

Biographies of Speakers

Pregnancy and Postpartum in Prison:

Healthcare, Law, and Lived Experience

3rd Annual Global Prison Nursery Network Symposium

Thursday, Oct. 30 & Friday, Oct. 31, 2025 University of Minnesota Law School











Day 1 Opening Remarks | 8:30 - 9:00 am



Barbara Frey

Barbara Frey, J.D., is an international human rights scholar, teacher, and activist. Frey directed the Human Rights Program at the University of Minnesota from 2001–22 and served as Director of Graduate Studies for the Master of Human Rights from 2015–19. Frey's research interests include gun violence and human rights, disappearances and impunity in Mexico,

immigration, and human rights advocacy, and she lectures and writes widely on these topics. Frey has worked in non-governmental and inter-governmental organizations as well as academic institutions. She was an alternate member of the U.N. Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (2000–03) and was Special Rapporteur for a Sub-Commission study on firearms and human rights (2001–06). She received two Fulbright-Garcia Robles fellowships (2013 and 2019) for research on human rights in Mexico. From 1985 through 1996, Frey was Executive Director of Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights. Frey serves on the advisory board of Children of Incarcerated Caregivers.

Dr. Christina Ewig

Christina Ewig is Professor of Public Affairs and Faculty Director of the Center on Women, Gender, and Public Policy at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota. As Faculty Director of the Center, Dr. Ewig works to stimulate research, teaching, and public engagement on gender and its intersections with other forms of inequality. She has published widely on the impact of health and pension system design on



gender, racial, and class inequalities in Latin America. She is currently working on a book on gender, race, and political inclusion in the Latin American region. Dr. Ewig has a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



Keynote Speaker | 9:00 - 9:30 am



Dr. Rebecca Shlafer

Rebecca Shlafer, PhD, MPH, is an Associate Professor in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Minnesota. Professor Shlafer is a developmental child psychologist with additional training in maternal and child public health. Her community-engaged research and teaching activities sit at the intersection of child development, public health, and the criminal legal system. She co-leads the Model Jail Practices Learning Community with partners at the Minnesota Department of Health. In addition, she leads a multi-state study on enhanced perinatal programs in 8 state prisons. Professor Shlafer's research has informed several policy changes in the state of Minnesota, including the state's anti-shackling legislation passed in 2014 and the passage of the Healthy Start Act in 2021, which allows the Commissioner of Corrections to place pregnant and postpartum people in community-based alternatives to incarceration. Her research has been widely published in peer-reviewed journals, and she is considered one of the nation's foremost experts on the impact of incarceration on pregnant and parenting people.



Advancing International Guidelines for Perinatal Care in Prisons | 9:30 - 10:45 am



Dr. Robert Paterson

Dr. Robert Paterson has worked for more than 20 years with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), focusing, for the last 15 years, on health in detention. He has worked in all ICRC operational regions, either in-country or as a regional expert. He is currently the acting Programme Coordinator for

all ICRC's health in detention activities, based in Geneva in the headquarters' "People Deprived of Liberty" unit.

Dr. Carolyn Sufrin

Carolyn Sufrin, MD, PhD, is a medical anthropologist and an obstetrician–gynecologist at Johns Hopkins University, where she is an associate professor in the Department of Gynecology and Obstetrics and in Health, Behavior and Society at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. She has worked extensively on reproductive health issues affecting incarcerated



women, from providing clinical care in jail, to research, policy, and advocacy. As founder and director of Advocacy and Research on Reproductive Wellness of Incarcerated People (ARRWIP), Dr. Sufrin has led numerous research studies aimed at documenting and improving maternal health outcomes behind bars. Her work is situated at the intersection of reproductive justice, health care, and mass incarceration, which she examines in her book, *Jailcare: Finding the Safety Net for Women Behind Bars*.





Kirsty Kitchen

Kirsty Kitchen is Director of The Birth Companions Institute, where she leads work on achieving better care, equity, and justice for pregnant women, mothers, and their babies in the first 1001 days, from conception to a child's second birthday. Kitchen is a leading voice on the needs and experiences of

women who navigate pregnancy and early motherhood amidst severe disadvantage and inequity. She has a specialist focus on women in contact with the criminal justice system, children's social care services, and the immigration system, as well as health inequalities and the social determinants of health.

Moderated by

Professor Marie Claire Van Hout

Marie Claire Van Hout is a Professor of International Health
Policy and Practice and the Vice President for Research,
Innovation, and Impact at the South East Technological
University in Ireland. She has been research active for over 20
years in the field of law, health inequalities, and human rights of

marginalized populations (people in prison, people who use drugs, women affected by gender-based violence, migrants, and refugees). Professor Van Hout consults regularly as an independent evaluation consultant or substantive expert for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Council of Europe Pompidou Group, and the World Health Organization in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.



Launching Born Inside: Birth Experiences During Incarceration & the Need for Doula Care | 11:00 - 11:15 am

The Birth Support Working Group (BSWG) is a New York-based interdisciplinary working group between members of Women & Justice Project, Hour Children, the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Elmhurst Hospital/Health + Hospitals, and the Department of Health Systems Design & Global Health at Mount Sinai Hospital. Since 2021, BSWG has aimed to identify and enact ways to improve reproductive healthcare, especially doula care, for birthing people incarcerated in New York's prisons and jails. Core members include individuals with lived experience of pregnancy during incarceration, reproductive justice and healthcare advocates, social work and doula providers, and medical professionals who care for incarcerated people. BSWG efforts have informed the jail-based doula program at Rikers Island, and are detailed in the report Born Inside:

Birth Experiences During Incarceration & the Need for Doula Care.



Chloë LeStage

Chloë LeStage (she/they) is a dedicated advocate for Reproductive Justice and criminal legal system reform. She is currently a Policy Associate at Youth Represent, a legal aid non-profit that offers free legal services to young New Yorkers impacted by the criminal legal system and advocates for youth justice policy change in

New York City and State. Previously a Fellow at the Women & Justice Project in Jackson Heights, NY, LeStage worked to advance the leadership and power of people impacted by incarceration, including through initiatives such as the Growing HoPE doula program supporting birthing people living in custody on Rikers Island and throughout the NYC shelter system. She holds a joint B.A. in Social Studies and Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies from Harvard College, where she was awarded the Richardson Public Service Fellowship and the Priscilla Chan STRIDE Fellowship. LeStage is trained as a full-spectrum birth doula and a restorative justice facilitator.



Christina Holdrege

Christina Holdrege is the Executive Director of Bloom Project NY, a non-profit organization that promotes the wellbeing of birthing people and families through relationship-based support, education, and community. She is a licensed social worker with certification in perinatal mental health and a commitment to



reproductive justice advocacy in jails and prisons. Holdrege served as the former Director of Reproductive Initiatives at Women & Justice Project, overseeing project implementation as well as policy advocacy, and provided group supervision for working on Rikers Island. She has worked in the nonprofit sector serving parents, caregivers, children, and families for over 20 years.



Judith Clark

Judith Clark is the Director of the Survivors Justice Project, which supports decarceration efforts through New York's Domestic Violence Survivor's Justice Act. She is active in efforts to address issues critical to women and families impacted by the criminal legal system. During her 38 years in prison, she worked with her

sisters to create organizations to address challenges, take responsibility for harm, and repair relationships with their communities. Clark founded ACE (AIDS Counseling and Education), developed programs for mothers to sustain bonds with their children, and mentored new mothers living in the Bedford Hills prison nursery.



Dr. Krupa Harishankar

Dr. Krupa Harishankar is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology as well as the Department of Health Systems Design & Global Health at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City. She practices as a generalist obstetrician-gynecologist at Elmhurst Hospital and holds



subspecialty certification in Complex Family Planning. Dr. Harishankar provides clinical care to women and gender expansive individuals currently incarcerated on Rikers Island. She applies global health principles and systems-building practices locally, conducting community-based participatory action research and implementing care delivery improvements through the global health department's New York City partnership. Dr. Harishankar's current work is centered on the provision of doula care to vulnerable populations, especially birthing people facing housing insecurity and incarceration. She is a founding member of the Birth Support Working Group, an interdisciplinary collaboration focused on improving care for birthing people facing incarceration in New York. Through professional and personal avenues, she is committed to creating change—as an advocate, clinician, and researcher—in close partnership with justice—involved women.



Miyhosi Benton

Miyhosi Benton is a criminal justice activist, policy advocacy expert, strategist, and independent consultant for the Women and Justice Project. Benton has contributed to multiple policy campaigns addressing issues at the intersection of gender justice and the criminal legal system. She was a leader in the successful campaign

to pass the 2015 New York Anti-Shackling law, one of the most progressive of its kind in the nation, which strengthened and expanded the state's ban on the barbaric practice of shackling pregnant women who are incarcerated.



Rebecca Giusti

Rebecca Giusti is the former Medical Director of NYC Health + Hospitals/Correctional Health Services' Complex Care and Special Populations Service, a role through which she provided care to the most medically complicated patients on Rikers Island. She is a Family Medicine physician with six years of



experience in care provision and patient advocacy at Rikers Island, where she worked to ensure high quality patient care, coordination with community programs, and compassionate release. She holds expertise in reproductive justice and maternal-child health in the carceral setting.



Dr. Sheela Maru

Dr. Sheela Maru is an Associate Professor in the Departments of Global Health and Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. She is an attending physician at Elmhurst Hospital where she practices as a generalist Obstetrician-Gynecologist. Dr. Maru is the Director of the NYC partnership

at the Arnhold Institute for Global Health at Mount Sinai and the Director of Global Health at H+H/Elmhurst Hospital. Her team aims to improve the health and wellbeing of communities served by the public health system in Queens through developing community partnerships, building community resilience, and addressing social determinants of health. She is a member of the Birth Support Working Group, an interdisciplinary collaboration focused on improving care for pregnant people who are justice-involved in New York. In addition, Dr. Maru has been an advisor for the organization Possible and Nyaya Health Nepal, supporting health systems strengthening and implementation science work in rural Nepal for the past 15 years. Her research is focused on improving healthcare access and quality for women and children in low-resource settings.



Effective Advocacy Through Litigation, Monitoring, and Collaboration |

11:15 - 12:30 pm



Veronica Filippeschi

Veronica Filippeschi is the Senior Advisor on Vulnerabilities at the Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT), based in Geneva, Switzerland, with over 15 years of experience in human rights. She leads APT's work to address the situations of heightened risks of torture and ill-treatment faced by women, LGBTIQ+ people and other persons deprived of liberty in

situations of vulnerability. In her work, Filippeschi regularly engages with national oversight bodies, national authorities, civil society organizations, UN and regional human rights bodies and she is the author of several public reports and other documents. In her current role, she has recently led the development of APT's Global Report on Women in Prison in collaboration with National Preventive Mechanisms from 46 countries. Prior to joining the APT in 2013, Filippeschi worked for several UN agencies in Latin America and Italy. She holds a master's degree in international relations and a master's degree in international human rights law.

Catherine Ahlin-Halverson

Catherine Ahlin-Halverson is a Staff Attorney at the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Minnesota where she conducts constitutional law litigation and engages in non-litigation legal advocacy to advance civil liberties in Minnesota. Ahlin-Halverson has a particular focus on the infringement of the rights of LGBTQ+youth, the right to learn in K-12 public schools,



and the rights of people impacted by our justice system, especially while incarcerated. She is a 2000 graduate of Columbia Law School and a 1996 graduate of Smith College. Ahlin-Halverson is a recipient of the Texas Defender Service Light of Justice Award, the Minnesota Justice Foundation Advocate Award, and was recently named to Minnesota Lawyer's Top Women in Law list.





Apurva Vivek

Apurva Vivek is a lawyer and the founder of Hashiya Socio-Legal Centre for Women. She works at the intersection of gender, law, and policy. Her organisation works with incarcerated women in Jharkhand, India, with a strong focus on their reproductive rights. Vivek works in close collaboration

with the Department of Prison in her state and has recently contributed to a portion on Reproductive Rights of Women Prisoners in the State's newly released Prison Manual, making it the first prison manual in her country to include provisions on abortion access and postpartum depression.

Moderated by **Stuti Shah**

Stuti Shah is a doctoral candidate at Columbia Law School. Her research lies at the intersection of criminal justice and reproductive justice, employing socio-legal and comparative methodologies. While at Columbia Law, she was awarded the LL.M. Pathways Public Interest and



Government Fellowship, which gave her the opportunity to work with Reprieve U.S. Shah has offered courses at National Law University, Bangalore and NALSAR, Hyderabad, and has received a Fulbright Award for the year 2024–25 to work with the Square Circle Clinic (formerly Project 39A) in Delhi, India.



Day 2 Introduction and Comments: Respecting the Best Interests of the Child | 8:30 - 9:00 am



Dr. Carrie Booth Walling

Carrie Booth Walling is Director of the Human Rights Program at the University of Minnesota, where she leads interdisciplinary research, teaching, and community outreach in the field of human rights within the College of Liberal Arts. She also serves as Director of Graduate Studies for the Graduate Minor in Human Rights, teaches in the Institute for Global Studies, and is

affiliated faculty at the Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs. Dr. Walling specializes in human rights, human rights education, human security, transitional justice, the United Nations Security Council and mass atrocity crimes. She is a certified instructor for the Inside–Out Prison Exchange Program, which brings incarcerated and non-incarcerated people together to study justice behind prison walls. A 2018 Truman National Security Fellow, she is the author of Human Rights and Justice for All: Demanding Dignity in the United States and Around the World and All Necessary Measures: The United Nations and Humanitarian Intervention.

Benoit Van Keirsbilck

Benoit Van Keirsbilck is the Director of the Belgian section of Defence for Children International (DCI). He is Chief Editor of the Journal of Children's Law (Belgium) and a member of the Advisory Board of the UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty. Van Keirsbilck is a member of the Interdisciplinary Center for the Rights of the Child, which organizes academic



courses and develops research. He served as a member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2021-2024), and has been reelected for a second mandate within the CRC (2025-2028).





Amanda Lyons

Amanda Lyons is Executive Director of the Human Rights Center at the University of Minnesota Law School, where she leads research, teaching, advocacy, and community engagement focused on advancing human rights locally and globally. She is a specialist in international human rights law and advocacy, with expertise in

economic, environmental, and gender justice. Lyons's work focuses on rights-based approaches to addressing inequality and advancing social justice. She teaches courses on Poverty and Human Rights and Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Human Rights, and directs the Human Rights Field Placement experiential learning program. Before joining the University of Minnesota, she led the Americas Program and served as New York Head of Office for Franciscans International, and previously worked with the International Center for Transitional Justice in Bogotá, Colombia. Lyons earned her J.D. magna cum laude from the University of Minnesota and her B.A. in Sociology and Latin American Studies from the University of Notre Dame.



Keeping Mothers and Babies Together | 9:00 - 10:15 am



Victoria Lopez

Victoria Lopez is a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist and has also completed her CPRS Forensic Endorsement training. She works for MN Prevention Recovery Alliance, Direct Recovery Support, and Revive Recovery, where she supports individuals who have been impacted by substance use, as well as working with individuals facing the transition of re-entry. She is also currently working

her degree in psychology. Lopez's experience being released through the Minnesota Healthy Start Act gives her a unique perspective on how to better support parents and families in Minnesota. She hopes to continue to use both her lived and professional experience to continue making positive change in Minnesota and beyond.

Kellie Turner

Kellie Turner is the Family Stability Community Navigator in the new Family Supports Unit of the Minnesota Department of Corrections. She has over 20 years of experience working in rehabilitative programs in the corrections field. Turner's own lived experience with substance abuse, homelessness and



incarceration fuels her passion to help others overcome similar challenges and get a second chance at a first class life. In her current position, she works closely with Healthy Start mom's providing resources and support to them in the community while they care for and bond with their baby.



Dr. Florencia Cabrera

Dr. Florencia Cabrera is a lawyer trained at the University of Buenos Aires. She serves as Deputy Public Defender in charge of Mobile Legal Aid Unit No. 2 before the National Criminal Enforcement Courts. Dr. Cabrera is also a member of the Board of Directors of the Argentine Association for the Enforcement of Penal Justice.





Moderated by **Isabel Coronado**

Isabel Coronado, is a citizen of the Muscogee Nation, a Changemaker with NewDeal4Youth, and a Research Scholar in the Litmus program at NYU's Marron Institute where she coordinates the Family-Based Justice Center, a national technical assistance center that helps local counties, states, and Tribal nations create

programs to keep families together through comprehensive services instead of sending parents/primary caregivers to prison. Prior to joining NYU, she participated in the Next100 cohort as a Policy Entrepreneur, where she researched, advocated, and wrote an original policy proposal on behalf of children who experience parental incarceration. Prior to that, she served as the Deputy Director of the American Indian Criminal Justice Navigation Council, where she led the development of a new non-profit in Oklahoma serving incarcerated Native American people during reentry and reconnecting them to their families and Tribal communities. Coronado was selected by the Center for Native American Youth at the Aspen Institute as a 2018 Champions for Change recipient, Myskoke Women's Leadership as the 2019 College Student of the Year, and by Myskoke Youth Council as the 2020 Youth Visionary in promoting civic engagement. Coronado received her BS in 2017 from Northeastern State University, and her master's of public health with an emphasis on rural and underserved populations from Oklahoma State University in 2019.



Progress and Pushback on Laws | 10:30 - 11:30 am



Maya Sikand KC

Maya Sikand KC is a senior barrister at Doughty Street Chambers in London specialising in State accountability across public and private law. She started her working life as an advocate and campaigner for women and girls fleeing domestic violence, sexual abuse, forced marriages and other exploitation in the NGO sector. This experience means she brings an intersectional approach to her

work with a commitment to providing a voice to the marginalised. She has recently co-authored a *Legal Toolkit on Representing Pregnant Women and Mothers in the Criminal Justice System*, in collaboration with the campaign group Level Up. She is an editor of the leading criminal textbook *Archbold* and a contributor to *Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery: Law and Practice* (Bloomsbury Professional, Second Edition, 2020). She sits as a Recorder (part-time judge) in the criminal courts.

Antonietta Clemente

Antonietta Clemente is a family lawyer and forensic criminologist, specialized in forensic psychopathology. In 2006 she founded Lavori in Corso APS, where she currently leads the scientific and institutional coordination. The association works across prisons, schools, and communities to safeguard parental bonds during incarceration, defend children's rights,



and promote parental empowerment as a tool for social emancipation. Alongside her legal practice at the boutique law firm "Di Gioia & Clemente Avvocati," Clemente has developed a path that weaves together law, education, and advocacy, bringing local experiences into dialogue with national and international institutions.





Pamela Winn

Pamela Winn, known as "The Face of Dignity For Incarcerated Women," is the founder of RestoreHER US which has created a global movement dedicated to driving systemic change, ensuring that the voices of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women are heard. Winn is a powerhouse of purpose — a justice warrior, policy architect, and a storytelling alchemist. With a nurse's heart

and an advocate's fire, she turns pain into power and policy into progress. She's the voice reshaping the system with bold reform like the Women's CARE Act. Whether testifying before lawmakers, building coalitions across states, or cultivating healing through art, gardening, and community, she moves with clarity, strategy, and soul. Winn doesn't just fight for change — SHE IS THE CHANGE!

Ruth Breen

Ruth Breen began her career within Corrections Victoria in 2009 as a Prison Officer and has been in head office administrative and policy roles since 2011. Working through a variety of business units, Breen has remained with the Rehabilitation and Reintegration Branch for several years as a Senior Programs Officer. She has a focus on overseeing the programs and services that support family engagement in the



Victorian women's prisons, including the Living with Mum program. Breen is passionate about her work and strives to strengthen and improve the services, supports, and programs available to pregnant women, and mothers and children in custody.



Moderated by

Julie Matonich

Julie Matonich is a trial attorney and co-founder of Children of Incarcerated Caregivers (CIC). Prior to focusing on civil litigation involving children and women harmed by inadequate medical care, Matonich worked as a criminal defense attorney for over a decade, representing clients, many of whom were parents of young children, in state and federal courts.



She currently serves as CIC's Board President and is the co-director of CIC's Prison Nursery Project, which hosts the Global Prison Nursery Network to collaboratively address critical issues faced by children living in prisons with their incarcerated parents. Matonich was a co-instructor of the Parental Incarceration and Children's Human Rights seminar at the University of Minnesota in 2024–2025, and continues to co-lead an initiative, developed through the seminar, to focus courts' attention on the impact that their decisions about pretrial detention have on a defendant's child. She is also a member of the Minnesota Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (JJAC) Children of Incarcerated Parents Subcommittee.



Mitigating Harms of Separation | 11:30 - 12:30 pm



Faith Masupa

An advocate for community development, mental wellness, leadership accountability, children rights, women empowerment, equal opportunities, and policy reforms. A Mandela Washington Fellow with exposure in Civic Leadership and a certified Global Woman Leader by Coady Institute. Keen and passionate about driving change that is all-inclusive and impactful for a better

environment for all to thrive. Through her community works, Masupa has made recommendations on policy changes to various Parliamentary Committees to improve the wellbeing of circumstantial children and the marginalised in society. She is also a mentor and member of the prestigious International Leadership Association. Masupa founded Mother of Millions Foundation in 2013, a non-profit organisation based in Zambia that provides support to circumstantial children and incarcerated women through the provision of nutrition, healthcare, education, and advocacy. She is also the founder of Mutende Health and Wellness, a platform that brings women together to address and provide solutions for mental health and wellness issues.

Autumn Mason

Autumn Mason is an advocate, family trauma professional, and community health worker with a passion for supporting justice-impacted families. Through her work with the MN Prison Doula Project and partnerships with the MN Freedom Fund, Voices for Racial Justice, and African American Babies Coalition, Mason has supported hundreds of families, children, and newborns by



providing education, support and advocacy. She has helped testify and push for the passing of legislation such as Healthy Start and has consulted the MN DOC in the implementation of this policy. Mason is raising awareness nationally on the harms of systems on children, families and communities through her short documentary film "Autumn" and public speaking opportunities across the country.





Dr. Laura Abbott

Laura Abbott is Professor of Maternal Health and Criminal Justice in the School of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences at The University of Hertfordshire, UK. A qualitative researcher, she focuses on improving the lives of incarcerated pregnant women and mothers through interdisciplinary work spanning

midwifery, sociology, and criminology. Twice winner of the Vice-Chancellor's Researcher of the Year Award, she leads the ESRC-funded Lost Mothers Project with the charity Birth Companions. Dr. Abbott's policy influence and public engagement include arts collaborations, media contributions, and government advising. A Fellow of the Royal College of Midwives, registered nurse and midwife, and Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, she grounds her research in practice and supervises postgraduate researchers.

Moderated by

Isabella Sánchez

Isabella Sánchez is a clinical psychologist and systemic family therapist based in Mexico City. She has worked extensively with incarcerated mothers, fathers, and their children, as well as young adults and teenagers in incarceration. Her work has centered on advocating for justice reform and designing psychosocial interventions within penitentiary systems,



including the coordination of large-scale programs, legislative forums, and intervention strategies to address the impact of incarceration on families. Sánchez is currently completing her master's degree in Systemic Family Therapy at Instituto Latinoamericano de Estudios de la Familia while continuing her private clinical practice and engaging in international advocacy for vulnerable populations.



We extend our sincere thanks to all of our speakers, moderators, and partners for sharing their time, insight, and expertise.

We are deeply grateful to all those who shared their lived experiences and to the organizations around the world that connected us.

Special thanks to our co-sponsors at the University of Minnesota: the Center on Women, Gender and Public Policy at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs; the Human Rights Center at the University of Minnesota Law School; and the Human Rights Program—and to our interpreter, Nadia Smith.

If you have questions, comments, or want to learn more about Children of Incarcerated Caregivers, contact us at info@cicmn.org.







