



Once Upon A Premie Inc.
Black Maternal Health and Neonatal Equity
Conference: Advancing Solutions and Bridging the
Gap
November 18, 2024

HOST



Jenné Johns, MPH

Is a national health equity thought leader, author and advocate for reducing healthcare disparities. While advocating for the needs of her own son, Jenné wrote, “Once Upon a Premie”, the first of its kind children’s book written for parents of preemies while in the NICU. A graduate of the Disparities Leadership Program at Harvard University Medical School, Jenné has over a decade of experience advocating for policy, and community changes to improve health equity and health outcomes for low-income communities. She also led quality improvement and health equity transformation strategies with the nation's largest health insurance companies. Jenné is President of Once Upon A Premie, Inc. and Founder of Once Upon A Premie Academy, the first and only virtual training academy focused on delivering health and racial equity educational programs for perinatal and neonatal healthcare professionals.

GUEST SPEAKER



Tonya Lewis Lee

Tonya Lewis Lee is an award-winning filmmaker, author and entrepreneur whose work often explores the personal impact of social justice issues. Most recently, the film she codirected and co-produced, exploring the US maternal mortality crisis, *AFTERSHOCK* (HULU) has received numerous awards including a 2024 DuPont-Columbia Award, a 2023 Peabody Award, a 2022 Sundance Special Jury Impact for Change Award and a 2023 Emmy Award nomination. As a television producer, Tonya served as Executive Producer on the episodic series *She's Gotta Have It* (NETFLIX) and wrote and produced *The Watsons Go To Birmingham* (AMAZON). As a film producer, Lee produced *Monster* (NETFLIX) which premiered at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival. As an author, Tonya's children's books, cowritten with

her husband Spike Lee, *Please Baby Please*, *Please Puppy Please* and *Giant Steps to Change the World* have sold over one million copies.

As an entrepreneur Tonya founded *Movita Organics* an organic vitamin supplement company to provide a premium vitamin supplement to the marketplace and to continue the conversation with women about how to access and achieve one's optimum health. Tonya is a dynamic speaker having presented to numerous organizations, communities, corporations, colleges and universities about the power of storytelling, the importance of women's health and the journey of entrepreneurship. She has received numerous awards and recognition for her work including being named the 2023 Forbes 50 Over 50 list. Tonya is a graduate of Sarah Lawrence College, The University of Virginia School of Law and is a member of the Writer's Guild of America, the Producers Guild of America, the Television Academy and is a member of the Board of Trustees of the March of Dimes and a Board Emeritus of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. She has two adult children and lives in New York with her husband.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Rose Horton, MSM, RNC-OB, NEA-BC, FAAN

Founder & CEO Not on My Watch Rose L. Horton, MSM, RNC-OB, NEA-BC, FAAN, is the Founder & CEO of Not on my Watch Consulting Partners, an LLC she created 3 years after coining the hashtag #notonmywatch. She created the hashtag out of her frustration at the rising rate of maternal morbidity and mortality.

As a nurse, she believes that nurses, as the largest healthcare employee contingent, have the power to change the trajectory of morbidity and mortality and eradicating preventable stillbirths. The hashtag is a call to action for all nurses to use their collective voices to support, listen to, advocate for, and follow evidence-based practices in caring for all birthing people. Under her LLC, she shares this message through consulting and speaking locally, regionally, and nationally. Rose will serve as the 2024 President-Elect of the Association of Women's Health Obstetrics & Neonatal Nursing (AWHONN), a 25,000-nurse member association that is pivotal in creating, supporting, legislating, researching best practices, and evidence-based care of women and newborns. She is currently a Board of Director for Synova Associates, Medela Healthy Birth Day Inc., as well as the National Network of Perinatal Quality Collaboratives. In 2021, Rose was invited to serve on the Biden Administration's Black Maternal Health Stakeholder group.

SPEAKER BIOS



Roxy Romeo

Roxy Romeo is a radio veteran that can be heard in over 63 markets across the country, including Miami, Houston, Atlanta, and Detroit. Despite being a national talent, she makes her listeners feel like besties! Roxy was born and raised in Miami, which is where she got her start in radio doing a Sunday morning 6a shift. Philadelphia is now her home base and is the co-host of one of the biggest morning shows in the city, the Rise + Grind Morning Show on Power 99.

Roxy is also a Voiceover artist that has lent her voice to National brands like BET, Coca-Cola, & Dove to name a few. She was the Voice of God for Pitbull's nationally televised NYE show 'Pitbull's NYE Revolution'.

Roxy has received a number of accolades throughout her career from being named one of "The Top 40 Under 40 Leaders of Today and Tomorrow" by Legacy Magazine, The Silver State Awards Radio Talent nominee, a Team Hennessy honoree for her contributions to the culture, as well as being honored by Social World Networking Professionals for making a difference in the community.

Outside of radio, Roxy loves spending time with her family. She is married with 2 young kids, a boy & a girl. After experiencing different levels of trauma while on both of her pregnancy journeys, maternal health issues and really, all things encompassing being a woman have become extremely important to her. She also loves volunteering, traveling, & surrounding herself in her Caribbean culture. With a husband & parents from Trinidad, the love for her culture is undeniable.



Candace Brown

Candace Brown is a registered nurse, biologist, and author who has cared for pediatric patients since 2019. Candace obtained a Bachelor of Science from Cabrini University and later earned her Bachelor of Science in nursing from Villanova University. She started her nursing career in the NICU at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, where she is currently employed. Candace has also worked as a transport and delivery nurse at the Johns Hopkins Hospital of Baltimore, Maryland, aiding with transporting and delivering sick neonates. Taking a brief break from the bedside before her return to Philadelphia, Candace also practiced

as a school nurse. In her work at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Candace cares for acutely and chronically ill neonates and their families. She recognizes the challenges that families face during their NICU stays, in particular, the challenges that disproportionately affect mothers and infants of color compared to their non-minority counterparts. Prompted by her own traumatic and nearly fatal birth experience with premature twins, Candace now works to be an active participant in eliminating the health disparities for this population.



Dr. James Smith, Jr.

President and CEO, Dr. James Smith, Jr. passionately works with learners providing high-performance solutions. The author, speaker, educator and visionary has provided his JIMPACT nationally and internationally and has worked with leaders, managers and individual

contributors both virtually and in person. He also authored three books with his last book, *The No Excuse Guide to Success* being nominated for an NAACP Image Award. Dr. James' primary model for solutions and speaking include a combination of keynotes (in-person and virtual), workshops (in-person and virtual), and coaching. He is also a guest professor at Temple University, Rutgers University, and Rushford Business School (Geneva, Switzerland). His expertise areas include:

- Personal Power
- Authenticity
- Presentation Skills
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

What makes him original or different from other speakers is that he's a physical storyteller. He retells and relives the stories while sharing his tools, solutions, approaches, and messages. Organizational leaders consistently contact him to discuss issues of responsibility/accountability, employee engagement and diversity and how their team members have evolved after their experience with him. CEOs and other clients reach out to him to share how excited they were with how their leaders received his "Move from Ally to Advocate" mantra as it relates to creating an inclusive workplace. In addition, Dr. James over the past 25 years, has presented in over 25 countries (e.g., India, China, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, Australia, Norway and Malaysia) and 43 states. As it relates to keynote speaking, Dr. James embodies the tradition of a true motivational speaker. He presents with his whole body. He is an onstage EXPERIENCE. He gives audiences an emotional, rollercoaster GPS to performance improvement. Some of our clients include: Biogen, Sabic (Saudi Arabia), AstraZeneca, Accenture, Aflac, Genentech, Jockey, Comcast, KenCrest, The Kimmel Center for Performing Arts, Tweezerman, Bristol Myers Squibb, IHI Energy, The American Club (Singapore), Celgene, Western Union, Aimco, Genworth Financial, Metlife and Lockheed Martin.



Dr. Joia A. Crear-Perry, MD, FACOG

Is a physician, policy expert, thought leader, and advocate for transformational justice. As the founder and president of the National Birth Equity Collaborative, she identifies and challenges racism as a root cause of health inequities. She is a highly sought-after trainer and speaker who has been featured in national and international publications including *Essence* and *Ms. magazine*. In 2020, Dr. Crear-Perry was honored by *USA Today* in its “Women of the Century” series and featured on *ABC Nightline*’s “Hear Her Voice.” Dr. Crear-

Perry has twice addressed the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to elevate the cause of gender diversity and urge a human rights framework toward addressing maternal mortality. Previously, she served as the executive director of the Birthing Project, director of women’s and children’s services at Jefferson Community Healthcare Center, and as the director of clinical services for the city of New Orleans Health Department.

Dr. Crear-Perry currently serves as a principal at Health Equity Cypher and on the Board of Trustees for Black Mamas Matter Alliance, Community Catalyst, National Clinical Training Center for Family Planning, and the University of California, San Francisco Preterm Birth Initiative. She is an adjunct professor at Tulane School of Public Health. After completing undergraduate studies at Princeton University and Xavier University,

Dr. Crear-Perry received her MD from Louisiana State University and completed her residency in obstetrics and gynecology at Tulane University’s School of Medicine. She is married to Dr. Andre Perry and has three children: Jade, Carlos, and Robeson. Her love is her family; health equity is her passion; maternal and child health are her callings. Association, and an active member of Once Upon A Premie, National Medical Association, and American Academy of Pediatrics.



Joshua Gaston

Is a passionate advocate and community leader dedicated to fighting for equity and justice. His journey of advocacy began in 2018 when he started his education at Oakwood University, a prestigious Historically Black University in Huntsville, AL, known for its legacy of producing influential leaders, such as U.S. Senate Chaplain Barry Black and motivational speaker Dr. Eric Thomas. However, Joshua's life took a profound turn in 2022 when his daughter was born prematurely at 26 gestational weeks, making him a NICU dad. During his daughter's challenging time in the NICU, Joshua confronted civil rights issues and healthcare inequities head-on. This period of intense struggle and advocacy revealed his inner strength and the power of his voice.

Joshua's relentless fight ensured his daughter received the necessary care and ignited his commitment to advocating for the rights of others facing similar challenges. Crushing the odds stacked against him, Joshua earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Church Leadership from Oakwood University in May 2024. Now based in Atlanta, GA, Joshua is an active community advocate, lay pastor, and mentor. His work extends beyond his local community as he travels nationwide, organizing and educating to promote transformation and equity. Joshua's mission is clear: to be a voice for the voiceless and a light in the darkness.



Kanika Harris, PhD, MPH (she/her)

Sr. Director of Maternal and Child Health Dr. Kanika Harris is recognized as a national expert and activist in Black maternal health. She served for four years as the Senior Director of Maternal and Child Health for the Black Women's Health Imperative. She is a behavioral health scientist by training and sought after expert in health equity, maternal and reproductive health, and evaluation. She also served as the maternal health equity advisor for the State of Maryland and the public health expert for the lactation commission in Washington DC. Most notably at BWHI Dr. Harris lead research, policy, and programming to address health inequities in reproductive and maternal health. Dr. Harris developed NOURISH (New Opportunity to Uncover our Resources Spirit Intuition and Healing) an innovative and comprehensive initiative to increase the birth worker pipeline and provide proximal and structural solutions to maternal health inequities.

Dr. Harris has been featured on CNN, the OWN channel, ProPublica, NPR, and the Washington Post. Dr. Harris is also a proud mother of 3 children the world can see, a doula, and a filmmaker. Dr. Harris received her master's degree in public health and international development from Morehouse School of Medicine and her PhD in Health Behavior and Health Education from the University of Michigan.



Keisha Nicole Christopher

Has been a dedicated nurse since 1998, starting her first full-time specialty job in the NICU in 2000. Since then, she has worked between the NICU and OB units. In 2014, her life took an unexpected turn when she became a NICU mom herself, giving birth to a micro preemie at 25 weeks and 2 days, weighing only 1 pound 5 ounces. She faced the challenging experience of a five-month NICU stay for her baby while continuing her work in the same unit. This experience deeply impacted her, both mentally and physically, yet she maintained

a brave exterior. This personal journey has profoundly influenced her perspective and approach as a nurse, leaving a lasting impression on her heart and career.



Jatesha "Jaye" Madden-Wilson

Is a Black Woman, Mom, Social Entrepreneur, Social Impact Speaker, Maternal Health Advocate, Published Author and Self-sufficiency Coach. Jaye has created big strides in advocacy for women of color most notably with the First Lady and Governor of New Jersey as a public speaker and maternal health advocate for Nurture NJ with the Black Maternal Health crisis. In her professional career as a Community Health Nurse, she provided

clinical care and moved into clinical operations as the Nursing Operational Manager for Callen-Lorde Community Health Center, a Federally-Qualified Health Center (FQHC) that specializes in providing care for the LGBTQ+ community. Jaye received her first opportunity in advocacy while at Callen Lorde and began lobbying in Washington DC, Albany NY and Trenton, NJ as a community advocate for the LGBTQ+ community.

While in these positions, she saw the importance of how community advocacy and engagement created better physical, emotional and mental health outcomes for its people. After 10+ years at Callen-Lorde, Jaye went through several transitions, both personally and professionally, which sparked the idea of creating a community of support that changed the narrative of motherhood, sisterhood and womanhood. Starting as a small mommy meetup group, Melinated Moms quickly grew into a health equity-focused women empowerment organization that changed the way community engagement related to maternal health. As her organization has grown, she has incorporated the additional titles of published author, and she was recently appointed by the Governor of New Jersey as a Special State Officer for the New Jersey Maternal Health Quality Collaborative.



Kimberly Seals Allers

Kimberly Seals Allers is an award-winning journalist, five-time author, international speaker, strategist, and advocate for maternal & infant health. A former senior editor at ESSENCE and writer at FORTUNE magazine, Kimberly is a leading voice on the racial and socio-cultural complexities of birth, breastfeeding, and motherhood. She is the founder of Irth, a new "Yelp-like" app for Black and brown parents to address bias and racism in maternity and infant care. Kimberly also created Birthright, a podcast about joy and healing in Black birth that centers on positive Black birth stories as a tool in the fight for birth

justice and reverses the narrative of negative statistics common in mainstream media coverage of Black maternal health. Learn more at KimberlySealsAllers.com. Follow her @iamKSealsAllers on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.



Sharee Lynn Livingston, DO

Dr. Livingston was born and raised in the inner city of Harrisburg, PA. She always knew she wanted to become a physician. She expressed particular interest in Women's Health at an early age. She started working as a candy striper at Community General Osteopathic Hospital at age 9. Dr. Livingston received a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia, PA. She received her medical degree from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. Dr. Livingston completed a rigorous Obstetrics and Gynecology residency at Penn State Hershey Medical Center in Hershey, PA. In 2006, she began practicing as an Ob/Gyn at UPMC Lititz. She is currently serving as the Ob/Gyn Department Chair. She is a member of the UPMC Lititz Board of Trustees. She is the highest volume female robotic surgeon in the county of Lancaster. Dr. Livingston is a Founding Board Member of "Patients R Waiting," a non-profit organization that is very dear to her.

The mission of Patients R Waiting is to eliminate health disparities by increasing diversity in medicine. Patients R Waiting aims to 1) increase the pipeline of minority clinicians; 2) make the pipeline of minority clinicians less leaky; and 3) support minority clinicians in practice. Dr. Livingston is a Co-Founder of the Diversifying Doula Initiative which aims to improve maternal outcomes through doula support. Dr. Livingston is a Co-Founder of FLOW (For the Love of Women). FLOW aims to eliminate menstrual inequity by providing free menstrual hygiene products to vulnerable women and people in Harrisburg and surrounding areas. Dr. Livingston was elected to Governor Shapiro's Advisory Commission on Women. She serves as the Chair of the Healthcare Subcommittee. Dr. Livingston Co-Founded and Co-Chairs the UPMC Health Equity NOW Committee. The mission of UPMC Health Equity NOW is to decrease maternal morbidity and mortality in racially and ethnically diverse populations delivering in UPMC birthing hospitals. She is most honored to be one of the founder and president of MOKA moms (Moms of Kids Advancing – mothers of color in medicine). Dr. Livingston gains all her pride and joy as the wife of Ivan T. Anderson, her childhood friend and neighbor. Together, they are blessed to enjoy two daughters, Addison and Ainsley and twin boys, Ivan and Troy.



Talonda Rogers

I have 15 years of experience working as a nurse and currently serve as a nurse instructor for the Practical Nursing Program at the Chester County Intermediate Unit in Downingtown, PA. My nursing career began in 2007 as a Licensed Practical Nurse in the same program, and I have been teaching within this program for the past five years. Throughout my career, I have been dedicated, focused, and detail-oriented. Due to the shortage of nurses and nursing instructors, I transitioned into nursing education, finding it fulfilling to help shape the future generation of nurses. Additionally, I am the founder of LOVED (Ladies of Value Encouragement and Determination), a group dedicated to addressing women's issues. Furthermore, I established the 4th Trimester MAHMEE to address the gap in postpartum care, aiming to provide essential care for mothers in the crucial months following childbirth, a period often overlooked in current postnatal care practices.



Andrea Lawful-Sanders

Hailing from the beautiful island of Jamaica, Andrea Lawful-Sanders imparts the warmth, strength, and vibrancy of her Caribbean roots into every client, student, mentee, and audience that she serves across the country. For nearly three decades, her life's work in Education, Advocacy, Consulting, and Communications have reflected the belief that "it takes a village" to develop both children and adults into the best version of themselves.

Her tenacious efforts have refined the lives and work of countless individuals, organizations and corporations, and she continues to gain momentum in this mission. Her commitment to producing tangible, measurable results that impact society for the better has earned her the title of Impact Investor. This also led to the creation of "**ALawfulTruth**," a website and public persona that inspires positive change through no-holds-barred dialogue, transparent storytelling and plenty of humor.

"Muva Diva" as she is affectionately called, was birthed out of the expressed desire from her social media audience to live a life of passion while confronting the hard truths in between where they are and where they aspire to be...and to do so with her assistance.

As the Mother of 2 successful young men, wife of one nerd, and a woman who lives life fearlessly no matter what is thrown her way with unending rewards to show for her bravery, Andrea is here to pass on all the wisdom from her roots, while balancing the scales of past lessons and future happiness. Connect with Andrea on social media by liking the ALawfulTruth Facebook page, her website, www.alawfultruth.com or email info@alawfultruth.com to book Andrea for your event keynote, diversity and inclusion training, personal coaching needs, and more.