of Public Health Nutritionist and Breastfeeding Coordinator for DOH within CHA. Emily's primary role is to manage the Breastfeeding Peer Counselor program for DC WIC, although she also provides technical assistance to other breastfeeding initiatives within DOH. Prior to working for DOH, Emily provided nutrition counseling at Unity Health Care for WIC families through her role as a WIC Nutritionist. Emily is passionate about helping support breastfeeding families in the District of Columbia. Emily is a Registered Dietitian, Nutritionist (RDN) and holds a certification as an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC). She earned her Master of Public Health (MPH) from the George Washington University. Emily is a native of New Jersey and currently resides in Washington, DC with her husband.

**Government Representative Colleen Sonosky**

*Department of Health Care Finance (DHCF)*

Colleen Sonosky, Juris Doctorate (JD) is the Associate Director of the Division of Children's Health Services in the Health Care Delivery Management Administration in the District of Columbia's Department of Health Care Finance (DHCF). DHCF is the agency responsible for the administration of the Medicaid program and the Division of Children's Health Services oversees policies and procedures for Medicaid's Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) services benefit—the pediatric component of the Medicaid program for children under 21. Ms. Sonosky serves as the District's EPSDT Coordinator as well as the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Director for the Medicaid-expansion program. In addition, Ms. Sonosky represents DHCF on the District-wide Child Fatality Review Committee, Interagency Coordinating

Committee for Early Intervention, and the State Early Child Development Coordinating Committee (SECDCC) where she co-chairs the Health/Wellbeing Sub-committee. She has also served on many national work groups concerning maternal and child health. Previously, Ms. Sonosky was the Director of Public Policy Research for the March of Dimes Foundation, the Vice President of Policy at FirstFocus, and the Senior Director of Programs and Policy for the Children's Defense Fund. From 1993 to 2003, she served as Assistant Director and a lead researcher on maternal and child health policy at the Center for Health Policy Research (now housed in the Department of Health Policy) at The George Washington University. Ms. Sonosky is an Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Departments of Health Policy and Prevention/Community Health at the George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services.

### **Government Representative Quameice Harris**

*Department of Human Services (DHS)*



Quameice Harris has been an integral part of the DC Health Link speaker engagement team. She is currently Special Assistant to the Director in the Department of Human Services/Office of the Director, collaborating with other Departments on special projects and tasks forces while providing a bridge for smooth communication. She is viewed as an Operational Subject Matter Expert facilitating the strategic fulfillment of Department objectives. Prior to this, Ms. Harris worked as Executive Assistant to the State Superintendent of Education in the Division of Early Childhood Education. Ms. Harris was also Staff Assistant to the Deputy Mayor of Children Youth, Families & Elders in the Executive Office of the Mayor.

### **Government Representative Chibu Anyanwu, MPH, CHES, CLC**

*Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)*

Chibu E. Anyanwu is recognized as a Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES), Certified Lactation Counselor (CLC) and Public Health Practitioner who has supported various organizations using her expertise in Project and Data Management, Cultural Competence, Youth Development, and African Affairs. Rooted in her dedication to public service and public health, Ms. Anyanwu has built a stellar reputation through professional experience in government, non-profit, and consulting industry. At the District of Columbia's Office of the State Superintendent of Education, she oversees the District's first comprehensive health and wellness program for early and education facilities and pre-kindergarten schools. Ms. Anyanwu is a graduate of West Chester University of Pennsylvania, with a Bachelor's of Science in Pharmaceutical Product Development and MPH. She also serves as a Commissioner for DC Commission on African Affairs and is a Daniel Leadership Institute Fellow.