

# 24TH INTERNATIONAL PERINATAL BEREAVEMENT CONFERENCE

*Join Us in New Orleans!*



## **EVIDENCE-BASED PERINATAL BEREAVEMENT CARE: EMBRACING DIFFERENCES**

A Biennial Conference for those who care for families experiencing miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, stillbirth, newborn death, a baby with a life-limiting condition, traumatic childbirth, death of the birthing parent, and pregnancy and/or birthing care that is disrespectful and lacks compassion.

IPBC 2026  
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA  
NEW ORLEANS MARRIOTT  
WAREHOUSE ARTS DISTRICT



May 13 - 16, 2026

PLIDA.ORG

# Join Us...



***The 24th PLIDA-sponsored International Perinatal Bereavement Conference is May 13 - 16, 2026 in the historic New Orleans, Louisiana.***

We invite you to attend this one-of-a-kind educational event, specially designed to bring together clinical professionals and bereavement advocates in a relaxed and communal setting. It is the only international conference devoted solely to the understanding of perinatal bereavement, meaning the death of a baby at any stage of pregnancy, birth, or in the first weeks or months of life. In addition, this year we are addressing traumatic birth, traumatic stress and grief following pregnancy loss, health disparities, maternal mental health and much more.

What makes the conference unique? Most notable is our commitment to the model of evidence-based care that includes clinical excellence, research, personal experiences, and bereaved family narratives. The purpose of the biennial International Perinatal Bereavement Conference is to bring new information, share best practices, and engage in educational and networking opportunities for those who support and care for bereaved families.

Additionally, this remarkable conference provides a wide variety of opportunities to engage, learn, and be inspired. Preconference workshops, plenary, concurrent, and poster sessions offer a wide array of opportunities to improve your clinical practice. Outstanding plenary speakers include Veronica Gillispie-Bell, MD, MAS, FACOG; Tori Charles, MA, ATR, LPC-A and Ashley Engler, MA, ATR-P, LPC-A; DonnaMaria Cortezzo, MD; Claire Crawford, PhD, LMSW, APHSW-C; Joia Crear-Perry, MD, FACOG; Karen A. Scott, MD, MPH, FACOG; and Darryl Owens, MDiv, BCC, CT, CPLC.

The welcome reception Wednesday evening is open to all attending the conference and is a great opportunity to catch up with old friends and meet new ones. The planning committee has arranged several other networking opportunities and casual receptions for you during our time together.

New Orleans is a historic city on the Mississippi River, in the heart of Louisiana. Known for its vibrant jazz music, Creole cuisine, French culture, and historic architecture, there is truly something for everyone. This is the ideal city to stay an extra day to explore all that the Crescent City has to offer.

Nearby attractions include the French Quarter, Cafe Du Monde for beignets, City Park, Preservation Hall, Mississippi River riverboat tour, and many museums and other attractions.

We invite you to contact us at [members@plida.org](mailto:members@plida.org) with any questions. Our team will be onsite to welcome you, assist with registration, and address your needs.

We look forward to meeting you and wish you an extraordinary conference experience. See you in New Orleans!

With gratitude,  
Gina Leigh Jones RN, CPLC, RTSCBC  
PLIDA President  
Conference Chair

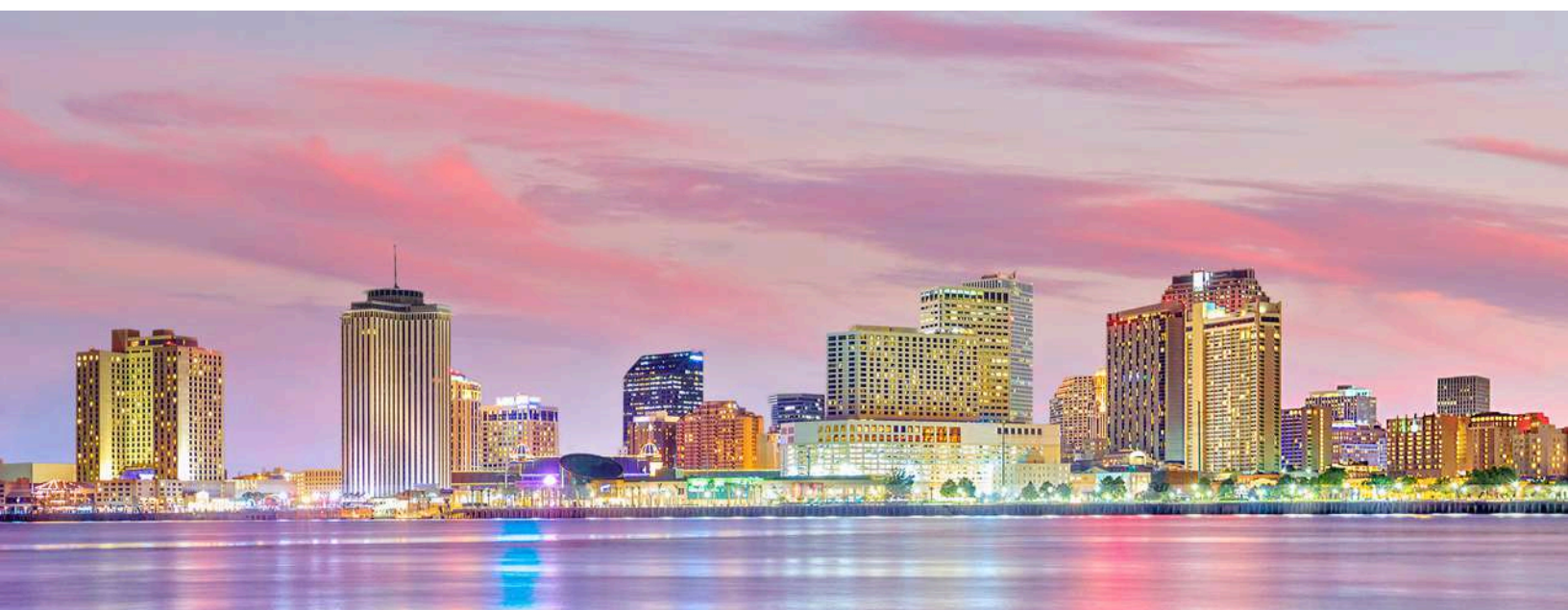


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## Mission

PLIDA (Pregnancy Loss and Infant Death Alliance) is an organization dedicated to being a leader in perinatal and neonatal bereavement care. Our mission is to provide education, advocacy, and networking for both healthcare providers and parent advocates, to promote the highest quality of evidence-based care for all families. We express our mission through a variety of ways, including professional continuing education, the establishment of position statements and practice guidelines, responding with a unified voice to issues in the media or legislation, and by creating a network for professionals to share resources, insight, and support.



# Conference Contributors



Thank you to the planning committee and conference co-chairs for their dedication to ensuring this conference is an educational and networking experience for all attendees. The conference committee would like to extend a thank you to the contributing members:

## **Conference Planning Chair**

Gina Leigh Jones, RN, CPLC, RTSCBC  
PLIDA President and Conference Chair  
Coordinator Bereavement and Supportive Care Services | Houston, TX  
Children's Memorial Hermann

## **Conference Planning Committee**

Rose Carlson, BS  
Tori Charles MA, ATR, LPC-A  
Rana Limbo, PhD, RN, CPLC, FAAN  
Terri Major-Kincade MD, MPH  
Jennifer Stachula, BA

## **Contributing PLIDA Education Committee Members**

Carrie J. Henry PhD., CNM, RN  
Denise Côté-Arsenault, PhD, RN, CPLC, FNAP, FAAN  
Laura Navarro Pickens, LCSW  
Rana Limbo, PhD, RN, CPLC, FAAN  
Terri Major-Kincade MD, MPH  
Gina Leigh Jones, RN, CPLC, RTSCBC  
Deborah Rich PhD, PMH-C, RTSCBC

## **PLIDA Staff**

Rose Carlson - Education Specialist  
Lucia Beltre - Business Coordinator  
Taylor Montgomery - Marketing Coordinator  
Jaclyn Nikodym - IT Manager

## **Contributing Community Members**

Cinnamon Cappel  
Pierce A.F. Jones, Esq.

Join hundreds of attendees at the International Perinatal Bereavement Conference presented by PLIDA for a one-of-a-kind experience. The conference is dedicated to evidence-based care, including research, personal experiences, and family narratives of bereavement. The biennial conference provides numerous educational and networking opportunities for those who support families experiencing loss.

## OBJECTIVES

- Identify skills for working within an interprofessional team when providing care for bereaved families.
- Examine ways of promoting health equity through health care access and quality in the perinatal population.
- Discuss trauma related to death, unexpected outcomes, and insensitive care during childbearing.
- Explore communication skills appropriate for the perinatal period.
- Describe grief and bereavement in diverse populations.
- Provide opportunities for relationship building.
- List ways of translating research findings into clinical practice to promote a compassionate standard of care for bereaved families.
- Explain principles and practice of self-care.

## PURPOSE

To engage in educational and networking opportunities for those who support bereaved families.

## AUDIENCE

This conference will appeal to any professional who provides care to families experiencing a perinatal death or engaging in research within the field including

- Obstetricians
- Maternal Fetal Medicine Physicians
- Neonatologists
- Palliative Care Physicians
- Advanced Practice Nurses
- Midwives
- Physician Assistants
- Nurses in Women's and Reproductive Health
- Social Workers
- Genetic Counselors
- Ultrasonographers
- Chaplains
- Funeral Directors
- Child Life Specialists
- Expressive Therapies
- Lactation Consultants
- Psychologists
- Childbirth Educators
- Policy Makers
- Program Administrators
- College and University Faculty
- Researchers
- Professors
- Parent Advocates
- ... among many others

*In addition, bereaved parents themselves participate in the conference in the role of parent advocates who may work in advocacy, lay support and who may hold a dual role as both patient and researcher or practitioner.*

# IPBC Hotel - New Orleans Marriott Warehouse Arts District

## Experience the Charm of New Orleans Marriott - Warehouse Arts District

Stay amid the unbridled energy and charm of the Big Easy in our hotel near the French Quarter, New Orleans, Garden District, and Central Business District. New Orleans Marriott Warehouse Arts District is housed in a 19th-century warehouse and blends historic style with modern convenience. Our New Orleans hotel in the downtown area enjoys an excellent location with views of downtown New Orleans and the Mississippi River.

### New Orleans Marriott - Warehouse Arts District

859 Convention Center Blvd, New Orleans, LA, 70130  
(800) 228-9290

### Group Room Rate: \$265.00

This discounted rate is available during the conference dates of: 5/11/26 - 5/16/26.



## Transportation to and from the Airport

The closest airport near New Orleans Marriott Warehouse Arts District is Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport (MSY). MSY is located approximately 15.3 Miles from the hotel. This hotel does not provide shuttle service, however there are many options to reach the hotel quickly.

Other options for transportation from the airport include:

- Taxi, Uber, Ride Sharing
- Car rental
- Airport Shuttle
  - One-way: \$24, Round-trip: \$44
  - Reservation Required: (504) 522-3500



# Registration

All registrations will be conducted online.



REGISTRATION TYPE	EARLY RATE* 7/15/25 - 4/16/26	REGULAR RATE 4/17/26 - 5/14/26
Preconference Half Day	\$200.00	\$250.00
Preconference Full Day	\$300.00	\$350.00
Main Conference PLIDA Member	\$680.00	\$780.00
Main Conference Non PLIDA Member	\$895.00	\$995.00
Single Day PLIDA Member	\$400.00	\$500.00
Single Day Non PLIDA Member	\$500.00	\$600.00

Registration closes on 5/14/26

Medical student pricing is available. To inquire, please reach out to [members@plida.org](mailto:members@plida.org).



## Additional Information

**Fees include** attendance at all conference sessions, admission to the welcome reception on May 13<sup>th</sup>, admission to the book signing reception on Thursday, May 14<sup>th</sup>, breakfast, lunch, and coffee breaks on the days for which you are registered. In addition, preconference fees include breakfast and lunch for attendees registered for morning or full-day preconference sessions. Your registration also includes access to conference materials, the conference app, poster presentations, and exhibits. **To receive the early registration rates, your registration must be completed online by 11:59PM CST on April 16, 2026.** This date is firm, with no exceptions.

### Payment:

Credit card is the preferred method of payment. All registrations have a \$15 processing fee per transaction. Should you have any issues with the online method or other registration questions, please contact [members@plida.org](mailto:members@plida.org).

### Cancellation/Transfer policy:

Full refunds (preconference registration), less a \$100 USD processing fee, are available only before March 26, 2026. Full refunds (conference registration), less a \$200 USD processing fee, are available only before March 26, 2026.

If you are transferring your registration to a colleague, a \$50 USD transfer fee applies. In order to receive a refund or transfer, you must notify conference management in writing by March 26, 2026 by emailing [members@plida.org](mailto:members@plida.org). If you do not cancel or transfer by this date, payment in full is still due, even if you do not attend the conference.

### Special Accommodations:

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, PLIDA seeks to make this conference accessible to all. If you have a disability that might require special accommodations, please email your needs to [members@plida.org](mailto:members@plida.org) or call her at 888-693-1435.

If you have questions or grievances, please contact [members@plida.org](mailto:members@plida.org).

# Sponsors & Exhibitors



Thank you to the IPBC 2026 Sponsors and Exhibitors! Are you interested in sponsoring and exhibiting? Visit [www.plida.org](http://www.plida.org)

## SPONSORS

*Mr. & Mrs. Gary Jones*  
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*Mr. & Mrs. Gary Jones*  
Delta Queen Reception Sponsor



*Ms. Rose Carlson*  
Reflection Room Sponsor



## Jazz Legend Sponsors



Manning Family  
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## EXHIBITORS

- Association of Women's Health, Obstetrics and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN) | [www.awhonn.org](http://www.awhonn.org)
- Cabocrema | <https://cabocrema.com/>
- Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital | <https://memorialhermann.org>
- Empty Arms Bereavement Support | [www.emptyarmsbereavement.org](http://www.emptyarmsbereavement.org)
- Forget Me Not | <https://www.fmncorp.com>
- Holy Sews, Inc. | [www.holysews.org](http://www.holysews.org)
- Jane's Room | <https://janesroom.org/>
- Now I Lay Me Down To Sleep | [nowilaymedowntosleep.org](http://nowilaymedowntosleep.org)
- Mamie's Poppy Plates | [www.mamiespoppyplates.com](http://www.mamiespoppyplates.com)
- M.E.N.D (Mothers Enduring Neonatal Death) | [www.mend.org](http://www.mend.org)
- Memories Unlimited | <https://www.memoriesunlimited.com/>
- NechamaComfort | <https://www.nechamacomfort.org/>
- Saul's Light | [saулsliгht.org](http://saулsliгht.org)
- Sea Glass Parenting | <https://store.seaglassparenting.com>
- Share Pregnancy and Infant Loss Support | [nationalshare.org](http://nationalshare.org)
- Sharing Solace | <https://sharingsolace.com/>
- Star Legacy Foundation | <https://starlegacyfoundation.org/>
- Sufficient Grace Ministries for Women, Inc | <https://sufficientgraceministries.org>
- Timely Presence | <https://thetimelypresence.com/>
- Walk With Me | [www.walkwithme-nonprofit.org/](http://www.walkwithme-nonprofit.org/)
- Woman's Health | [www.womans.org](http://www.womans.org)



[www.plida.org/exhibit-sponsor-ipbc](http://www.plida.org/exhibit-sponsor-ipbc)

*\*These are the confirmed exhibitors and sponsors at the time of publishing. We will update weekly.*

# Plenary Speakers

## **PRECONFERENCE PLENARY SPEAKER: WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 2026**

### **INTERVENTIONS TO ADDRESS PERINATAL, MATERNAL AND NEONATAL OUTCOMES AND LOSS IN LOUISIANA: VERONICA GILLISPIE-BELL, MD, MAS, FACOG**



Dr. Veronica Gillispie-Bell is a Board-Certified Obstetrician & Gynecologist and an Associate Professor at Ochsner Health in New Orleans, Louisiana. She serves as the System Medical Director of Health Outcomes and the Medical Director of Quality for Women's Services across the Ochsner Health System, and the Medical Director of the Minimally Invasive Center for the Treatment of Uterine Fibroids. Dr. Gillispie-Bell earned her medical degree from Meharry Medical College, completed her residency at Ochsner Health, and holds a Master of Applied Science in Patient Safety and Healthcare Quality from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. She also holds certification in Diversity and Inclusion from Cornell University. Known nationally for her expertise in managing heavy menstrual bleeding due to fibroids, she is highly skilled in advanced laparoscopic and robotic-assisted surgeries in addition to her obstetric care.

As Medical Director of the Louisiana Perinatal Quality Collaborative and the Pregnancy-Associated Mortality Review for the Louisiana Department of Health, Dr. Gillispie-Bell is a leading force in addressing maternal health disparities. Her work focuses on improving birth outcomes and eliminating racial disparities in maternal health across Louisiana. Dr. Gillispie-Bell has testified before Congress, led congressional briefings, and was an invited speaker at The White House Maternal Health Day of Action, where she advocated for policy improvements in maternal care and outcomes. Dr. Gillispie-Bell has held numerous leadership roles on both local and national platforms, and her clinical and advocacy work has earned her wide recognition. She has been quoted in national outlets such as USA Today and The New York Times and has appeared as a featured speaker at the Essence Festival, on Good Morning America, CNBC, Scripps News, and the 1619 Project Docuseries.

## **PRECONFERENCE PLENARY SPEAKER: WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 2026**

### **PAINTING THE JOURNEY: ART THERAPY AS A MODALITY FOR COPING WITH PREGNANCY, FETAL AND INFANT LOSS: TORI CHARLES, MA, ATR, LPC-A AND ASHLEY M. ENGLER, MA, ATR-P, LPC-A**



Tori R. Charles is a Licensed Professional Counselor Associate with a master's degree in art therapy and an emphasis in counseling. She earned a bachelor's in art education at Xavier University followed by a master's at St. Mary-of-the-Woods College. With over 7 years of clinical experience, Tori is dedicated to supporting individuals and families through life's most complex emotional landscapes, including perinatal loss, chronic illness, and medical trauma.

Currently, Tori provides therapeutic services at Children's Memorial Herman, including Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, Antepartum and Postpartum Units, General Pediatrics, Outpatient Pediatrics, and Pediatric Oncology. Their integrative approach combines the healing power of creative expression with evidence-based counseling techniques to support families navigating the emotional challenges of hospitalization, grief, and adjustment.

Tori is particularly passionate about perinatal health and has been instrumental in developing supportive programming for families coping with pregnancy and infant loss. Through individual and group therapy Tori helps clients process grief, foster resilience, and reconnect with meaning during times of profound transition. As a speaker she not only brings clinical expertise but also deep empathy and insight into needs of bereaved families. Their work continues to inspire a more compassionate and holistic approach to mental health care in the medical setting.



Ashley Engler is an Art Therapist and Licensed Professional Counselor Associate at Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital. After earning her Bachelor of Arts from Baylor University, she served as the Program Coordinator for Arts in Medicine at MD Anderson Cancer Center Children's Cancer Hospital. Toward the end of her nine-year career there, she completed her Master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and Art Therapy from Pennsylvania Western University - Edinboro. Since then, Ashley has begun soaring to new heights in her role as Art Therapist, supporting pediatric patients and families through evidence-based, compassionate, and trauma-informed care. It is the greatest joy of Ashley's career to share her passion for art with those that she serves in her clinical work. At Children's Memorial Hermann, she has the opportunity to work with babies and families in the NICU, as well as meet children and teens in the PICU, Heart Center, Dialysis, and specialty care units.

# Plenary Speakers (continued)



## **MAIN CONFERENCE PLENARY SPEAKER: THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2026**

**COMPLEX FETAL DIAGNOSES: CURRENT LANDSCAPE, CONSTRAINTS AND BARRIERS TO EQUITABLE CARE: DONNAMARIA CORTEZZO, MD**



DonnaMaria Cortezzo, MD, is a neonatologist in the Division of Neonatology at Connecticut Children's. She has a secondary appointment with the Division of Pain and Palliative care and is the Neonatal Lead for Fetal Care. Dr. Cortezzo's clinical interests include fetuses and neonates with multiple congenital anomalies, congenital diaphragmatic hernias, complex airways, neonates requiring surgical intervention, neonatal pain management, and neonatal-perinatal palliative care.

## **MAIN CONFERENCE PLENARY SPEAKER: THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2026**

**TOOLKIT FOR PERINATAL PALLIATIVE CARE FOR MEDICAL INTERRUPTION OF PREGNANCY: A LIVED EXPERIENCE: CLAIRE CRAWFORD, PHD, LMSW, APHSW-C**



Claire Crawford, LCSW, PhD is a Grief Counselor at Texas Children's Hospital, where she provides therapy to parents who have lost a child. Previously, Claire served as a palliative care social worker for six years. She is passionate about improving communication between medical providers and families, particularly when discussing sensitive issues such as making difficult medical decisions and providing bereavement support. Claire's research focuses on maternal mental health, disparities and discrimination in health care settings, and medical education. Claire's professional interests became personal when she experienced three pregnancy losses of her own. When she is not working, Claire finds peace and restoration in being outdoors with her son and husband.

## **MAIN CONFERENCE PLENARY SPEAKER: FRIDAY, MAY 15, 2026**

**USING A JUSTICE CENTERED LENS TO ACHIEVE BIRTH EQUITY: ADDRESSING HISTORY, POWER, PRIVILEGE AND HEALING: JOIA CREAR-PERRY, MD, FACOG**



Dr. Crear-Perry is a physician, policy expert, thought leader, and advocate for transformational justice. As the founder and president of the National Birth Equity Collaborative, she identifies and challenges racism as a root cause of health inequities. She is a highly sought-after trainer and speaker who has been featured in national and international publications including *Essence* and *Ms.* In 2020, she was honored by *USA Today* in its "Women of the Century" series and featured on "Nightline's" "Hear Her Voice" on ABC.

Dr. Crear-Perry has twice addressed the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to elevate the cause of gender diversity and urge a human rights framework toward addressing maternal mortality. Previously, she served as the executive director of the Birthing Project, director of Women's and Children's Services at Jefferson Community Health Care Centers, and as the director of Clinical Services for the City of New Orleans Health Department. She currently serves as a principal at Health Equity Cypher and on the board of trustees for Black Mamas Matter Alliance, Community Catalyst, National Clinical Training Center for Family Planning, and the University of California San Francisco Preterm Birth Initiative.

After completing undergraduate studies at Princeton University and Xavier University of Louisiana, she received her medical degree from Louisiana State University and completed her residency in obstetrics and gynecology at Tulane University School of Medicine.

# Plenary Speakers (continued)



## **MAIN CONFERENCE PLENARY SPEAKER: FRIDAY, MAY 15, 2026**

**FEELING SAFE IS THE FLOOR, NOT THE CEILING: REDEFINING QUALITY AND SAFETY IN OBSTETRIC CARE: KAREN SCOTT, MD, MPH, FACOG**



Dr. Karen A. Scott has nearly 30 years of supporting women, girls, and gender expansive people across the sexual, reproductive and perinatal life course. Based in Tennessee, Dr. Scott is a national and international speaker about the ways in which obstetric racism violates the humanity, bodies, and lives of Black women, girls, gender expansive people, and their given and chosen family throughout health services design, provision, evaluation, and training, in the afterlife of slavery.

As an improvement and implementation scientist activist, community OBGYN, and applied epidemiologist grounded in a Black feminist-reproductive justice praxis, she developed the first and only validated Patient Reported Experience Measure of obstetric racism (the PREM-OB Scale® Suite), which is now available for implementation, spread, and scale as prevention and mitigation against obstetric racism.

At the end of 2021, Dr. Scott relocated to her birthplace in Nashville, TN to expand her activism and scholarship throughout the South and Midwest. In 2022, Black Mamas Matter Alliance hosted the Black Maternal Health Conference and Training Institute and recognized Dr Scott as an unsung hero in public health related to infant and maternal mortality prevention by selecting her to receive the Inaugural Jackson, Rowley, and Hogan Excellence in Black Maternal Health Scholarship, in honor of the foremothers of Black Maternal Health scholarship and practice. Currently, she is the proud developer and principal investigator of the first and only Black community-led multi-state quality and safety program to address obstetric racism during childbirth hospitalization and postpartum called The CATCH Pilot, Community-led Accountability and Transformation in Care experiences and Hospital culture. She also serves on the TN Fetal Infant Mortality Review Committee and TN Maternal Mortality Review Committee Taskforce.

## **MAIN CONFERENCE CLOSING SPEAKER: SATURDAY, MAY 16, 2026**

**WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?: REV. DARRYL I OWENS, MDIV, BCC, CT, RTSCBC**



Darryl Owen received his BA degree in Industrial Relation at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and his Masters of Divinity at Duke University. He has served as a Clinical Chaplain at Central Prison in Raleigh, NC, and became the Women's Services Chaplain/Grief Counselor at UNC Hospitals in Chapel Hill, NC in Feb. 2001.

His duties include providing pastoral care and grief counseling to patients, families, and staff served by the North Carolina Women's Hospital. He also co-manages the perinatal bereavement program and leads worship services in the Hospital community. Darryl is certified as a clinical chaplain by the Association for Professional Chaplains; in thanatology by the Association for Death, Education, and Counseling; and as a Perinatal Loss Care provider by the Hospice and Palliative Credentialing Center. He is a Past President of the Association for Professional Chaplains, and of the North Carolina Chaplains Association. He serves as an elder at his local church. He has also served on numerous boards locally and nationally.

# IPBC 2026 Conference Schedule



## **TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2026**

5:00PM - 7:00PM Registration Opens  
5:00PM - 9:00PM Reflection Room

## **PRECONFERENCE SCHEDULE: WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 2026**

7:00AM - 6:00PM Registration Opens  
7:00AM - 9:00PM Reflection Room  
7:00AM - 7:45AM Continental Breakfast for Preconference Registrants  
7:45AM - 8:00AM Welcome and Opening  
8:00AM - 9:15AM Preconference Plenary #1: Interventions to Address Perinatal, Maternal and Neonatal Outcomes and Loss in Louisiana: Veronica Gillispie-Bell, MD, MAS, FACOG  
9:15AM - 9:30AM Coffee Break  
9:30AM - 12:00PM Preconference Session #1  
12:00PM - 1:00PM Lunch (provided)  
1:00PM - 2:15PM Preconference Plenary #2: Painting the Journey: Art Therapy as a Modality for Coping With Pregnancy, Fetal and Infant Loss: Tori Charles, MA, ATR, LPC-A and Ashley Engler, MA, ATR-P, LPC-A  
2:15PM - 2:30PM Coffee Break  
2:30PM - 5:00PM Preconference Sessions #2  
5:00PM - 9:00PM Exhibits Open  
6:30PM - 9:00PM Welcome Reception

## **MAIN CONFERENCE SCHEDULE: THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2026**

6:55AM - 4:30PM Registration Open  
7:00AM - 9:00PM Reflection Room  
7:00AM - 6:00PM Exhibits Open: *Exhibits will be closed during Plenary and Concurrent Sessions*  
7:00AM - 8:00AM Continental Breakfast  
8:00AM - 8:15AM Welcome and Opening  
8:15AM - 9:30AM Main Conference Plenary Opening #3: Complex Fetal Diagnoses: Current Landscape, Constraints, and Barriers to Equitable Care: DonnaMaria Cortezzo, MD  
9:45AM - 11:00AM Poster Presentations and Coffee Break  
11:15AM - 12:15PM Concurrent Sessions #1  
12:15PM - 1:15PM Lunch (provided)  
1:15PM - 1:30PM Announcements  
1:30PM - 2:45PM Plenary Session #4: Toolkit for Perinatal Palliative Care for Medical Interruption of Pregnancy. A Lived Experience: Claire Crawford PhD, LMSW, APHSW-C  
2:45PM - 3:15PM Coffee Break  
3:15PM - 4:15PM Concurrent Sessions #2  
4:15PM - 6:00PM Cocktail Reception

## **FRIDAY, MAY 15, 2026**

6:55AM - 4:30PM Registration Open  
7:00AM - 7:00PM Reflection Room  
7:00AM - 8:00AM Continental Breakfast  
7:00AM - 3:30PM Exhibits Open: *Exhibits will be closed during Plenary and Concurrent Sessions*  
8:00AM - 8:15AM Welcome and Opening  
8:15AM - 9:30AM Plenary Session #5: Using a Justice Centered Lens to Achieve Birth Equity: Joia Crear-Perry, MD, FACOG  
9:30AM - 10:00AM Coffee Break  
10:00AM - 11:00AM Concurrent Sessions #3  
11:15AM - 12:15PM Concurrent Sessions #4  
12:15PM - 1:15PM Lunch (provided)  
1:15PM - 1:30PM Announcements  
1:30PM - 2:45PM Plenary Session #6: Feeling Safe Is the Floor, Not the Ceiling: Redefining Quality and Safety in Obstetric Care: Karen A. Scott, MD, MPH, FACOG  
2:45PM - 3:15PM Break  
3:15PM - 4:15PM Concurrent Sessions #5  
4:00PM Exhibits Close  
6:00PM - 8:00PM President's Reception (by invitation only) - Courtyard Suite #329

## **SATURDAY, MAY 16, 2026**

7:00AM - 8:00AM Registration Opens  
8:00AM - 9:00AM Continental Breakfast  
9:00AM - 10:15AM Plenary Session #7 Closing: Where Do We Go From Here?: Rev. Darryl Owens, MDiv, BCC, CT, RTSCBC  
10:15AM - 10:30AM Conference Closing

Pregnancy Loss and Infant Death Alliance is pleased to announce we have been granted continuing education credit for both our Preconference and Main Conference at our upcoming International Perinatal Bereavement Conference in New Orleans on May 13 – 16, 2026.

## Learning Objectives:

- Identify skills for working within an interprofessional team when providing care for bereaved families.
- Examine ways of promoting health equity through health care access and quality in the perinatal population.
- Discuss trauma related to death, unexpected outcomes, and insensitive care during childbearing.
- Explore communication skills appropriate for the perinatal period.
- Describe grief and bereavement in diverse populations.
- Provide opportunities for relationship building.
- List ways of translating research findings into clinical practice to promote a compassionate standard of care for bereaved families.
- Explain principles and practice of self-care

## Accreditation Statement

In support of improving patient care, this activity has been planned and implemented by Rush University Medical Center and [Pregnancy Loss and Infant Death Alliance-PLIDA](#). Rush University Medical Center is jointly accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), and the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) to provide continuing education for the healthcare team.

## Credit Designation Statements: Pre-Conference Day (5/13/26)

### For Medicine:

Rush University Medical Center designates this live activity for a maximum of **7.75** AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)<sup>TM</sup>. Physicians should claim only credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

Successful completion of this CME activity, which includes participation in the evaluation component, enables the learner to earn credit toward the CME of the American Board of Surgery's Continuous Certification program. It is the CME activity provider's responsibility to submit learner completion information to ACCME for the purpose of granting ABS credit.

### For Nursing:

Rush University Medical Center designates this knowledge-based live activity for a maximum of **7.75** nursing contact hour(s).

### For Psychologists:

Rush University Medical Center designates this live activity for **7.75** CE credits in psychology. Continuing Education (CE) credits for psychologists are provided through the co-sponsorship of the American Psychological Association (APA) Office of Continuing Education in Psychology (CEP). The APA CEP Office maintains responsibility for the content of the programs.

### For Social Work:

As a Jointly Accredited Organization, Rush University Medical Center is approved to offer social work continuing education by the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) Approved continuing education (ACE) program. Organizations, not individual courses, are approved under this program. Regulatory boards are the final authority on courses accepted for continuing education credit. Social workers completing this course receive **7.75** general continuing education credits.

## Credit Designation Statements: General Conference (5/14/26 - 5/16/26)

### For Medicine:

Rush University Medical Center designates this live activity for a maximum of **12.00** AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)<sup>TM</sup>. Physicians should claim only credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

Successful completion of this CME activity, which includes participation in the evaluation component, enables the learner to earn credit toward the CME of the American Board of Surgery's Continuous Certification program. It is the CME activity provider's responsibility to submit learner completion information to ACCME for the purpose of granting ABS credit.

### For Nursing:

Rush University Medical Center designates this knowledge-based live activity for a maximum of **12.00** nursing contact hour(s).

### For Psychologists:

Rush University Medical Center designates this live activity for **12.00** CE credits in psychology. Continuing Education (CE) credits for psychologists are provided through the co-sponsorship of the American Psychological Association (APA) Office of Continuing Education in Psychology (CEP). The APA CEP Office maintains responsibility for the content of the programs.

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# Preconference Sessions

## **PRECONFERENCE SCHEDULE: WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 2026**

### **8:00AM - 9:15AM: MORNING OPENING PLENARY SESSION**

#### **INTERVENTIONS TO ADDRESS PERINATAL, MATERNAL AND NEONATAL OUTCOMES AND LOSS IN LOUISIANA: VERONICA GILLISPIE-BELL, MD, MAS, FACOG**

By improving clinical quality of care, addressing social determinants of health, and improving systems of care, we can improve fetal, maternal, and infant loss. However, even under the best conditions, these tragedies will occur. As healthcare providers, we play a crucial role in providing healing through compassionate healthcare. In this session, you will learn how to provide patient centered-care even in the loss.

### **9:30AM - 12:00PM: PRECONFERENCE SESSIONS #1**

#### **MEMORY MAKING AND PLANNING GROUP EVENTS: ROSEMARY CARLSON, BS AND YOLANDA KING, MPA, MSW, LICSW**

This preconference presentation focuses on creative ways to honor and memorialize babies at the time of the loss, no matter the gestation of the pregnancy. Attendees will learn how to create keepsakes not only for the parents, but also grandparents and siblings. Carlson and King will share ideas for hosting meaningful memorial events as well as provide an opportunity to participate in a hands-on activity you can take back to the families you serve.

#### **SUPPORTING BEREAVED PARENTS EXPERIENCING PREGNANCY AND INFANT LOSS: SKILLS DEVELOPMENT, RESEARCH UPDATES, AND CARING FOR THE BEREAVED: KATHLEEN MASSMAN, PHD, LPCC**

Despite growing awareness of perinatal loss, medical and mental health providers often receive limited training in how to support individuals and families navigating pregnancy and infant loss. This gap can leave clinicians feeling uncertain in assessment, hesitant in intervention, and unclear on how to differentiate grief from co-occurring mental health concerns. This session bridges that gap through current research and practical, clinically grounded guidance.

We will explore how perinatal grief presents across the continuum—from the time of loss through the postpartum period and beyond. Grief in this context often overlaps with symptoms of trauma, depression, and anxiety, while not always fitting neatly within traditional diagnostic frameworks. Special attention will be given to commonly used screening tools, including their strengths, limitations, and impact on clinical decision-making.

Participants will be introduced to the framework of companioning in grief, emphasizing a stance of walking alongside rather than “fixing” grief. We will discuss how this approach informs clinical language, therapeutic presence, and assessment, alongside evidence-informed care. Further, we will consider how generational grief and individual grieving styles influence the way perinatal loss is experienced, expressed, and supported in clinical care.

Designed for medical and mental health providers, this session offers practical strategies to strengthen confidence in working with perinatal loss, with a focus on clarity, compassion, and interdisciplinary collaboration. Building on prior conference sessions, this session will integrate current research and evolving perspectives from perinatal mental health, psychology, and thanatology to support thoughtful, responsive care for grieving parents. Participants will leave with new insights and tools to support individuals and families navigating loss.

#### **PARTNERING WITH BEREAVED PARENTS: ASHLEY KIEFER AUTREY, MD, KIMBERLY NOVOD, MPA, AND TANYA SPITZER**

Dr. Autrey, a pediatric palliative care physician, will present her work with bereaved parents explaining how hope and prognostic awareness can co-exist at the end of life. Kimberly Novod, a bereaved parent and executive director of Saul’s Light, a local organization that helps NICU families and still-birth grieving families, will provide key takeaways from her lived experiences. Both Dr. Autrey and Ms. Novod will lead a bereaved parent panel offering participants additional insight and a chance to interact and ask questions.

#### **NAVIGATING PATIENT ACCESS TO REPRODUCTIVE CARE ACROSS STATE LINES: CLAIRE CRAWFORD PHD., LMSW, APHSW-C AND REBECCA TAPICK**

Termination for medical reasons (TMFR) remains highly stigmatized, even within pregnancy and infant loss communities, and is only becoming more fraught within the current legal landscape of abortion access. As a result, birthing people who choose TMFR often experience deep grief compounded by shame, silence, and fear of judgment and possible legal retribution. In this presentation, we will reframe and validate TFMR as palliative, compassionate end-of-life care and draw parallels to the care and memory making opportunities typically offered for pregnancy and infant loss. We will also guide providers with specific, concrete actions for more empathetic care and empower parents to ask for memory making and choice throughout their TMFR experience. As two mothers who have experienced loss, including a TMFR, and with a range of palliative care and grief experiences both personal and professional, we are uniquely positioned to speak to both perspectives on this sensitive topic.

#### **ABC'S OF EMPATHY IN COMMUNICATION DURING PATIENT ENCOUNTERS: BACK TO BASICS: TERRI MAJOR-KINCADE, MD, MPH, FAAP**

In this pre-conference session, Dr. Major-Kincade will spend time reviewing the core principles of empathy, illustrate the barriers to empathetic communication in caring for patients and apply 3 core empathy principles to direct patient care in the perinatal/pregnancy and infant loss setting.

## **PRECONFERENCE SCHEDULE: CONTINUED**

### **1:00PM - 2:15PM: PRECONFERENCE PLENARY #2**

#### **PAINTING THE JOURNEY OF GRIEF: ART THERAPY AS A MODALITY FOR COPING WITH PREGNANCY AND INFANT LOSS:**

**TORI CHARLES, MA, ATR, LPC-A AND ASHLEY ENGLER, MA, ATR-P, LPC-A**

This plenary session will introduce Art Therapy as a vital, trauma informed clinical practice to supporting caregivers and families experiencing perinatal grief and loss. Themes to be explored include processing complex emotions, honoring loss, and reconnecting with meaning when language is insufficient. Two case studies will illustrate the power of Art Therapy in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of families during their journeys of grief and loss.

### **2:30PM - 5:00PM: PRECONFERENCE SESSIONS #2**

#### **PAINTING THE JOURNEY OF GRIEF: A WORKSHOP DEMONSTRATING THE USE OF ART THERAPY WITH PREGNANCY AND INFANT LOSS (FETAL CENTER, ANTEPARTUM, AND NICU): TORI CHARLES, MA, ATR, LPC-A AND ASHLEY ENGLER, MA, ATR-P, LPC-A**

In this hands-on workshop, we will explore the ways that Art Therapy can bypass language to honor the complexity of grief, create meaning, and provide opportunity for expression. Participants will have the chance to engage in an experiential showcasing the importance of making space for creativity during the bereavement process. The invitation is open to all skill levels; no artistic experience required.

#### **BEYOND THE BINARY: INCLUSIVE SUPPORT FOR LGBTQ+ FAMILIES: JULIE BINDEMAN, PSY-D AND URSULA SABIA SUKINIK**

In this session, we will explore strategies for providing affirming, inclusive, and culturally responsive care to LGBTQIA+ individuals and families across the full spectrum of reproductive experiences—including fertility, pregnancy, birth, postpartum, and pregnancy loss. From language to advocacy and birth planning to bereavement support, participants will learn how to break down barriers, challenge assumptions, and create safer, welcoming spaces for clients of all identities and family structures. Together, we'll ensure every family feels seen, respected, and supported throughout their unique journey.

#### **SAFE SPACES FOR POST-TRAUMATIC GROWTH: THE SUPPORT GROUP AS COMMUNITY IN HEALING: CAROL MCMURRICH, MA**

Facilitators often have little or limited training in support group start up and sustaining a support group and can be unclear on the dynamics of support group management; they identify the need for further training and resources. Participants in this pre-conference session will learn strategies to create trauma-informed support group environments in which participants share, learn, and heal as well as discuss the elements of a trauma-informed environment.

#### **SUPPORTING BEREAVED PARENTS EXPERIENCING PREGNANCY AND INFANT LOSS: SKILLS DEVELOPMENT, RESEARCH UPDATES, AND CARING FOR THE BEREAVED: KATHLEEN MASSMAN, PHD, LPCC**

Despite growing awareness of perinatal loss, medical and mental health providers often receive limited training in how to support individuals and families navigating pregnancy and infant loss. This gap can leave clinicians feeling uncertain in assessment, hesitant in intervention, and unclear on how to differentiate grief from co-occurring mental health concerns. This session bridges that gap through current research and practical, clinically grounded guidance.

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Designed for medical and mental health providers, this session offers practical strategies to strengthen confidence in working with perinatal loss, with a focus on clarity, compassion, and interdisciplinary collaboration. Building on prior conference sessions, this session will integrate current research and evolving perspectives from perinatal mental health, psychology, and thanatology to support thoughtful, responsive care for grieving parents. Participants will leave with new insights and tools to support individuals and families navigating loss.

#### **A FOLLOW-UP CARE TOOLKIT FOR PERINATAL LOSS: SHANDEIGH BERRY, PHD, RN, CNE**

Women who experience perinatal loss often “fall through the cracks” and do not receive the support and resources necessary to facilitate healthy coping and healing. In this interactive workshop, Dr. Berry will guide attendees through the steps in creating and sustaining a perinatal loss follow-up care program, provide scripted prompts for phone care and helping them identify stakeholders to implement a follow-up care program at their institution.

#### **ABC'S OF EMPATHY IN COMMUNICATION DURING PATIENT ENCOUNTERS: BACK TO BASICS: TERRI MAJOR-KINCADE, MD, MPH, FAAP**

In this pre-conference session, Dr. Major-Kincade will spend time reviewing the core principles of empathy, illustrate the barriers to empathetic communication in caring for patients and apply 3 core empathy principles to direct patient care in the perinatal/ pregnancy and infant loss setting.

# Main Conference Sessions



## **MAIN CONFERENCE SCHEDULE: THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2026**

### **8:15AM - 9:30AM: MORNING OPENING PLENARY SESSION #3**

#### **COMPLEX FETAL DIAGNOSES: CURRENT LANDSCAPE, CONSTRAINTS AND BARRIERS TO EQUITABLE CARE: DONNAMARIA CORTEZZO, MD**

In this plenary session, Dr. Cortezzo will present and discuss ethical considerations for fetal and neonatal interventions that may change lethal diagnoses to complex chronic diseases. She will also identify external factors that may limit available care options, discuss counseling challenges with complex fetal diagnoses, and explain the importance of palliative care for complex diagnoses.

### **11:15AM - 12:15PM: CONCURRENT SESSION #1**

#### **HEALING HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS: HOW DO WE SUPPORT THE SECOND VICTIM?: VERONICA GILLESPIE BELL, MD, MAS, FACOG**

By improving clinical quality of care, addressing social determinants of health, and improving systems of care, we can improve fetal, maternal, and infant loss. However, even under the best conditions, these tragedies will occur. As healthcare providers, we play a crucial role in providing healing through compassionate healthcare. In this session, you will learn how to provide patient centered-care even in the loss.

#### **SUPPORT OF FATHERS, LGBTQ, NON-GESTATIONAL CARRIERS: TAY SCOTT BLOODWORTH, DBH**

The grief response of life partners to perinatal loss has barely begun to be researched, and most studies have focused on mothers, their loss, and postpartum care provided to them. A need exists for validation of the partners' grief by family/friends, medical care providers, and communities. Accessibility to support services for males following the loss has been limited or non-existent in most communities. During this session, Bloodworth will discuss how a perinatal loss team can provide multiple avenues of support for both women and men and how it can have a positive impact.

#### **LESSONS FROM BEREAVED PARENTS: ASHLEY KIEFER AUTREY, MD AND KIMBERLY NOVOD, MPA**

Learn do's and don't's of providing bereavement support to parents and families from a pediatric palliative care physician and an experienced bereaved parent and community leader dedicated to supporting NICU and bereaved families.

#### **PERINATAL LOSS CARE IN THE POST-DOBBS WORLD: JULIE BINDEMAN, PSY-D AND URSULA SABIA SUKINIK**

This session focuses on the overview of current laws and their implications and impact on perinatal care beyond abortion. Bindeman will identify the gaps in care within a hospital setting, explore the importance of trauma-informed communication and discuss the ethical and professional challenges post-Dobbs. Additionally, the importance of interdisciplinary communication between doulas, mental health professionals, and the medical care team will be examined.

#### **SUPPORTING SIBLING GRIEF: THE ESSENTIAL ROLE OF A CHILD LIFE SPECIALIST IN PERINATAL BEREAVEMENT: ABIGAIL HURST, CCLS**

When a baby dies, there is a need for support of siblings as they can experience profound grief and confusion in the wake of death. Hurst is a Child Life Specialist and will address the emotional, psychological, and developmental needs of these children. She will show how incorporating the role of a CCLS in perinatal bereavement care has a positive impact not only on the siblings, but also on the family.

#### **FOURTH TRIMESTER CARE AFTER PERINATAL LOSS: RESEARCH GAPS AND NEXT STEPS, CARRIE HENRY, PHD., CNM, RN**

While most providers and advocates are acutely aware of the mental health and psychosocial risks associated with perinatal loss, physical risks are seldom discussed. This session will provide a comprehensive overview of both mental health and physical health risks associated with perinatal loss.

### **1:30PM - 2:45PM: MAIN CONFERENCE PLENARY #4**

#### **TOOLKIT FOR PERINATAL PALLIATIVE CARE FOR MEDICAL INTERRUPTION OF PREGNANCY. A LIVED EXPERIENCE: CLAIRE CRAWFORD PHD, LMSW, APHSW-C**

This session explores how a perinatal palliative care approach can be used in Termination for Medical Reasons (TFMR) at any stage of pregnancy. Often viewed solely as a clinical procedure, TFMR can also be understood as a compassionate, family-centered decision that considers the quality of life for both the baby and the parents. By reframing TFMR through a palliative care lens, families can be supported in making informed choices, accessing comfort measures, and engaging in meaningful memory making. As a palliative care social worker who experienced TFMR, the presenter will utilize personal and professional expertise to describe practical communication tools to help providers guide patients through TFMR with empathy, clarity, and respect for their values.

**3:15PM – 4:15PM: CONCURRENT SESSION #2**

**NAVIGATING GOALS OF CARE IN THE NEONATAL-PERINATAL PERIOD: DONNAMARIA CORTEZZO, MD**

Dr. Cortezzo will introduce neonatal-perinatal palliative care, explain the importance of neonatal-perinatal palliative care for families facing complex fetal diagnoses, review navigating fetal/neonatal goals of care, discuss how to effectively communicate goals of care/conceptualize and document a perinatal palliative care birth plan/integrate paradigms of neonatal-perinatal palliative care.

**NAVIGATING LOSS IN SURROGACY LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCES OF GRIEVING INTENDED PARENTS AND GESTATIONAL CARRIERS: KRISTY MILLER, MSW, LSW, PMH-C**

Outside of surrogacy agencies, there are not many (or many commonly known) resources available for supporting surrogates through loss or trauma associated with their surrogacy journeys, or for the intended parents who lose a child they did not carry. In this workshop, participants will learn appropriate language to use with gestational carriers and the intended parents. Case studies will be presented as well as resources that will assist in your personal and professional practice with surrogacy families.

**HANDPRINTS, HEARTBEATS, AND JOURNALS, OH MY!: PATIENT MEMORY MAKING WITHIN INTERDISCIPLINARY CARE: ABIGAIL KNIGHT, BSN AND LAINEY RAAB, NMT**

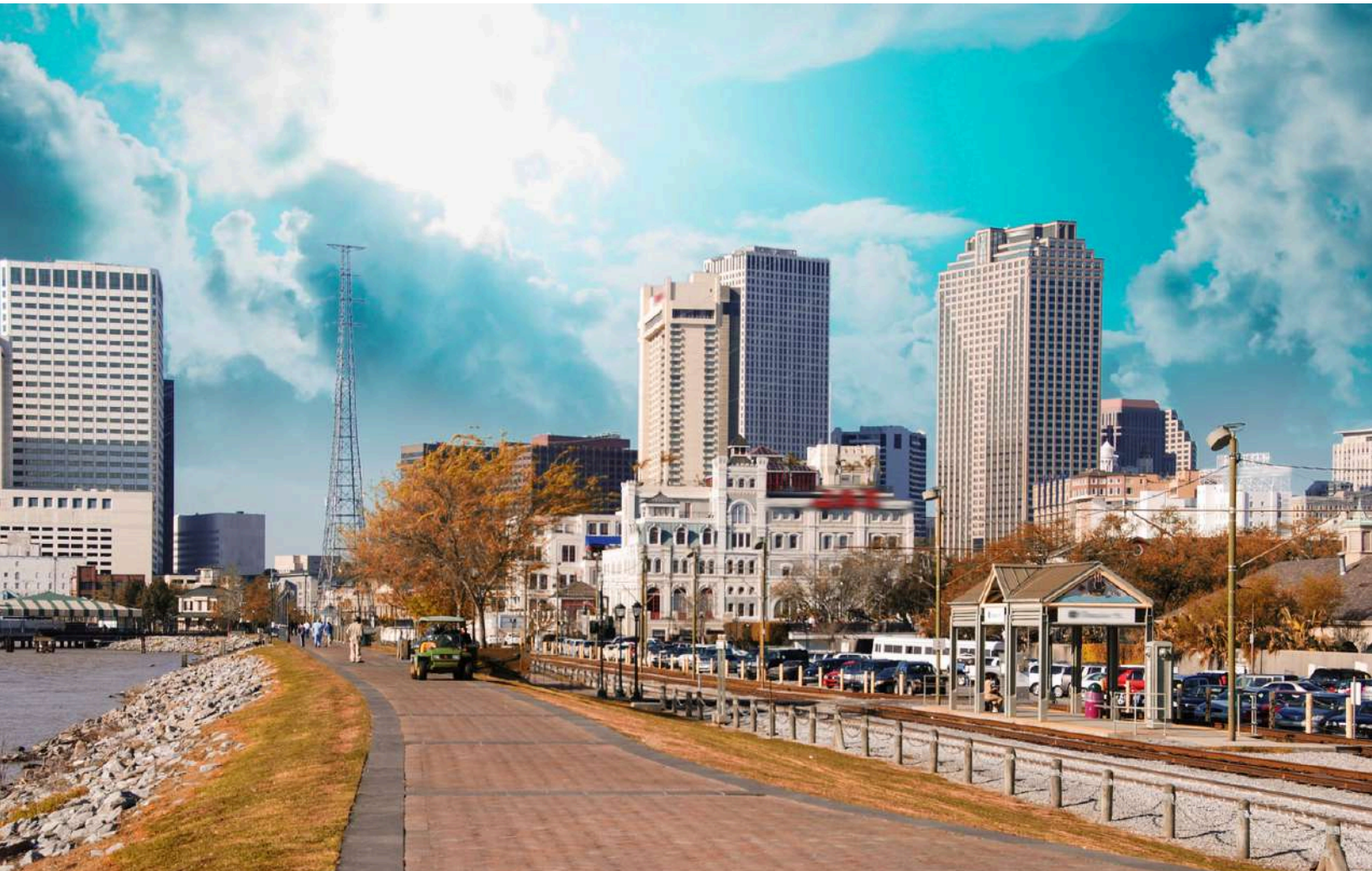
Seamless communication between interdisciplinary care teams during bereavement is essential to best serve grieving families. Knight and Raab will present ways to identify disciplines able to provide support to families via memory making, therapeutic interventions, and counseling. They will discuss providing family centered care, fully through memory making items offered by various disciplines.

**PERINATAL GRIEF AND CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE CARE FOR LATINE FAMILIES: MARIANELA RODRIGUEZ REYNALDO, PHD**

Disparities in the healthcare setting that provides services for Latine families has an impact on providing best care as many professionals are not trained on culturally responsive approaches for Latines. The purpose of this session is to provide participants with the knowledge and awareness of culturally responsive best practices when working with Latine families experiencing perinatal loss as well as to provide knowledge on the current state of disparities.

**PREGNANCY AND BIRTH EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN AND MEN WITH FETAL LIFE-LIMITING CONDITIONS (LLFCS) IN POLAND/ PERINATAL PALLIATIVE CARE: URSZULA TATAJ-PUZYNA, PHD, CM AND BARBARA BARANOWSKI, PHD, CM**

Participants in this session will gain an understanding of how a system of perinatal care works in Poland, a country with limited parental decision making regarding abortion. Tataj-Puzyna and Baranowski will discuss the challenges and barriers to perinatal care, antenatal education and hospice care.



**8:15AM - 9:30AM: MORNING PLENARY SESSION #5**

**USING A JUSTICE CENTERED LENS TO ACHIEVE BIRTH EQUITY: ADDRESSING HISTORY, POWER, PRIVILEGE AND HEALING: JOIA CREAR-PERRY, MD, FACOG**

This plenary session will discuss the historical context to the social and political determinants of health inequities in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Wellbeing.

**10:00AM - 11:00AM: CONCURRENT SESSIONS #3**

**HOW IMPORTANT IS SPIRITUALITY IN PERINATAL BEREAVEMENT?: DARRYL OWENS, M.DIV., BCC, CT, CPLC**

Participants of this workshop will take a brief dive into how to be spiritually present with patients and families especially when the provider doesn't share the same understanding of spirituality.

**PERINATAL LOSS CARE IN THE POST-DOBBS WORLD: JULIE BINDEMAN, PSY-D AND URSULA SABIA SUKINIK**

This session focuses on the overview of current laws and their implications and impact on perinatal care beyond abortion. Bindeman will identify the gaps in care within a hospital setting, explore the importance of trauma-informed communication and discuss the ethical and professional challenges post-Dobbs. Additionally, the importance of interdisciplinary communication between doulas, mental health professionals, and the medical care team will be examined.

**IMPROVING PERINATAL HEALTH, CREATING STRONGER CONNECTIONS WITH FAMILIES, AND FINDING SUPPORTIVE COLLEAGUES: MEMBER'S EXPERIENCES THROUGH THE INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP FOR PERINATAL EXCELLENCE: LINDSEY WIMMER, DNP, MSN, BSN**

Health professionals often identify several barriers to communicating with bereaved families, including lack of skills or practical implementation strategies, institutional support, and interdisciplinary collaboration. Families impacted by perinatal loss also report significant communication concerns through pregnancy and postpartum. This workshop will provide participants with information and resources to implement progressive care protocols into clinical practice that are being used to improve pregnancy outcomes and reduce disparities for families.

**AFFIRMING BEREAVEMENT CARE: NAVIGATING LOSS WITH LGBTQ+ PARENTS: DAVID MAUSER, MD**

Just as LGBTQ+ patients experience unique health related risk factors and barriers to care, LGBTQ+ parents experiencing the grief and loss of a child may face similar challenges. Affirming care aims to reduce disparities in health equity through compassionate, person-centered care in a safe and inclusive environment. In this talk, we will discuss how the principles of affirming care can be used to support LGBTQ+ parents experiencing infant loss.

**THE CURRENT STATE OF PERINATAL PALLIATIVE CARE: ERIN DENNEY KOELSCH, MD, FAAHPM, DENISE CÔTÉ-ARSENAULT PHD, RN, CPLC, FNAP, FAAN**

Those who provide care and support to families impacted by a baby with a life-limiting fetal diagnosis will learn about the latest evidence in the field of Perinatal Palliative Care (PeriPC) as well as its impact. The purpose of this presentation is to provide an in-depth update on the field of PeriPC—the research, state of the science and developing standards for clinical practice.



**11:15AM - 12:15PM: CONCURRENT SESSIONS #4**

**RESPECTFUL CARE FOR MAMAS, BABIES AND THEIR VILLAGES: JOIA CREAR PERRY, MD, FACOG**

This plenary will discuss opportunities to improve the outcomes of Birthing Families with respectful care.

**STORY TELLING IN THE SAND TRAY: USING SAND TRAY THERAPY TO COPE WITH PERINATAL TRAUMA AND LOSS, LACEY CASTILLEJA FISHER, LPC-S, RPT-S, PMH-C**

Mental health clinicians in the perinatal mental health community often need more modalities to use in therapy services for perinatal bereavement that supplement or extend beyond cognitive therapies or traditional talk therapy. Those who attend this workshop will gain the knowledge to utilize sandtray therapy as an expressive art in their clinical practice with bereaved parents. Although sandtray therapy is a modality that requires in-depth training, this course can be used as a foundational training for those interested in learning more about it into their practice.

**WHEN LOSS SEPARATES AND REUNITES: HELPING COUPLES PROCESS THE TRAUMA OF PREGNANCY LOSS TOGETHER: IRENA MILENTIJEVIC, PHD**

Pregnancy loss support and interventions typically focus on women's grief, while men's experiences are often overlooked, leaving fathers unsupported and excluded from treatment. Participants in this workshop will learn ways to bridge the gap in care by implementing interventions that support both partners and address the unique ways women and men grieve and cope.

**SUPPORTING FAMILIES IN THEIR DECISION TO DONATE ORGANS AND TISSUE AFTER NEWBORN DEATH: TERRI KING WEINMAN, DO, FAAP**

Many families face a tragic situation when they learn their baby will not live long, and some families wonder if their newborn can donate tissue or organs following their death. While many providers fail to pursue this option, sometimes due to not being comfortable having the conversation. In this workshop, Dr. Weinman will present ways to have these difficult conversations while also sharing the benefits to families who choose donation and how to support them in a manner that promotes healing from their loss.

**SACRED LOSS: EXPLORING CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS RESPONSES TO PREGNANCY AND INFANT LOSS: MEGAN FOCKLER, RN, MPH**

There are not many existing resources where people with lived experience of loss share about how culture or faith/spirituality impacted them after their loss. In this workshop, participants will listen to the experiences of bereaved families and how their culture and religion is integrated into their loss journey. Hearing directly from both families and religious leaders will help practitioners better understand what families find helpful and what can be offered during this sensitive time.

**1:30PM - 2:45PM: PLENARY SESSION #6****FEELING SAFE IS THE FLOOR, NOT THE CEILING: REDEFINING QUALITY AND SAFETY IN OBSTETRIC CARE:****KAREN A. SCOTT, MD, MPH, FACOG**

This plenary session challenges dominant paradigms of obstetric quality and patient safety that pathologize blackness, reduce patients to risk categories, erase the expertise of lived experience, and ignore the emotional, cultural, and spiritual dimensions of Black birthing experiences. Drawing from the SACKRED Birth quality framework and the PREM-OB Scale® suite, Dr. Scott introduces an emotionally, culturally, and scientifically rigorous theory of quality that centers Black maternal voices as experts, not exceptions. Attendees will engage with transformative tools to center patient voice, expose systemic harms, and cultivate practices that affirm autonomy and restore dignity in hospital birth settings.

**3:15PM - 4:15PM: CONCURRENT SESSIONS #5****DIGNITY IS COLLECTIVE: RECLAIMING KINSHIP AND HUMANITY AS EMOTIONAL SAFETY IN OBSTETRIC CARE:****KAREN SCOTT, MD, MPH, FACOG**

Join Dr. Karen A. Scott, MD, MPH, FACOG, author of SACKRED Birth: Mobilizing A New Quality Paradigm in Obstetric Care, for a powerful reading and discussion exploring how dignity, kinship, and emotional safety must be centered as foundational elements of obstetric care for all—particularly for Black mothers and birthing people.

In this session, Dr. Scott will read selected passages from chapters 3, 6, and 7, inviting participants into a dialogue about how health care systems can move beyond metrics and medicalization to embrace relational, cultural, and communal approaches to safety. Drawing from real experiences and community-based wisdom, the conversation will challenge institutional norms that isolate patients and suppress emotional expression, while offering liberatory pathways to reclaim the full humanity of care. Participants—whether providers, advocates, or impacted families—will be invited to reflect, respond, and imagine new ways to restore empathy, accountability, and collective dignity in clinical spaces.

**FROM GRIEF TO POLICY MAKING: THE JOURNEY OF LIAM'S LAW, A LAW TO IMPROVE STILLBIRTH CARE: ANNA CALIX, ALEXANDRA CALLEN AND HENA WADHWA, PHD**

Participants will learn about strategies for identifying opportunities for legislative change and/or strengthening implementation of existing laws to improve and standardize stillbirth care. Presenters will provide participants with a roadmap for successful implementation of stillbirth care policy as well as share ways a birth certificate after a stillbirth can be a tool for grief support.

**WHEN PREGNANCY GETS COMPLICATED: SUPPORTING FAMILIES AS THEY NAVIGATE A PREGNANCY WITH AN UNCERTAIN OUTCOME: ABIGAIL GELLENE-BEAUDOIN, LCSW, APHSW-C, RPT, PMH-C**

Gellene-Beaudoin will identify the specific needs of families who encounter a pregnancy with an unknown outcome. Attendees will leave this workshop with the knowledge and skills needed to appropriately and compassionately support and provide medical care for families who encounter a fetal anomaly from diagnosis to birth, and beyond.

**BEST PRACTICES FOR SUPPORTING JEWISH FAMILIES DURING PERINATAL BEREAVEMENT: REVA JUDAS, BS**

A lack of information and misinformation about Jewish ritual needs after perinatal loss is common and can negatively impact families' ability to make choices that will be helpful to their long-term healing. In this session, Judas will provide details of the most common time-sensitive rituals and the range of options that Jewish families may choose as well as provide resources that a family can turn to for help in completing those rituals. She will also discuss other rituals that families might want to consider in the longer term to help them find meaning and support after their loss.

**INTERDEPARTMENTAL COLLABORATION ON THE PREGNANCY AND INFANT LOSS CONTINUUM: ONE HOSPITAL'S PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND SUCCESSFUL PALLIATIVE CARE PATIENT STORIES: AMY CROCHET, RN, BSN, RN-CPLC AND MEGAN HALEY, MSN**

There can be a lack of interdepartmental coordination for families receiving a fetal life-limiting diagnosis. This workshop will show the development of one hospital's perinatal and neonatal palliative care team and show the effects of inclusive, interdepartmental care provided to families experiencing the loss of their newborn.

**MAIN CONFERENCE CLOSING: SATURDAY, MAY 16, 2026****9:00AM - 10:15AM: PLENARY CLOSING SESSION****WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?: REV. DARRYL OWENS, MDIV, BCC, CT, RTSCBC**

To close the conference, Owens will briefly the objectives for the conference as well as the plenary topics as they relate to grief literacy. Attendees will learn how grief literacy can enhance our practices. The presentation will close with a with a ritual to honor the transition back to our areas of practice.

# Poster Presenters



## **BEREAVEMENT ROOM TO SUPPORT FAMILIES BEREAVING THE LOSS OF AN INFANT**

MICHELE FRANKEN, MSN

## **COLLABORATION OF AN OBSTETRICAL RESIDENCY PROGRAM WITH A COMMUNITY HOSPICE/BEREAVEMENT AGENCY TO IMPLEMENT AN OBSTETRICIAN SPECIFIC EDUCATIONAL CURRICULUM TO IMPROVE CARE TO BEREAVED FAMILIES AND SUPPORT STAFF DURING DIFFICULT DELIVERY SITUATIONS**

GERKEN, K.; PARKER, K.

## **COMMUNITY GRIEF RITUALS TO SUPPORT PERINATAL LOSS**

ALYSSA ROSE, FOUNDER & LEAD FACILITATOR | ALYSSA ROSE HEALING ARTS

## **DESIGNING A BEREAVEMENT PROGRAM**

KETURAH BEILER RN BSN CHPPN

## **"I STARTED HEALING MYSELF": BLACK MOTHERS' GRIEF JOURNEYS AFTER STILLBIRTH**

CARRIE J. HENRY, PHD, CNM, RN; SARA K. KAYLOR, EDD, RN, CNE; MALLORY A. SCOGIN, MD, MPH, FACOG

## **PARENTING SUPPORT INTERVENTION DURING PREGNANCY WITH A LIFE-LIMITING FETAL CONDITION: A PILOT STUDY**

DRS. DENISE CÔTÉ-ARSENAULT, SAMAH HAWSAWI, ERIN DENNEY-KOELSCH, KATHIE KOBLER

## **THE FAMILY SUPPORT SPECIALIST REGISTERED NURSE ROLE IN A COMPREHENSIVE CARE (LEVEL IV) DESIGNATED MATERNAL FACILITY**

CATHERINE QUINTANA

## **THE PARADOXICAL COINCIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT AND LOSS - A PHENOMENOLOGIC ANALYSIS OF PARENTS' EXPERIENCES IN BIRTHING A CHILD AFFECTED WITH A LIFE-LIMITING CONDITION AFTER BIRTHING PREPARATION**

URSZULA TATAJ-PUZYNA, RM, MA, PHD; BEATA SZLENDAK, PHD, RM

## **THE POWER OF COMPASSIONATE PRESENTATION: A QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION OF MEMORY MAKING BOXES IN PERINATAL BEREAVEMENT**

ELIZABETH M. DRAKE, MN, RN AND SHEREE SCOTT, PHD, RN, AGCNS-BC CMSRN

## **THE INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP FOR PERINATAL EXCELLENCE: ELEVATING CARE FOR FAMILIES AND BABIES BEYOND STANDARDS, ABOVE EXPECTATIONS**

RODRIGUEZ, S.; WIMMER, L.

## **TINY TIPS FOR TINY ANGELS: A BEREAVEMENT & POSTMORTEM CARE REFERENCE MANUAL FOR THE NEONATAL ICU**

JILLIAN BLAIR, BSN, RNC-NIC AND KARA CROMWELL, BSN, RNC-NIC, CPST

## **WHEN IMAGES CARRY GRIEF: COMMUNICATION TRAINING FOR SONOGRAPHERS CARING FOR FAMILIES EXPERIENCING PERINATAL LOSS AND COMPLEX FETAL DIAGNOSIS**

HEMA SEAWORTH, MD, MARIZA RODRIGUEZ, MA, HALEY WILKES, MD, AND ROSE MOJICA, LVN

## Stay Connected with the IPBC App

The IPBC app gives you access to all of the must-have details right at your fingertips!

- Session Locations/Descriptions
- Attendee List
- Networking Opportunities
- Event Calendar
- Exhibit Hall Layout
- Speaker Bios
- Sponsorship Profiles
- Social Feeds



# Welcome Reception

Once again, the Welcome Reception will be included with each IPBC main conference registration! All registered conference attendees are invited to join us the evening of Wednesday, May 14th at the IPBC hotel, New Orleans Marriott Warehouse Arts District, to meet, engage and mingle with fellow attendees. This is an ideal opportunity for attendees to network, reconnect, and get acquainted in the beautiful hotel with hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar.

*\*Should you wish to invite guests, tickets are available for purchase through conference registration. Exhibitors are welcome to attend and can purchase tickets through their exhibitor application.*

May 14, 2026  
6:30 PM - 9:00 PM



*Network . Reconnect . Community .*

# President's Reception

May 15, 2026  
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

We are pleased to bring back an opportunity to attend a special President's Reception at IPBC 2026 in New Orleans honoring well known perinatal bereavement pioneers:



**Veronica Gillispie-Bell, MD, MAS, FACOG**



**Donna Maria Cortezzo MD**



**Tori Charles, MA, ATR, LPC-A**



**Ashley Engler, MA, ATR-P, LPC-A**



**Claire Crawford PhD, LMSW, APHSW-C**



**Joia Crear-Perry, MD, FACOG**



**Karen A. Scott, MD, MPH, FACOG**



**Rev. Darryl I Owens, MDiv, BCC, CT, RTSCBC**



**David Mauser, MD**

This special event will take place on Friday, May 15th from 6PM - 8PM. This intimate gathering is designed to provide a time and space in a relaxed environment to honor these pioneers and those we admire, for their innovative work, who have helped and are making traumatic grief, health equity, ethics, perinatal and neonatal palliative care essential to the understanding of perinatal bereavement.

Those honored have made significant contributions to programs of research and worked within national organizations to create innovations to support credentialing. These honorees stand alone and have made significant contributions to the equitable care of all and provided needed education to improve clinical practice and outcomes.

**Those who register early for IPBC 2026 will be entered into a random drawing for the opportunity to attend this special event!**

# New Orleans Attractions

The revitalized Warehouse Arts District is considered the 'SoHo of the South' and is home to several art galleries, museums, jazz clubs, and James Beard award-winning restaurants. Spend the day exploring the WWII Museum and the Ogden Museum of Southern Art before indulging in a meal you won't forget at Cochon, Emeril's, or one of the latest restaurants to hit the downtown scene.

## MUSEUMS AND AQUARIUMS



## AIRPORT



## SHOPPING AND NIGHTLIFE



## RESTAURANTS



## THEATER



## SIGHT SEEING



# Frequently Asked Questions

## ***What is the cost of parking at New Orleans Marriott Warehouse Arts District?***

Daily valet parking is \$56.23. Off-site parking is available at Fulton Street Garage (0.1 miles away from hotel).

## ***What is the International Perinatal Bereavement Conference?***

Pregnancy Loss and Infant Death Alliance (PLIDA) offers this international conference biennially as an opportunity for networking and gaining education for those who support bereaved families.

## ***Who can earn continuing education?***

PLIDA is applying for CEs for multiple disciplines.

## ***Who is the conference audience?***

This conference will appeal to any professional who provides care to families experiencing a perinatal death or who engages in research in the field. Practice disciplines include obstetricians, maternal fetal medicine physicians, neonatologists, palliative care physicians, advanced practice nurses, midwives, researchers, college and university faculty, physician assistants, nurses in women's and reproductive health, inpatient ob/gyn, and emergency room, social workers, genetic counselors, ultrasonographers, chaplains, funeral directors, child life specialists, lactation consultants, psychologists, psychotherapists, childbirth educators, policy makers, program administrators, researchers, professors, and parent advocates, among many others. In addition, bereaved parents, themselves, participate in the conference in the role of parent advocates who may work in advocacy, lay support and who may hold a dual role as both patient and researcher or other practice discipline.

## ***Where do attendees pick-up their badge and convention materials?***

All conference activities will be held onsite at New Orleans Marriott Warehouse Arts District. Look for the registration table!

## ***This is my first conference. Will there be an opportunity to meet others?***

Yes! We are excited you're here. We will have designated tables at breakfast and lunch that allow for "newbies" to connect with other first time attendees, and veteran attendees. If you are needing a little nudge, visit the team at the PLIDA table and we'll connect with some attendees!

## ***Does full conference registration rate include the preconference options?***

No, the preconference options are selected on the registration form and paid for according to the amount listed.

## ***What does registration include?***

- Admission to the Welcome Reception and Booksigning Reception
- Access to all plenary and concurrent presentations. Please note that Wednesday preconference sessions are an additional fee.
- Access to exhibit hall, poster presentations, and quiet reflection room
- Access to written materials provided by the presenters
- Free Wi-Fi throughout the conference space
- Continental breakfast and coffee breaks
- Lunch at preconference on Wednesday
- Lunch on main conference days- Thursday and Friday

## ***What type of experience can an attendee expect at the conference?***

The conference provides enriching presentations combined with networking, visiting with old friends, making new friends and connections, and enjoying the attractions in New Orleans. Revitalized and located near an international airport, there truly is something for everyone.

## ***What is the dress code?***

Business casual. You may want to consider dressing in layers to account for the transition from air-conditioned meeting rooms to the outdoor areas of New Orleans Marriott Warehouse Arts District.

## ***What is the contact information for PLIDA?***

PO Box 66433  
Houston, TX 77266  
(855) 398-7377  
members@plida.org  
www.plida.org