

Arizona Telemedicine Council

Speaker Bios - April 17, 2024

Robert “Bob” Burns

Bob Burns is the co-founder of the Arizona Telemedicine Program and the co-chair of the Arizona Telemedicine Council. Bob began his service in the Arizona state legislature in 1989 as a newly elected member of the House of Representatives. After terming out of the House he was elected to the Arizona state senate where he served multiple terms until again terming out due to Arizona term limits. He was elected as President of the Senate in his final term as a senator. Bob then was elected to the Arizona Corporation Commission in 2012 and served multiple terms. He was elected as chairman of the Commission in 2019.

Jeff Axtell, M.Ed.

Jeff Axtell is an Arizona native who has lived and worked across many communities within our great state. Jeff went to Northern Arizona University where he graduated with a Bachelor’s of Science in Healthcare Administration. Jeff furthered his education by attending the University of Arizona to obtain his Masters in Public Health/Community Education.

Jeff started his healthcare career in Bisbee Arizona where he was the Deputy Director for the Cochise County Health Department. After a few years with the county, Jeff relocated back to Flagstaff where he was the Director of the Children’s Rehabilitative Services, (CRS) program at Flagstaff Medical Center. After a few years Jeff was assigned to the FMC’s Cancer Center operations as another area under his directorship where he continued working with the hospital for over 20 years.

Jeff was hired by North Country Healthcare as the clinic manager for their Williams, Ash Fork and Seligman Federally Qualified Health Centers and was responsible for ensuring access to care in underserved and rural areas. Jeff hired in March of 2017, as the Chief Executive Office for Native Americans for Community Action, Inc. where he was responsible for all aspects of the Federally recognized Urban Indian Health Organization and Federally Qualified Health Center.

Jeff joined the Arizona Advisory Council on Indian Health Care in April of 2022 and currently serves as the Director of the American Indian Health – Area Health Education Center. AIH-AHEC program activities include Community Based Experiential Training for college students in health related disciplines; youth pipeline healthcare activities for grades K-12; Continuing professional education for primary providers working in Tribal communities; and a community immersion program for graduate students in healthcare fields.

Tara Sklar, JD, MPH

Professor Tara Sklar is the Faculty Director of the Health Law & Policy Program and a Distinguished Public Service Scholar at the University of Arizona James E. Rogers College of Law. She also holds appointments as Associate Director of Telehealth Law & Policy at the UA College of Medicine-Tucson and Senior Advisor with Innovations in Healthy Aging at the UA Health Sciences. Professor Sklar’s teaching and research bridges the gap between healthcare and law by aligning where the law can help mitigate health disparities and improve patient care for vulnerable populations. Her work examines legal, regulatory, and ethical issues that arise in adapting to a diverse aging population, with a particular focus on digital health equity. Her legal scholarship is published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, *Journal of Empirical Legal Studies*, and *Journal of Clinical and Translational Science*, among many others. Her forthcoming book, “*Telehealth Law & Policy in a Nutshell*,” is under contract with West Academic Publishing. She teaches courses on Telehealth Law & Policy and Aging & the Law.

Dr. Daniel Bárbara

Dr. Daniel Bárbara is Chief Executive Officer of Desert Senita Community Health Center (Desert Senita) with primary clinic locations in Ajo and Arizona City, Arizona and two new locations currently scheduled to open in May and June of 2024 in Coolidge and Stanfield, Arizona. Dr. Bárbara began his service with Desert Senita in the summer of 2023 and immediately launched a diversification and sustainability campaign that included a community outreach program, patient-centered practices addressing the social determinants of health, and an unprecedented expansion into neighboring communities lacking in available health center services.

His father's family having recently immigrated from Baja California, México, Dr. Bárbara was born and raised in rural West Central Arizona where he developed a passion for the care of individuals who lack access to quality health care and social services. Dr. Bárbara (boarded in Public Health), trained in health science, the implementation of evidence-based medicine as a care paradigm, and health services research at Nova Southeastern University in Florida.

Dr. Bárbara has served throughout his career, spanning nearly 30 years, at the nexus of health and social services designing and implementing programs that address the social determinants of health. Many of those years of service involved the development and administration of complex tribal health systems supporting several Native American communities from Arizona to Washington State. Dr. Bárbara has served in the Health and Human Services Executive Director role for a number of tribes in addition to research and postsecondary education roles in support of his passion.

Dr. Toyin Esan (Pharm.D, MBA, BCPS).

Dr. Esan is a board-certified Clinical Pharmacist, with areas of specialization in Disease State Management (Diabetes, Hypertension, Hyperlipidemia, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, Smoking Cessation, Anticoagulation Management, Medication Reconciliation and Education, Community/Primary Healthcare, Immunization, Transition of Care and Education). Her career spans over 17 years in Hospital and Community Pharmacy, as well as serving as an Integrated Primary Care Clinical Pharmacist collaborating with other health-care disciplines to provide evidence-based and cutting-edge care to the patient-population she serves. She is passionate about instituting quality programs that focus on improving patients' quality of life and saving health-care dollars needed to reinvest in the community, especially for rural dwellers who have limited access to healthcare facilities. The professional schools and training programs she attended include: University of Maryland, College Park, MD. /Pre-Pharmacy/ 2000-2002. Howard University School of Pharmacy, NW, Washington D.C. /Pharmacy/ 2002-2006. Fitchburg State University, Fitchburg, MA /Master of Business Administration-Healthcare Management Concentration/ 2022-2023. Board of Pharmacy Specialties/ Board Certified Pharmacotherapy Specialist/2018.

She has a passion for primary care, especially patients that live in rural America who have unique challenges, are disproportionately affected by social determinants of health and who are more likely to pass away prematurely compared to their counterparts in urban areas. This is why she is so vested in providing the knowledge needed by the patient population she serves at Desert Senita Community Health Center to understand their diagnosis, as well as equip them with the tools needed to succeed in their self-care, thereby reducing their rate of hospitalization/readmissions.

Justin Rice

Justin Rice is the Manager of Clinical Systems – Optimization at Phoenix Children's Hospital. He began working in healthcare 16 years ago at a Gastroenterology practice that was still on paper charts at that time. He started in healthcare with the goal to help make a difference in people's lives hoping to bring a positive light to people's experience engaging with healthcare. Justin has a passion for advancing the technology that is used to care for people. He joined Phoenix Children's Hospital in 2015 to apply his love of technology in combination with his drive to help patients.

Michael Holcomb, BS

Michael J. Holcomb, BS is the interim director for the Arizona Telemedicine Program (ATP) and is also ATP's associate director for information technology. He has 26 years of experience working with telemedicine and telehealth technologies and has 21 years of experience serving on the Arizona Telemedicine Program Executive Team. He has served as a technology expert for ATP's federally funded Southwest Telehealth Resource Center (SWTRC) since 2009. He served as the chair of the Technology Special Interest group of the American Telemedicine Association from 2010-2012. As interim director for the ATP he is responsible for all of ATP's programs, operations, grants, agreements, and facilities. He co-authors peer-reviewed manuscripts about telehealth along with abstracts, posters, and book chapters. He currently serves as principal investigator for SWTRC, site principal investigator on an NIH multi-site rural ostomy self-management training telehealth grant, and as a co-investigator on the University of Arizona Center for Rural Health's Arizona Health Improvement Plan grant from the Arizona Department of Health Services.

Carrie Foote, BS, BA

Carrie Foote holds the position of Associate Director of Administration at the Arizona Telemedicine Program and serves as the Program Administrator for the Southwest Telehealth Resource Center. In her capacity, she exercises administrative oversight for both the ATP and SWTRC. Ms. Foote represents these organizations at regional and national meetings, assuming responsibility for the creation and curation of public relations materials. Additionally, she plays a pivotal role in fulfilling reporting obligations and coordinating activities for both the ATP and the numerous partnering organizations associated with the SWTRC. Ms. Foote serves as the editor for both the ATP and SWTRC blogs.