

# Measuring Disability in the Census Bureau: Policy Implications and Opportunities

## Speaker Biographies

### Keynote:

**Richard Besser, MD**, (he/him) is president and CEO of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), a position he assumed in April 2017 following a long career at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and at ABC News. In his role, Dr. Besser is a leading voice on the importance of healthy and equitable community conditions, the need for economic inclusion for the wellbeing of families, accountable public health and healthcare systems, and advocating for racial justice. Dr. Besser leads Foundation colleagues in these efforts, and has also been an influential advocate throughout the COVID-19 pandemic for prioritizing health equity in COVID-19 response as well as in planning for future public health emergencies. Dr. Besser is an elected member of the National Academy of Medicine and serves on the Board of Trustees of Howard University. He co-chairs the President's Council on Disability Inclusion in Philanthropy. Before joining the Foundation, Dr. Besser served for eight years as chief health and medical editor for ABC News, and as a leader at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), where he worked for 13 years. He served as acting director of the CDC during the initial response to the H1N1 influenza pandemic. Dr. Besser served as the pediatric residency director at the University of California, San Diego, and conducted research to reduce the spread of tuberculosis to children. He returned to the CDC in 1998 as an infectious disease epidemiologist working on pneumonia, antibiotic resistance, and the control of antibiotic overuse. The author or co-author of hundreds of presentations, abstracts, chapters, editorials and publications, Dr. Besser has earned many awards for his work in public health and his volunteer service. He received the Surgeon General's Medallion for his leadership during the H1N1 response, and in 2011, the Dean's Medal for his contributions to public health from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. His book, "Tell Me the Truth, Doctor: Easy-to-Understand Answers to Your Most Confusing and Critical Health Questions," written with his wife, Jeanne, was published by Hyperion in 2013. Dr. Besser received his Bachelor of Arts degree in economics from Williams College and medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania. He completed a residency and chief residency in pediatrics at Johns Hopkins University Hospital in Baltimore.

### Panel 1 - Implications for Policymaking and Research:

**Scott Landes** is an associate professor of sociology, O'Hanley faculty scholar, and faculty associate in the Aging Studies Institute at Syracuse University, and co-founder of the Disability Health Equity Research Network (DHERN). He received a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Florida in 2014. Informed by his own experience of being multiply disabled, he uses demographic methods to examine health and mortality trends across the life course for disabled people, and strategies for measuring disability status in nationally-representative surveys.

**Kimberlyn Leary**, executive vice president at the Urban Institute, works with Urban's president, Sarah Rosen Wartell, to enhance Urban's impact and forge new partnerships. Previously, Leary was Urban's senior vice president for research management and program development. Before joining Urban, Leary held full-time academic roles at Harvard Medical School and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, where she directed the Enabling Change program. She led the Center of Excellence in Women's Mental Health at McLean Hospital as its first executive director and was chief psychologist at Cambridge Health Alliance. Her career began at the University of Michigan. Leary has

advised the White House under President Obama and President Biden. She was an adviser to the Obama White House Council on Women and Girls and a senior policy adviser to the Office of National Drug Control Policy. During the Biden-Harris transition, Leary was a part-time volunteer member on the agency review team for that office. At the Biden White House, on IPA assignment from Urban, she was the first senior equity fellow at the Office of Management and Budget and a senior adviser to the Domestic Policy Council. Additionally, Leary is an award-winning educator and writer, focusing on government innovation, adaptive leadership, collaboration, and equity. She holds an MPA from Harvard Kennedy School and a PhD in clinical psychology from the University of Michigan. She also has advanced training as a psychoanalyst from the Michigan Psychoanalytic Association.

**Susan J. Popkin** is an Institute fellow in the Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center and codirector of the Disability Equity Policy Initiative at the Urban Institute. A nationally recognized expert on public and assisted housing programs and policy, Popkin also leads Urban's Future of Public Housing initiative. She has served as principal investigator on many mixed-methods studies on the impact of housing programs on resident outcomes, including Chicago's Plan for Transformation, HOPE VI, and Moving to Opportunity. This work also includes Urban's HOST Initiative, a research program that uses community engagement and community-based participatory approaches to explore new strategies for improving outcomes for families in public and assisted housing, and in conducting evaluations of complex community-based interventions, such as the local evaluation of Baltimore's Promise Heights Promise Neighborhood and the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Family Centered Community Change Initiative. Popkin is the author of *No Simple Solutions: Transforming Public Housing in Chicago*; coauthor of the award-winning *Moving To Opportunity: The Story of an American Experiment to Fight Ghetto Poverty*; lead author for the book *The Hidden War: Crime and the Tragedy of Public Housing in Chicago*; and coauthor of *Public Housing Transformation: The Legacy of Segregation*.

## Panel 2 - Importance to Disabled Communities:

**Meeta Anand** is the Senior Program Director for Census & Data Equity at The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights. She previously served as census consultant to The Leadership Conference Education Fund. Prior to this role, she served as New York Immigration Coalition's Census 2020 Senior Fellow where she spearheaded the organization's efforts to ensure a fair and accurate count of New Yorkers, particularly immigrants, in the 2020 Census. In this capacity she also served as the facilitator and convener of New York Counts 2020, the statewide coalition of CBOs engaged in the 2020 Census. She also recently served as Board Chair for Sakhi for South Asian Women, an organization dedicated to addressing gender-based violence in the South Asian community of NYC. Anand spent over 10 years working at the law firm White & Case, where she was an associate in the project and asset finance group and headed business development for the same group. Prior to that, she clerked at the Court of International Trade, interned at the Division of Appeals and Opinions at the New York State Office of the Attorney General, worked as a commercial banker at Banco Santander, interned at the Bureau of Human Rights at the State Department, and assisted research in economics at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston. She received a J.D. from Harvard Law School, an M.A. from the The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, and a B.A. from Tufts University in Political Science and Economics, summa cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa.

**Celina Barrios-Millner** is co-vice president of the Office of Race and Equity Research at the Urban Institute, a national data and evidence-based policy think tank based in Washington, D.C., where she manages the office's support for equity-oriented research and practice. Celina brings 20 years of experience advancing transformational equity and inclusion strategies through the public sector. She served in senior roles in Boston, where she was charged with embedding equity and racial justice into all

city planning and operations. She established the city's Supplier Diversity program, oversaw the city's local hiring policy, and helped design the city's Immigrant Advancement Agenda.

**Dom Kelly** is the Co-Founder, President & CEO of New Disabled South, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and New Disabled South Rising, its 501(c)(4) arm. He previously served as both the Georgia Fundraising Director and the Senior Advisor for Disability for Stacey Abrams' campaign for governor of Georgia. Prior to that, he was Senior Fundraising Manager and a Strategic Advisor for Disability at Fair Fight Action, the voting rights organization founded by Stacey Abrams, where he also created and led the organization's Disability Council composed of prominent disability advocates and policy experts from across the country.

**Marlene Sallo** is the Executive Director of the National Disability Rights Network, the nation's largest provider of legally based advocacy services for people with disabilities, comprised of 57 member agencies located in all 50 states, US territories, and in affiliation with the Native American Consortium. Prior to joining NDRN, she was the Executive Director of Massachusetts' Disability Law Center where she oversaw DLC's Get Out the Count campaign and served on the MA Census 2020 Statewide Complete Count Committee. She brings over 30 years of experience protecting the human and civil rights of people with disabilities and advancing racial equity.