



## The Science of Well-being & Why It Matters

### SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

(In order of appearance on the program)

**KATHRYN SANTORO, MA** is Director of Programming at the National Institute for Health Care Management (NIHCM), Foundation, a nonprofit and nonpartisan organization dedicated to transforming health care through evidence and collaboration. Ms. Santoro currently leads NIHCM's programs to highlight market and policy innovations, including webinars and Capitol Hill briefings, and directs the organization's journalism and population health programs.

Ms. Santoro joined NIHCM Foundation in September 2004 after receiving her Master's degree in Public Policy from the George Washington University with a focus on women's health policy. Ms. Santoro previously served as a Project Consultant for Women in Government where she was responsible for compiling a state-by-state report card on access to cervical cancer screening. While pursuing her Master's degree, Ms. Santoro was a Communications Assistant for a health policy consulting firm and a Graduate Intern for a Washington, D.C. based women's and children's policy research organization. Ms. Santoro attended Villanova University in Villanova, PA and graduated with a BA cum laude in Political Science.

**EMILIANA R. SIMON-THOMAS** is the science director of the Greater Good Science Center, where she oversees the GGSC's fellowship program, is a co-instructor of its Science of Happiness online course, and helps run its Expanding Gratitude project.

Ms. Simon-Thomas is a leading expert on the neuroscience and psychology of compassion, kindness, gratitude, and other "pro-social" skills. She earned her doctorate in Cognition Brain and Behavior at UC Berkeley, where her dissertation used behavioral and neuroscience methods to examine how negative states like fear and aversion influence thinking and decision-making. During her postdoc, Ms. Simon-Thomas transitioned to studying pro-social states like love of humanity, compassion, and awe. From there, she served as Associate Director/Senior Scientist at CCARE (the Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education at Stanford University), focusing on how compassion benefits health, well-being, and psychosocial functioning.

Today, Ms. Simon-Thomas work spotlights the science that connects health and happiness to social affiliation, caregiving, and collaborative relationships, as she continues to examine the potential for – as well as the benefits of – living a more meaningful life.

**LUANN HEINEN** is the Vice President of Well-being & Workforce Strategy at the National Business Group on Health. The National Business Group on Health is the nation's only non-profit organization devoted exclusively to representing large employers' perspective on national health policy issues and helping companies optimize business performance through health improvement, innovation and health care management.

Ms. Heinen is responsible for the Business Group's initiatives on employee, family and community well-being and workforce effectiveness. These include:

- *Best Employers: Excellence in Health and Well-being* recognition program
- *Well-being & Workforce Strategy Institute*, a source of thought leadership, benchmarking and tactical support to large employers on health and well-being, with a focus on business performance.
- *Leave Optimization Forum*, where employers address opportunities as well as challenges related to absence, leave and workplace flexibilities.
- Annual Workforce Strategy conference; the 2019 event is *Experience the Advantage of Well-being*, September 17-19, 2019 in San Diego.

Ms. Heinen earned a Master of Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and an A.B. in human biology with distinction from Stanford University.

**CINDY BJORKQUIST** is the Director, Health & Wellbeing at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan. With over 33 years of experience in various roles in the health and wellness industry, Ms. Bjorkquist has worked directly in health care for the past 23 years. In her current position as director of BCBSM Health & Well-Being, she is responsible for the Health & Well-Being portfolio including strategy, development, contracting and operations across the enterprise for all market segments. Prior to her current position, Ms. Bjorkquist was hired by Allegiance Health System to create the nonprofit hospital foundation called The Foundation for a Healthy Community and serve as the executive director. She was responsible for assembling and chairing the board of directors, leading strategic development including product development for the Physician Health Plan of South Michigan, and coordinating the community sponsorship and grant funds.

Ms. Bjorkquist has also held instructor positions at Michigan State University and Jackson Community College, and was president and owner of High Voltage, a consulting company specializing in worksite wellness program development and evaluation.

She earned a bachelor's degree in exercise physiology and biology from Spring Arbor University, and holds a master's degree in kinesiology with a double major in biology and exercise in sports science from Michigan State University.

Most cherished accomplishment – her two Spartan graduated boys.