

## Maine CDC's Office of Population Health Equity Health Equity Advisory Council Member Bios

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### **Abdikadir Negeye (*he/him/his*)**

Abdikadir Negeye was born in Somalia and lived in two refugee camps in Kenya before resettling in the United States in 2006. A graduate of the University of Southern Maine with a Bachelor of Arts in Social & Behavioral Science and a Masters in Leadership & Organizational Studies, Abdikadir is a 16-year resident of Lewiston, Maine. He is the co-founder, assistant director, and human resources director of Maine Immigrant and Refugee Services (MEIRS), an organization that educates and assists immigrant and refugee youth and their families and promotes a pathway toward citizenship and community engagement. He is skilled in community organizing, organizational development, training, and program development.



### **Amina Hassan (*she/her/hers*)**

Amina Hassan graduated from Lewiston High School in 2014 and received her Bachelor of Arts in Social & Behavioral Sciences with a concentration in counseling from the University of Southern Maine. She has worked with the Lewiston-Auburn community for over a decade as a case manager, interpreter, and advocate for women and children. Amina founded Her Safety Net, a nonprofit organization that provides advocacy and wellbeing services for women of all ages and youth. She works closely with Lewiston public school, Lewiston Housing, and several non-profit agencies in the area. Amina is planning to pursue her master's in social work in the coming fall.



### **Ayesha Hall (*she/her/hers*)**

Ayesha Hall is a civic leader, youth and mental health advocate with a passion for systems reform and cooperative economics. Ayesha received her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Clemson University. After several years assisting and directing children's programs for inner city youth in New York, Ayesha pursued and obtained Master's in School Psychology from Mercy College which enables her to serve schools, community agencies and families in a wide range of demographic settings throughout the Northeast Region. She currently works with Lewiston Public School district as the Social Emotional Learning and Equity Resource Coordinator.



### **Deqa Dhalac (*she/her/hers*)**

Deqa Dhalac is a passionate advocate for the immigrant community with extensive experience in social services, public health, and community building. She is the Mayor for South Portland and a South Portland City Councilor representing District 5. She is a leader in the Somali Community Center of Maine, a Board member for Northern Light Mercy Hospital, and the co-founder of Cross-Cultural Community Services. Additionally, she is a certified language tester and cultural skill trainer, ensuring unmet needs of immigrant communities are addressed.



**Flo Edwards (*she/her/hers*)**

Flo Edwards is a dentist, radio show host, entrepreneur, and active community member committed to strengthening BIPOC and LGBTQ+ communities in Maine. Being black, lesbian, and female, she understands that marginalized people will always have to defend and demand equal human rights for themselves. Flo is currently a dentist at the Jessie Albright Dental Clinic in Bath and is the creator and host of the WMPG radio show, *In the Pocket*. She currently serves as a Board member for The Third Place and Equality Maine. Flo received a bachelor's degree from Lake Forest College in Chicago, earned her dental degree from Howard University, and served in the US Army as a captain. Flo lives with her wife and their two Labrador Retrievers in the Rosemont area of Portland. They enjoy kayaking, camping, running, and snowshoeing throughout the state.



**Humza Khan (*he/him/his*)**

Humza Khan is an HR Professional and founder of Inclusion Maine, a consulting firm specializing in building diverse, equitable, and inclusive organizations. Humza brings HR and DEI together to solve challenges around attracting and retaining diverse talent in Maine. Born in Multan, Punjab Pakistan, Humza is a first-generation Muslim Pakistani-American who grew up in Maine. For fun, Humza enjoys engaging in activities from both cultures, such as bowling on the weekends and chai for breakfast.



**Idella Glenn (*she/her/hers*)**

Idella Glenn serves as Vice President for Equity, Inclusion and Community Impact at the University of Southern Maine (USM) promoting diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and guiding USM in building a sustainable environment that is inclusive for all faculty, staff and students. Idella has 30 years of experience working in higher education and 25 years of experience in the DEI field. Previously, she has worked as Special Advisor on Inclusivity and Diversity at Hollins University in Roanoke, VA, and also served as the Director for Diversity Education and Retention Initiatives at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA.



**Jennifer Monti (*she/her/hers*)**

Jennifer Monti is a cardiologist interested in projects at the intersection of public health, medicine, and technology. She received her medical and public health degrees from Case Western Reserve University and her undergraduate degree in biochemistry from Harvard College. She received her medical training at Hopkins and the University of Pennsylvania. She currently works on the health tech team at Meta and attends on the cardiology service at Maine Med. She lives in Cumberland with two delightful children.



**Leslie Monroy (*she/her/hers*)**

Leslie was born and raised in Cali, Colombia. She came to live with her family in New Jersey when she was 10 years old. Leslie graduated from Drew University in 2014 with a major in Environmental Studies and Sustainability, and a minor in Archaeology and French. After graduating, she served in AmeriCorps: The Great Basin Institute Nevada Conservation Corps. There her conservation team worked to control plant growth for human consumption, helped build a fence for the national park, and planted native trees for conservation purposes. Leslie currently serves as the Migrant Education Program Director at Mano en Mano. She's very passionate about conserving the environment and loves helping people as much as possible. On her down time, she likes to spend time with her loved ones, play tennis or draw.



**Lisa Sockabasin (*she/her/hers*)**

Lisa Sockabasin is a citizen of the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Motahkomikuk with extensive experience in Tribal, State, and Federal governments, non-profits, and philanthropic organizations. Lisa has over 20 years of addressing inequities experienced by and providing opportunities to tribal populations. She currently serves as the Co-CEO of Wabanaki Public Health and Wellness (WPHW) and is the former Director of the Office of Health Equity in the Maine Department of Health and Human Services. Lisa was previously a nurse epidemiologist with the North American Indian Center of Boston, Inc. and a coordinator to the Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard's Four Directions Summer Research Program.



**Melissa Hue (*she/her/hers*)**

Melissa Hue is a graduate of the University of New England where she earned a Bachelor's in Medical Biology and a Master's in Public Health. She previously served seven years in healthcare, including three years at MaineHealth where she worked on accessibility to healthcare for vulnerable and marginalized communities. As a first-generation immigrant from North Carolina, she attributes her passion for DEI work to her lived experience. Currently, Hue serves as the Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for the City of Lewiston.



**Ninette Irabaruta (*she/her/hers*)**

Ninette Irabaruta works at United Way of Southern Maine as the Director of Public Policy and Advocacy. Ninette also works with the Maine Community Foundation where she coordinates the Investing in Leaders of Color program that focuses on building the field of people and organizations working to promote and increase racial equity in Maine. Before joining United Way, Ninette served as Global Manager for The Nourishment Economies Coalition, where she worked on a two-year project with indigenous communities across North America, all while bringing in new business opportunities and donors. A native of Burundi in Central-East Africa, Ninette moved to the United States in 2012 to escape the political unrest. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from St. Joseph's College and her Master's in Sustainable International Development, Policy Development from Brandeis University.



**Regina Phillips (*she/her/hers*)**

Regina Phillips is the co-founder and full-time Chief Operations Officer for Cross Cultural Community Services (CCCS). Regina previously worked for the Westbrook School Department as their Equity Resource Coordinator and Grants and Community Engagement Coordinator. Before her work in Westbrook, she was the Program Manager for the City of Portland Refugee Services and Family Shelter Programs and has served on countless boards. Regina grew up in Maine and received her undergraduate from Curry College in Milton, MA. She also has a Master of Social Work from the UNE and a Doctor of Social Work from Tulane University.



**Ryan Polly (*he/him/his*)**

Ryan G. Polly, PhD has over 20 years professional experience in diversity, equity, and inclusion, organizational and leadership development, and college-level teaching. He is currently the inaugural Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for MaineHealth in Portland, Maine where he leads a DEI & Healthcare Equity strategy for MaineHealth's 23,000 employees and 11 hospital health system. Ryan holds a Ph.D. in Transformative Studies, a Master's Degree in Adult Education and an undergraduate degree in Health Sciences. He is an ordained Interfaith Minister from One Spirit Interfaith in New York City. Ryan is a transgender man, a parent of five children, grandparent of one, a devoted spouse, and a singer, songwriter, and author.



**Sana Osman (*she/her/hers*)**

Sana Osman is a Sudanese-American health worker at Maine Access Immigrant Network (MAIN), an ethnic community-based nonprofit organization. Born in the U.S. and educated in the Sudan, Sana received her Bachelor's degree in Agricultural Science from the University of Gezira. Sana is a tireless community health advocate. She previously worked as an interpreter for the Maine Judicial Branch and in medical settings. She currently serves on the board of directors for Consumers for Affordable Health Care (CAHC) and Cross-Cultural Community Services (CCCS). Sana is a qualified medical and court Arabic interpreter.



**Selam Runyon-Baruch (*she/her/hers*)**

Selam Runyon-Baruch is a multicultural, multilingual, naturalized US citizen born in Ethiopia, with an educational background in international affairs/political science and women studies. She currently serves as the Director of Development and Community Engagement at the New Mainers Public Health Initiative. A graduate of University of Maine, Selam is a powerful force in the workplace and uses her positive attitude and tireless energy to encourage others to work hard and succeed. She is committed, adaptable, and resourceful. Selam enjoys working both, independently, and with a team. She takes pride in her ability to see herself and everyone; Selam believes in respect and humility as the building blocks for all relationships.



**Taiba Zahir (*she/her/hers*)**

Taiba Zahir holds a Master of Public Health in Global Health Epidemiology and Disease Control from George Washington University and a Bachelor's in Health Science from Boston University. She's spent the past two years working on the COVID-19 pandemic with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, DC Health Department, and the World Health Organization in the Philippines. She is currently an Epidemiologist for the CDC Foundation and the Global Health Coordinator at Butterfly Network, a medical technology company. Taiba has made a vow to herself to champion for health justice for marginalized and vulnerable populations during each step of her career. In her free time, she likes to write and perform spoken word poetry, try new food, play sports, and travel and embark on new adventures.