



EAST TENNESSEE OPIOID CONFERENCE

Jim Lancaster, MD - Cigna

After practicing internal medicine in an independent, multi-specialty medical clinic for fifteen years, Dr. Lancaster has worked full time in the payor sector since January 2013. He is a senior medical director with Cigna and currently serves as the Market Medical Executive for the Mid-South Area. His role is focused on increasing the quality of medical care in the area by partnering with physician groups and health systems in value based care collaborations, serving as the clinical lead for relationships with clients, and using prior experience to improve the overall health in our communities.

His work as a senior medical director with Cigna-HealthSpring allowed a continued focus on population health and physician engagement. He helped lead the development and implementation of several innovative and successful disease management programs, served as the forward facing medical director for multiple independent and employed physician groups where he was responsible for education and success related to value based care, financial partnerships in risk adjusted models, and innovative ways to impact patient outcomes and utilization.

His passion for engaging both the medical community and the population as a whole are the focus of not only his professional career but also his life outside of medicine where he has served leadership roles in several nonprofit organizations dedicated to improving the health of the community.

Prior to working full time in the corporate sector, Dr. Lancaster gained a strong foundation in healthcare management and relationships in a variety of roles including peer review, pharmacy and therapeutics, system strategic planning, medical staff leadership, and multi-specialty medical group leadership.





EAST TENNESSEE OPIOID CONFERENCE

James Choo, MD – Pain Consultants of East Tennessee

James J. Choo, MD is a native of Knoxville, TN. He graduated from Emory University in 1999 with a Bachelor of Science in Anthropology, and received a Doctor of Medicine degree in 2004 from The University of Tennessee Health Science Center in Memphis. After medical school, Dr. Choo completed his residency in anesthesia at the Ochsner Clinic Foundation in New Orleans, LA. After residency, he attended the University of New Mexico and completed an ACGME-accredited pain fellowship. Dr. Choo is ABMS board-certified in anesthesiology and pain medicine.

Dr. Choo is the owner of Pain Consultants of East Tennessee and serves as the Medical Director of the PCET Surgery Center. Pain Consultants of East Tennessee is an American Pain Society Center of Excellence.



Dr. Choo has been extremely active in advocating for solutions to the opioid crisis while at the same time protecting chronic pain patients' needs. Dr. Choo served on Governor Bill Haslam's Chronic Pain Guidelines Panel in 2014, which assisted the Tennessee Department of Health in drafting guidelines that would assist state legislators in addressing the state's ongoing challenges associated with prescription drug abuse. Dr. Choo has appeared before the Tennessee General Assembly Senate and House Health committees to testify in support of strengthening laws for pain management practices across the state. In addition to serving on a number of boards and committees, Dr. Choo is honored to serve as a founding member of the annual East Tennessee Opioid Conference.

Dr. Choo is a proud supporter of the Pain and Palliative Care Service at East Tennessee Children's Hospital, having helped raise more than \$75,000 through various PCET-sanctioned events since 2016.

Dr. Choo was honored to be awarded the Metro Drug Coalition's "Commitment to Service" award in 2018. He has also been voted a "Top Doc" for Pain Management by local area physicians for eight consecutive years. The honor is published in Cityview Magazine. In 2019, Dr. Choo presented at The University of Tennessee's TEDx conference.



**EAST TENNESSEE
OPIOID CONFERENCE**

Michael Baron, MD – Tennessee Medical Foundation

Dr. Michael Baron attained his Medical Degree, Masters in Public Health and completed an internal medicine internship at Tulane University, School of Medicine. He completed his first residency in Anesthesiology at Washington University in St Louis, School of Medicine and his Psychiatry training at Vanderbilt University, School of Medicine. He has maintained board certifications in Anesthesiology, Psychiatry and Addiction Medicine.

He has practiced in the Nashville area since 1998 in a variety of settings including private practice, academic and was Medical Director of a residential treatment center. He is a Clinical Assistant Professor at Vanderbilt University, School of Medicine. His specialty is chronic pain and addiction. In 2006, he published original research showing that high dose opioids increased chronic pain scores.



Dr. Baron was appointed to the Tennessee Board of Medical Examiners (BME) in 2010 and reappointed in 2015. He served as Chair of the Tennessee Controlled Substance Monitoring Database committee for 3 years. He helped write many different Tennessee Department of Health rules pertaining the treatment of pain, prescribing controlled substances and addiction. Dr. Baron resigned from the appointed positions in January 2017 to accept the Medical Director position of the Tennessee Medical Foundation – Physician Health Program.

Dr. Baron continues to serve on the steering committees for the Tennessee Chronic Pain Guidelines and on the Nonresidential Buprenorphine Treatment Guidelines. Most recently he was asked by the Federation of State Medical Boards to join the workgroups that are rewriting the Policies on Professional Sexual Misconduct and the Impaired Physician. Dr. Baron is also the Medical Director for the Nashville/Davidson County Drug Court - a volunteer position.



Brian Winbigler, PharmD – The University of Tennessee Health Science Center

Dr. Brian Winbigler, a native of Maryville TN, received a Bachelor of Science degree in biochemistry and cellular and molecular biology from The University of Tennessee Knoxville, a Master of Business Administration from Lincoln Memorial University, a Doctor of Pharmacy degree (PharmD) from the University of TN Health Science Center, and completed a community pharmacy residency.

As an Assistant Professor in the department of clinical pharmacy and translational science at the University Of Tennessee College Of Pharmacy, Dr. Winbigler directs the Substance Use Disorders elective and related content in other modules. He also works with the TN Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services as a Regional Overdose Prevention Specialists, providing training and education on opioid overdose and for overdose prevention through the distribution of naloxone.



In the community, he volunteers and serves as chair for Blount County’s Substance Abuse and Prevention Action Team, educator for Harbours Gate, and works with the Knox County Harm Reduction Coalition. All three organizations provide educational opportunities and resources that address substance misuse prevention and treatment. He serves on the Blount County Board of Health, board of Harbours Gate, and the UT Alumni Association Board of Governors.

He holds active membership in both state and national organizations including the American Society of Addiction Medicine, American Pharmacist Association, American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy, and Tennessee Pharmacist Association (TPA) serving on the TPA Resolutions Committee. Dr. Winbigler is the recipient of both State and Federal funds for opioid related research.



EAST TENNESSEE OPIOID CONFERENCE

Craig Towers, MD – High Risk Obstetrical Consultants

Dr. Craig Towers is a native of California. He received his undergraduate degree from Whittier College in Whittier, California. He then completed medical school at the University of Kansas School of Medicine. Dr. Towers completed his residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology at Wesley Medical Center / University of Kansas in Wichita, Kansas. Following his residency, Dr. Towers completed his fellowship in Maternal-Fetal Medicine at Long Beach Memorial Women's Hospital and the University of California-Irvine.



Dr. Towers is board certified in both Obstetrics and Gynecology and Maternal-Fetal Medicine. He has held academic appointments as both Assistant and Associate Professor at the University of California, Irvine. He joined the University of Tennessee Medical Center and Graduate School of Medicine in 2010 and has served as a Professor and Vice Chair in the Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology.

He has extensive experience in teaching and research. He has published over 100 journal articles, chapters, and abstracts. In addition, he has presented locally, nationally, and internationally on topics of interest such as drug addiction in pregnancy, infectious diseases in pregnancy, fetal heart monitoring, fetal lung maturity, and third trimester bleeding. He is a member of several professional organizations including the American Congress of Obstetricians & Gynecologists, Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine, the Central Association of Obstetricians & Gynecologists, and the Pacific Coast Obstetrical & Gynecological Society.

Dr. Towers recently retired from clinical practice but remains very active in his research on drug addiction in pregnancy.



EAST TENNESSEE OPIOID CONFERENCE

Keith Gray, MD – The University of Tennessee Medical Center

Dr. Keith Gray is the Chief Medical Officer at the University of Tennessee Medical Center – Knoxville (UTMCK). Dr. Gray earned an undergraduate and medical degree from Wake Forest University. He completed his general surgery residency and surgical research fellowship at Vanderbilt University Medical Center before completing a surgical oncology fellowship at the MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas.

Dr. Gray has practiced surgical oncology at UTMCK for 12 years, during which time he has served as Chief of the Division of Surgical Oncology, Chief-of-Staff, medical director of multiple service lines, and co-founded the Physician Leadership Academy. He is interested in health equity and eliminating health disparities in East Tennessee and has delivered over 100 community lectures.

Dr. Gray completed an MBA degree from the Haslam College of Business in 2014, where he served as class president and was voted Physician Leader of the Year.

Gray has been recognized as one of the “Top Docs” by Knoxville’s Cityview Magazine and received awards recognizing his outstanding patient care, compassion, and leadership. He is a graduate of Leadership Knoxville and Leadership Tennessee. In and out of the hospital, Dr. Gray feels called to serve and empower those around him. As an academic surgeon he advocates for patients battling cancer and mentors those pursuing healthcare careers.

In the community he serves as the chair of the Emerald Youth Foundation and a trustee on the East Tennessee Foundation board. Dr. Gray is a husband of 22 years to Kala, a father of five, a youth coach, and an elder in his church. He enjoys community service, running, family movies, and desserts made by his kids.





EAST TENNESSEE OPIOID CONFERENCE

Marie Williams, LCSW – State of Tennessee

Marie Williams, LCSW, was reappointed Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS) by Governor Bill Lee on January 19, 2019. Ms. Williams was initially appointed to the position by Gov. Bill Haslam, effective October 22, 2016.

As Commissioner, Ms. Williams oversees and leads the department in its role as the state's public mental health and substance abuse authority with an annual budget of more than \$380 million. She provides leadership and oversight to 1,846 full-time positions that assist individuals to secure treatment and recovery services for serious mental illness, serious emotional disturbances, and substance abuse disorders. Her duties as commissioner also include system planning; monitoring, licensing, evaluating, and setting policy and quality standards; collaborating with other state and community agencies; and working to educate the community about mental health and substance abuse services. Ms. Williams's oversight responsibilities include community mental health and substance abuse programs and the operation of four regional mental health institutes. TDMHSAS-funded community behavioral health services are provided through contracted relationships with more than 280 not-for-profit and faith-based organizations with over 1,000 ongoing contractual agreements. The department also operates four regional mental health institutes which serve more than 8,000 people on an annual basis, and the department has contracts with three additional private psychiatric hospitals which serve more than 3,000 people annually. In all, the department serves approximately 350,000 Tennesseans annually who are struggling with mental health and substance abuse issues.



In her time as Commissioner, Ms. Williams has served as a leader in addressing several essential issues facing Tennessee including the opioid crisis, emergency psychiatric services, and criminal justice reform.

Under the direction of Gov. Bill Haslam, Ms. Williams co-chaired a workgroup of commissioners, state and local lawmakers, and law enforcement officers to develop a comprehensive plan to address opioid addiction and reduce overdose deaths in Tennessee. This plan became known as TN Together and was the signature policy initiative of Gov. Haslam's final year in office. The \$30 million plan addressed the crisis by making significant investments in substance abuse treatment, addiction prevention, and law enforcement.

In the arena of emergency psychiatric services, Commissioner Williams established an unprecedented public-private partnership in collaboration with the Tennessee Hospital Association which resulted in the creation and implementation of psychiatric treatment protocols for use in Emergency Departments (EDs)



across the state. These protocols have been adopted by the Tennessee College of Emergency Physicians and are being adopted as a national model by the American College of Emergency Physicians as well. This collaboration continues to pay dividends as the department works with stakeholders to address the burden that emergency psychiatric services place on communities across Tennessee.

Ms. Williams's efforts in the area of criminal justice reform include advocating, increasing funding, and expanding the network of recovery courts to encompass 78 recovery courts in Tennessee. Additionally, Ms. Williams is responsible for leadership and oversight of the department's new juvenile justice program which seeks to create alternatives to out-of-home placements in areas of the state where options are limited.

In her previous position as Deputy Commissioner, Ms. Williams served as top advisor to the Commissioner and managed the departmental budget of more than \$337 million. Ms. Williams successfully assisted in the department's transformation initiative. Through strong partnership and collaboration with community providers, treatment for patients was moved into less-restrictive environments, and \$20.5 million was reinvested into community-based services. Her leadership secured the support of three East Tennessee private psychiatric in-patient hospital partners to provide services to those patients previously served by Lakeshore Mental Health Institute.

Commissioner Williams's drive for serving Tennesseans with behavioral health challenges still lies with the area where her passion was first sparked: housing and homeless services. Ms. Williams began her career in Memphis supporting people experiencing homelessness and mental illness. Her success there led to employment with TDMHSAS starting in 2000 as the Director of Housing Planning and Development. Her initiative, the Creating Homes Initiative (CHI), since its creation has leveraged \$600 Million and developed more than 18,000 supportive housing options for people diagnosed with mental illness and co-occurring disorders.

Commissioner Williams is the recipient of numerous professional and community awards from national and state groups including the Excellence in Advocacy Individual Achievement Award from the National Council for Behavioral Health, the George Goodman and Ruth P. Brudney National Social Work Award from Mental Health America, the Senator Douglas Henry Award for Service to Children and Families at Risk from the University of Tennessee College of Social Work, the Voice of Recovery Award from the Tennessee Association of Alcohol Drug and other Addiction Services, and the Tipper Gore Legacy Award from Tennessee Voices for Children. Ms. Williams lives in Nashville, and she is the mother of Nicole Williams.



EAST TENNESSEE OPIOID CONFERENCE

Stephen Loyd, MD – Cedar Recovery

Stephen Loyd currently serves as the Chief Medical Officer of Cedar Recovery, an addiction treatment company headquartered in Mount Juliet, TN servicing patients across Middle Tennessee. On top of his work for Cedar, he is currently a member of the Tennessee Board of Medical Examiners as well as serving as a federal expert witness.

A nationally recognized thought leader and clinician, Dr. Loyd has decades of experience in internal medicine, mental health, and substance abuse services. His background includes serving as the Medical Director and Assistant Commissioner for Substance Abuse Services with the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.



Dr. Loyd has been in recovery since 2004. Experiencing addiction first hand has allowed him to develop a unique approach to patient care that is passionate, effective, and impactful. His daily goal is to help as many people receive the quality treatment they deserve in order for them to feel better, get better, and stay better.