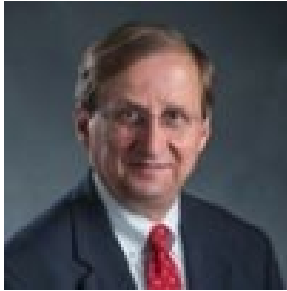


***Meet the Speakers***  
***MSU Autism Conference - 2022***

*“MSU Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disabilities Family and Professionals Day”*



**B. Keith English, MD**

Professor and Chair, Department of Pediatrics and Human Development, MSU College of Human Medicine

Dr. English is the Professor and Chair of the Department of Pediatrics and Human Development in the College of Human Medicine at Michigan State University. Prior to this, Dr. English spent 23 years on the faculty at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center in Pediatric Infectious Diseases and served as Director of Pediatric Infectious Diseases at Le Bonheur Children’s Hospital for 17 years. His laboratory in Memphis focused on innate immunity - primarily macrophage responses to Gram-positive bacteria and their products. Dr. English served as the laboratory research mentor for more than 20 post-doctoral fellows (Pediatric Infectious Diseases, Pediatric Critical Care Medicine, Pediatric Emergency Medicine, Neonatology) over the past two decades and developed and ran a faculty mentoring program for pediatric faculty at UTHSC before moving to Michigan. Additionally, Dr. English was extensively involved in the Memphis-area response to the 2009 H1N1 flu pandemic (and was honored for these efforts with several awards, including the Tennessee chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics’ “Pediatrician of The Year” award in 2010).

Dr. English came to MSU because of the opportunity to build pediatric research in partnership with the expansion of academic pediatrics in Grand Rapids (in partnership with Helen DeVos Children’s Hospital) and with basic and social science colleagues in East Lansing. He played a major role in the development and expansion of pediatric research in Memphis before moving to Michigan and served in many leadership roles (including President) in the Southern Society for Pediatric Research. There are two major focuses of our expanding pediatric research program at MSU -- developmental biology and precision/genomic/omic medicine.



## **Aron Sousa, MD, FACP**

Professor, Dean, College of Human Medicine

Aron Sousa, MD, FACP became the dean of the College of Human Medicine on April 22, 2022. He was previously appointed interim dean of the College of Human Medicine for the second time in October of 2019. His first interim position was from 2015- 2016, prior to Norm Beauchamp's appointment as dean. Previously, he served as senior associate dean for academic affairs for the college, a post he's held since 2006. He was and continues to be responsible for the educational programs across seven community campuses throughout the state. During his tenure, he managed the doubling of the college's class size, and converting its two-year, 60 student Grand Rapids campus into a four-year, 350 student campus. He also led the creation of a pair of new, two-year clinical campuses in Traverse City and Midland.

Most of Dr. Sousa's work is in medical education and curriculum. He led the design of the college's new and highly successful Shared Discovery Curriculum, which is characterized by robust clinical experiences in each year of medical school, promotion based on progress testing, and content organized by chief complaint rather than organ system or discipline. He leads the college's accreditation activity and regularly serves as a site team member for the Liaison Committee on Medical Education. As the leader of the college's \$30 million expansion in Flint, Dr. Sousa was the PI on the C.S. Mott grants that led to the college establishing the CHM building and the creation of the Division of Public Health in Flint. Dr. Sousa is a practicing general internist. He received his bachelor's in chemistry and his medical degree from Indiana University School of Medicine. He has served as both a resident and chief resident in internal medicine and completed a Primary Care Fellowship at Michigan State University.



## **Caleb Bupp, MD**

Spectrum Health, Helen DeVos and Michigan State University, Department of Pediatrics and Human Development

*Dr. Caleb Bupp will be presenting on: Research as it relates to “Autism and Intellectual Disabilities”*

Caleb is a pediatrics trained, board certified medical geneticist practicing with Beaumont Health Spectrum Health and Helen DeVos Children’s Hospital in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He serves as the Division Chief of Medical Genetics and Genomics. He is also an assistant professor at Michigan State University where he was named a Pediatric Master Series Teacher. He is the chairperson of the Genomics Committee at Helen DeVos Children’s Hospital and the Spectrum Health Institutional Biosafety Committee, as well as serving on the Helen DeVos Children’s Hospital Research Advisory Council. He is the chair of the State of Michigan’s Newborn Screen Quality Assurance Advisory Committee and a member of the Make-A-Wish Medical Advisory Council for the State of Michigan. Dr. Bupp received his Bachelor of Science in molecular biology from Grove City College in Grove City, Pennsylvania and his medical degree from the University of Toledo College of Medicine in Ohio. He completed a pediatrics residency at the University of Louisville in Kentucky and his medical genetics training at the Greenwood Genetic Center in South Carolina.

His clinical interests include intellectual disability, genetics education, and rare syndromes. He has authored multiple journal articles and textbook chapters in the field of genetics. Recently, he helped describe a new treatable genetic syndrome caused by *ODC1* mutations now termed Bachmann-Bupp syndrome. He has been an invited speaker for many conferences and events locally and nationally.



**Jannel Phillips, PhD, ABPP/CN**

Clinical Neuropsychologist, Henry Ford Medical Center

*Dr. Jannel Phillips will be presenting on the clinician perspective of "Autism and Intellectual Disabilities"*

Jannel Phillips is a clinical pediatric neuropsychologist that specializes in working with children and adolescents with complex developmental and neurological disorders, including children with hearing impairments, cochlear implants, seizures, congenital cardiac disease and other medically related complications. In addition, I see children with more commonly diagnosed neurodevelopmental disorders including Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders and Learning Disorders. When evaluating children, I recognize the importance of working within the social, family, and school systems. I have an extensive background in child development, neurodevelopment, and neurological structures as it relates to brain-behavior relationships.

Jannel is passionate about working with children in the context of the entire family and pride myself on being relatable and approachable to the families I see. As a mother, she understands the problems and concerns that arise within the children's social and school environments today. Outside of work, Janelle enjoys spending time with her family, cooking, having weekly barbeques, and camping.



**Mary Opsommer**

*Mary Opsommer will be presenting on "Autism and the journey of raising a son on the spectrum".*

Mary Opsommer is a single mother of an adult son on the Autism Spectrum. She has spent the better part of 25 years advocating for David and other individuals on the spectrum. Mary is currently a board member for the Mid-Michigan Autism Association and has served for the past 13 years. Both Mary and David love the college environment and couldn't imagine living anywhere else.



**Nigel Paneth, MD, MPH**

University Distinguished Professor, Emeritus  
Departments of Epidemiology & Biostatistics and Pediatrics & Human Development  
College of Human Medicine, Michigan State University

*Dr. Nigel Paneth will be presenting on recent research on biological pathways linking autism, cerebral palsy and other neurodevelopmental disorders*

Nigel Paneth is a pediatrician and perinatal and developmental epidemiologist with a particular interest in the relationship of events and exposures in pregnancy and early infancy that affect the prevalence of developmental disorders such as cerebral palsy, autism spectrum disorder and intellectual disability.



**Tisa Johnson-Hooper MD, FAAP**

Vice Chair, Pediatrics  
Medical Director, Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities  
Henry Ford Medical Center

*Dr. Tisa Johnson-Hooper will be presenting on the clinician perspective of Autism and Medical Complexity*

Dr. Tisa Johnson-Hooper has been affiliated with the Henry Ford Health (HFH) for 22 years. She serves as Vice Chair of the Department of Pediatrics and Medical Director for the Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities (CADD). Dr. Johnson-Hooper provides primary care at HFH New Center One and participates on the CADD multidisciplinary diagnostic team. Dr. Johnson-Hooper has maintained a long-standing interest in advocating for children with disabilities and have focused her primary care practice on providing high quality, comprehensive primary care for children and youth with special health care needs. Her research and quality improvement interest includes optimizing developmental screeners for early identification of children who are at risk of developmental disorders, identification of factors which contribute to autism spectrum disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, transition of youth from pediatrics to adult approach to health care, and integrative mental health initiatives.



**Anne Barna, MA**

Parent Advocate

*Anne Barna will be presenting on the parents perspective as it relates to “Autism and Medical Complexities; medical trauma reduction strategies for parents/caregivers and professionals”*

Anne Klein Barna is currently the Deputy Health Officer for Administration at Ingham County Health Department, and is a longtime public health professional, formerly working at Barry-Eaton District Health Department for 17 years.. She lives in Mason, MI, and is the parent of three children, two of whom have significant disabilities. Her daughter is 14 years old, has a mutation in her IQSEC-2 gene, as well as hip dysplasia, epilepsy, and severe cognitive impairments. Her daughter loves music, dancing, and being outdoors, and attends a center-based special education school. Her youngest son is 8 years old, is autistic, and was born with a birth defect called Esophageal Atresia/Tracheoesophageal Fistula, resulting in a 4 month NICU stay upon birth. He used a feeding tube for 2 years, eventually teaching himself to eat and drink by mouth. He uses an AAC device to communicate as he is not yet speaking. He attends an autism classroom at his local elementary school, and enjoys swinging, running, and TV shows about trains and sheep. Both children are wheelchair users for long distances. Anne previously served for several years on the Michigan Department of Education’s Special Education Advisory Committee, and currently serves as a Planning Commissioner for the City of Mason. Anne earned her Bachelor’s degree from Grand Valley State University in Anthropology/Biology in 2001, and a Master of Arts from the University of Kentucky in Applied Medical Anthropology in 2004. Anne will be beginning her Doctor of Public Health studies at the University of Illinois-Chicago in Fall 2022.



**Sarah Douglas, PhD**

*Sarah Douglas and Emily Jensen will be presenting on: What we Learn from our caregivers as it relates to "Autism and Medical Complexities"*

Sarah N. Douglas, PhD is an Associate Professor at Michigan State University. Sarah is the director of the RADD lab (Research in Autism and Developmental Disabilities) where she researches how to best support children with disabilities, their families, and educational teams. Before entering academia, she was a special education teacher to children with ASD and medical complexities.



**Emily Jensen, BS**

Doctoral Student, Michigan State University, Human Development and Family Studies

*Emily Jensen and Sarah Douglas will be presenting on: What we Learn from our caregivers as it relates to "Autism and Medical Complexities"*

Emily Jensen is a doctoral student at MSU in Human Development and Family Studies. Her research interests focus on supporting children with disabilities in medical settings. She utilizes mixed methods research to understand the experiences of children and their families, as well as professionals working with this population, with goals to improve care systems and quality of life.



**CHIOMA TORRES, MD**

Michigan State University, CHM Department of Pediatrics and Human Development

*Dr. Chioma Torres will be presenting on: Research as it relates to “Autism and ADHD”*

Chioma is a graduate of Michigan State University College of Human Medicine in 2010. She completed residency at Phoenix Children’s Hospital/Maricopa County Pediatric Residency Program in 2013. She then practiced both in private practice and in academic pediatrics for 5 years prior to starting fellowship at University of Michigan in Development and Behavioral Pediatric in 2018. She has a specific interest in inequities in medicine and children with disabilities.



**Melissa Hendriks, MD**

Pediatric Psychiatrist, Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities, HFHS

*Melissa Hendriks will be presenting as a clinician as it relates to “Autism and ADHD”*

Dr. Melissa Hendriks is a board certified child and adolescent psychiatrist with Henry Ford Health Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities. Before her career in medicine, Dr. Hendriks worked as a Speech-Language Pathologist in various settings and holds a Master’s degree in Speech and Language Pathology. Dr. Hendriks earned her medical degree at Wayne State University School of Medicine in 2010. She completed her residency with Henry Ford Health System, followed by a fellowship in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the University of Michigan. She has held multiple leadership roles at Henry Ford Health System, where she is currently serving as Director of Pediatric Behavioral Health Integration, a program designed to provide access to mental health services through collaboration with primary care. Dr. Hendriks is the immediate past president of Michigan Council of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.





## **Catherine Blatnik**

Parent Advocate

*Catherine will be presenting as a Parent and Disability Advocate as it relates to "Autism and ADHD"*

Cathy Blatnik is a homemaker/wife and mother to an 18-year-old son with Autism, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, ADHD and Complex Partial Epilepsy; a 26-year-old daughter and a stepson who is 38 and married. Originally from Maryland, she has lived in Michigan for over 20 years. She is a Program Director of a non-denominational/ecumenical disability ministry, President of the Mid-Michigan Autism Association and Coordinator of Special Needs Ministry for the Diocese of Lansing. Cathy is affiliated with numerous disability organizations and represented the Mid-Michigan Autism Association when accepting the 2019 Governor's Award for Innovative Tourism Collaboration and was one of the four finalists for the "2020 Remarkable Woman" contest sponsored by WLNS, Lansing's CBS affiliate. Cathy has had her writing published on several disability websites. She is passionate about being a Disability Advocate!



## **Ashley Woodman, PhD**

Director, Undergraduate Specialization in Developmental Disabilities and Human Services  
Senior Lecturer, Psychological and Brain Sciences

*Ashley Woodman, Ph.D., and Amy Cannava, Ed.S., NCSP, will present findings from a recent research study on protective factors among transgender and gender diverse autistic youth.*

Dr. Woodman is a Senior Lecturer in the Psychological and Brain Sciences Department and Program Director for the Undergraduate Specialization in Developmental Disabilities and Human Services at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She received her Ph.D. in Applied Developmental and Educational Psychology from Boston College and completed a postdoctoral fellowship in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities at the Waisman Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her research focuses on the impact of raising a child with a developmental disability on parent well-being as well as family factors that predict trajectories of growth in children, adolescents and adults with developmental disabilities across the lifespan.



**Amy Cannava, EdS, NCSP**

School Psychologist, Arlington, VA Public Schools

*Amy Cannava, Ed.S., NCSP and Ashley Woodman, Ph.D. will present findings from a recent research study on protective factors among transgender and gender diverse autistic youth.*

Amy Cannava is in her 20th year of practice as a school psychologist and the recipient of the 2019 NASP Presidential Award in recognition of Exceptional Service to Children and School Psychology. For the last decade she has specialized in LGBTQIA+ youth which resulted in her being appointed as the Chair of NASP's LGBTQI2-S Committee. Amy is a recognized and frequently requested speaker at local and national conferences. She has authored book chapters for NASP on LGBTQIA+ youth, worked with The Trevor Project, GLSEN, Gender Spectrum, HRC, PBS Frontline, HBO, and Project Thrive representing NASP. A former crisis counselor for The Trevor Project, Amy remains inspired and appropriately challenged by the youth she serves who motivate her to continue bettering the world.



**Maureen Connolly, MD**

Medical Director of Henry Ford Health School-Based and Community Health Program, Detroit

*Dr. Connolly will be presenting on gender identity and sexual orientation within the autism community.*

Dr. Maureen (Mo) Connolly (she/her) is a pediatrician and Medical Director of Henry Ford Health's School-Based and Community Health Program in Detroit, Michigan. She works with clinical staff to provide medical services at school-based and community clinic sites, with a focus on caring for LGBTQ+ young adults, transgender care, and HIV prevention and treatment. She leads Henry Ford's collaboration with the Ruth Ellis Center, an LGBTQ+ community center that is now providing no cost, accessible medical and mental health services to adolescents and young adults. Dr. Connolly earned her bachelor's degree in psychology from Harvard University and her MD from the University of Michigan. She completed pediatric residency at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.



## **Lady Mae Lexi Zurita**

Youth Advocate

*Lady Mae will be presenting as a Youth Advocate as it relates to “Autism and LGBTQ+”*

Lady Mae Lexi Zurita is a transwoman who has been fighting for her rights and the rights of others for years. She is currently going into her senior year at Davenport University, where she is Studying Organizational Leadership and Performance. She has used most of her energy in life working as on the push for trans acceptance within the school and medical community. Recently she joined MY Access which is a group dedicated to preventing the continual erasure and abuse of disabled people within medical systems, social society, and the non-profit sphere. She identifies as a member of the disabled community and works to protect herself and those like her by going to events like these so she can share her perspective, and the experiences of those who are not present in the space that was created. Mae also recently became a Lady, by buying a small plot of land in Scotland for \$30.



## **Vic Gipson**

Youth Advocate

*Vic will be presenting as a Youth Advocate as it relates to “Autism and LGBTQ+”*

Vic Gipson is a queer, trans, autistic man who can speak best to their personal and early career lived experiences. Vic is a current senior at Farmington High School, on their way to the University of Michigan Flint in the Fall of 2022. Vic has been an active participant in their high school Gender Sexuality Alliance club, and MY Trans Voice group, as co-facilitator, a member of the youth advisory council, and MY Access Youth Advisory Council. Vic also volunteers with Stand with Trans in their Youth Driven Spaces program. These groups work to serve the community by reaching out to public officials, and community members, to value inclusivity and equitable access for marginalized communities.



**Barbara Thompson, PhD**

Michigan State University, CHM Department of Pediatric and Human Development

Barbara Thompson, Assistant Professor in the College of Human Medicine's Department of Pediatrics and Human Development, studies social and emotional neurodevelopment. As a trained behavioral neuroscientist, Dr. Thompson uses behavioral, molecular, and physiological techniques to study the impact of environmental and genetic perturbations on brain development. Having extensively studied limbic circuitry and how disruptions alter affective processing, as well as how prenatal disruptions in reward circuitry lead to significant changes in behavior and cellular functions throughout development. Dr. Thompson now merges these interests in her own laboratory. Her research program explores the neurobiological underpinnings of neurodevelopmental disorders in which disruptions in both affect and reward can have detrimental effects. Utilizing a combination of techniques in basic science and clinical research, Dr. Thompson's laboratory explores functional disruptions in behavior and attempts to elucidate the underlying neural changes responsible for these disruptions. The long-term goals of her studies are to better understand these functional disruptions and responsible neural circuitry, thereby allowing for the design of individualized interventions for individuals with neurodevelopmental disorders.



**Jane Turner, MD, FAAP**

Michigan State University, College of Human Medicine, General Pediatrician and Professor Emerita of Pediatrics and Human Development

Jane Turner is a general pediatrician and professor emerita of pediatrics and Human Development at Michigan State University. She enjoys all aspects of caring for children and youth and has a special interest in working with children who have chronic health conditions including autism and other neurodevelopmental disabilities. She served on the faculty of the College of Human Medicine for 30 years as teacher, clinician and administrator.

Dr. Turner completed her Bachelor of Arts in biology at Harvard University. She went to medical school at the Oregon Health Sciences University and completed a pediatric residency at Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh.

Dr. Turner was chief medical consultant for Michigan’s Children’s Special Health Care Services program from 2011-2017 and served on the Governor’s Autism Council from 2012-2016. Dr. Turner has participated in national and state initiatives promoting the family-centered medical home, supporting transition of youth to adult health care, telehealth and care coordination. Dr. Turner is co-Director of Michigan’s Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (MI-LEND) program, an interdisciplinary graduate-level program involving six Michigan universities.