

## Meet the 2025 Council of Affiliate Awardees



**Venise White, MPH, MHPE – Florida Public Health Association**

### **2025 Council of Affiliates Award for Excellence**

**Venise White** is a leader with the Florida Department of Health in Seminole County, Office of Health Promotion and Education and Grants Administration. She has led innovative and inclusive work designed to address the social determinants of health and advance health equity within Florida Department of Health including Healthiest Weight Florida campaign, the Goldsboro Farmers Market and the Congressional Wellness Program.

Venise has served in many roles with the Florida Public Health Association including immediate past president, current member at large and ARGC. She consistently aligns with APHA's national goals through her work with National Public Health Week and Speak for Health. She works regionally with Region IV and has facilitated cultural competency trainings with the Region IV Public Health Training Center.

From Venise's nominator: "... Venise White exemplifies the spirit of the CoA Award for Excellence. Her visionary leadership, sustained services, and commitment to innovation have transformed communities across Florida and influenced regional and national practice. Her legacy is one of advocacy, compassion and excellence..."



### **Brett Harris, DrPH – New York State Public Health Association**

#### **2025 Council of Affiliates Innovation in Public Health Award**

**Brett Harris** is faculty at University at Albany, State University of New York in the Department of Health Policy, Management and Behavior. Her work has focused on substance use and suicide prevention. Her public health practice experience has focused on behavioral health.

Brett founded the New York State Public Health Association Mental Health Workgroup. She led the development of a Mental Health Webinar Series with 14 sessions to be delivered throughout the year. This webinar series has brought in sponsorships and led to increased collaborations between public health and mental health organizations such as American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) and the New York State Office of Mental Health.

Brett led the formation of the Behavioral Health Advisory Group to raise awareness of the New York State Public Health Association among behavioral health organizations, better understand priorities and build partnerships to improve behavioral health.

Brett aligns with APHA through her work with the ISC on suicide prevention and the mental health section.

From a nominator: “Dr. Harris is a fierce advocate for public health. She endlessly champions principles of equity to ensure that public health is for everyone. She is an innovative, inspiring, driven and compassionate leader, and is committed to APHA’s vision to build the healthiest nation...”



**North Carolina Public Health Association**

### **2025 Council of Affiliates Outstanding Affiliate Award**

**The North Carolina Public Health Association** is committed to advocacy, education and advancement in public health. NCPHA is part of the North Carolina Public Health Collaboration and engages a diverse public health audience in advancing public health.

#### **More on NCPHA**

##### Advocating

- Invested in VoterVoice in 2024 and have successfully advanced four statewide campaigns focused on tobacco prevention and Medicaid, resulting in more than 230 messages delivered to legislators.
- Proceeding NPHW, NCPHA hosted its first Public Health Day at the NC General Assembly and convened 50+ members to advocate for tobacco 21 legislation and local public health communicable disease funding. Met in person with 30 senators and 30 representatives
- NCPHA Advocacy Committee consulted with Sections to determine where to prioritize efforts leading to a more refined and strategic approach
- Donated to APHA in a more substantial way than previous to advance APHA's role in public health

##### Educating

- Fall 2024 conference was the largest event to date with more than 600 members attending
- Hosted in partnership with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and piloted a scholarship program offering 5 attendees registration
- Hosted a Public Health Data Summit focused on innovations in public health data

##### Advancing

- After Hurricane Helene, NCPHA launched a Disaster Relief Fund to support public health professionals affected by the storm; the fund is now a permanent fund to support future disasters.
- As a Smart Surfaces grant recipient, NCPHA is working closely with City of Charlotte and local partners to raise awareness about the intersection of climate and health and the potential of Smart Surfaces.



**Arielle Hieronimus, MPH - Ohio Public Health Association**

**2025 Council of Affiliates Outstanding Affiliate Staff Award**

**Arielle Hieronimus**, an epidemiologist by training joined the Ohio Public Health Association to lead the growth of the Public Health Professional Services (PHPS) program. The program was conceived to build a funding stream for OPHA and help meet the growing and diverse staffing needs of public health agencies across the state by placing qualified professionals in part-time, temporary or short term roles filling critical staffing gaps. Arielle's leadership has grown the program to include hundreds of experts in a variety of areas to contribute more than 3000 hours to agencies across Ohio in 2024. She monitors job trends, recruits and aligns her work with OPHA's mission to strengthen the public health workforce.

Arielle's efforts have generated revenue to cover her position and supported other non-revenue generating programs within OPHA. This contributed to the financial health and mission-driven sustainability of OPHA. Her leadership led to the development of OPHA's profession-based listserv communities and these communities serve as vital platforms for members to exchange resources, ask questions, learn about training opportunities and connect with peers.

From a nominator: "Arielle exemplifies what it means to serve the public health profession with integrity, innovation and heart. Her "we'll figure it out" attitude, intellectual capacity, and deep dedication are why we at OPHA feel so fortunate to have her on our team"



## **Ryann Whealy – Arizona Public Health Association**

### **2024 Council of Affiliates Outstanding Student Award**

**Ryann Whealy** is the Arizona Public Health Association's student board member. She has contributed to the work of AzPHA through her statewide outreach, student engagement and community connections. Ryann has generously volunteered her time to support programming efforts for the association including to revitalize and expand academic partnerships.

Ryann aligned her work with APHA during NPHW as she coordinated and moderated "Advocacy Starts Here: Amplifying Voices for Public Health" a live panel featuring a mayor, state policy leaders and public health professionals.

From a nominator: "Ryann's leadership, reliability and statewide impact are exceptional. She has shown initiative well beyond her formal responsibilities, helped with infrastructure for future student engagement and extended AzPHA's reach across Arizona's diverse regions and institutions..."