

2026 CHEAC Annual Meeting Workshop Session Biographies Health Management Associates

Brittney Dobson-Ellis, Associate Principal

Brittney Dobson-Ellis is a public-sector health and behavioral health executive specializing in countywide planning, behavioral health transformation, cross-sector integration, managed care strategy, and implementation of complex policy and financing reforms. Her work connects behavioral health, public health, healthcare, social services, housing, justice partners, and community-based organizations around shared priorities to improve population health, access, equity, and community outcomes.

At Health Management Associates (HMA), Brittney partners with counties and public-sector organizations on community health and behavioral health planning, BHSA implementation, system assessment and redesign, organizational transformation, financing strategy, and stakeholder engagement. She helps align community needs, regulatory requirements, funding, system capacity, and local priorities into actionable plans with clear strategies, implementation pathways, accountability structures, and measurable outcomes.

Brittney brings deep experience helping counties integrate planning efforts that often operate in parallel, including Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) Integrated Plans, Medi-Cal and managed care initiatives, public health priorities, housing and homelessness strategies, justice-system partnerships, and other countywide initiatives. Facilitating and supporting cross-sector planning processes with county departments, providers, community organizations, people with lived experience, and other partners to identify shared priorities and translate them into coordinated action.

Before joining HMA, Brittney served as Assistant Director of Behavioral Health and Recovery Services for Stanislaus County, where she provided executive leadership across a countywide behavioral health system. She established the County's first Behavioral Health Plan and Provider Relations Division, strengthening infrastructure for Medi-Cal Specialty Mental Health Services, the Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System, provider oversight, quality, compliance, financing, and system performance.

Brittney also served as the County's Chief of Crisis, Access & Medication Services, overseeing critical components of the behavioral health continuum and leading major system transformation efforts. As Stanislaus County implemented California's expanded grave disability standard under Senate Bill 43 (SB 43), she helped translate statutory change into operational practice across the crisis and Lanterman-Petris-Short (LPS) continuum in coordination with behavioral health, hospitals, law enforcement, emergency response, legal and judicial partners, and community stakeholders.

Across her public-sector leadership and consulting work, Brittney has led transformation spanning community planning, crisis and access systems, outpatient behavioral health, substance use treatment, managed care, provider networks, financing, quality, compliance, and administrative infrastructure. She brings a practical implementation lens to planning, connecting community voice and population-level priorities with operations, workforce, governance, service delivery, and accountability so strategic plans translate into measurable improvements for communities.

Brittney earned a Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy from Touro University Worldwide, a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Sierra Nevada College, and an Associate of Arts in Psychology/Communications from Sierra College. She is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) in California.

Nayely Chavez, MPH, Associate Principal

With experience evaluating programs designed to meet the social determinants of health, behavioral health and palliative care needs of low-income and vulnerable populations, Nayely Chavez is committed to using all avenues of public health, health policy, and the healthcare system to advance health equity. She learns from the communities she works with and is dedicated to advocate for their needs in and out of the hospital. She has a focused interest in Latinx, first-generation, immigrant, and/or undocumented communities.

Her experience includes working to foster relationships with client stakeholders, project management and coordination, developing account analysis and reports, as well as leading training and orientation modules.

Before joining HMA, Ms. Chavez completed a fellowship with the Massachusetts Health Policy Commission where she facilitated the qualitative evaluation and supported the quantitative evaluation of the implementation, impact, and sustainability for grant programs. She supported strategic planning and the development of timelines, work plans, and evaluation reports.

Ms. Chavez earned a master's degree in public health from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, and a bachelor's degree in public health from the University of California, Berkeley. During her studies, she worked as a teaching assistant with the Public Health Leadership Lab and completed the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion fellowship with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

Robyn Odendahl, MPA, Principal

Robyn Odendahl brings 10 years of experience in the public and nonprofit sectors, including public health departments and healthcare agencies, conducting stakeholder engagement, needs assessments, and social science research and evaluation. She works with clients to identify and implement strategies that elevate the voices of the communities to identify needs and also collaborates with policymakers, community-based organizations, and public health, and healthcare entities to design and implement solutions that address those needs. Ms. Odendahl has designed many research and evaluation studies that emphasize community and stakeholder participation, effectively measure impact and apply lessons learned in real time.

Ms. Odendahl is skilled in synthesizing data into immediately useful content, including frameworks, reports, and toolkits, as well as into long-term recommendations to improve program and policy implementation and show impact. Her experience includes both quantitative and qualitative methods and data analyses, including scanning of existing best practices and resources and designing, implementing, and analyzing focus group, interview, survey, and program data to evaluate health and human service policies and programs. She has worked to bring together cross-sector stakeholders to design and implement collective impact evaluations and has facilitated collaborative discussions among stakeholders regarding shared goals and measurement, including the identification, collection and synthesis of relevant data to support collective impact objectives. She has provided technical assistance and training to community-based organizations working to define their impact on individual health outcomes to participate in value-based payment models and initiatives.

Prior to her work at HMA, Ms. Odendahl directed evaluation efforts for North Range Behavioral Health's youth substance use prevention program, Weld County Prevention Partners. Funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Colorado Prevention Partnership for Success grant, she designed, implemented, and analyzed evaluations for several evidence-based youth substance use prevention programs, including a social norm campaign, social marketing campaign, and coalition work. She directed the development of Weld County epidemiological profiles; helped to establish prevention priorities; guided the allocation of resources to address prevention priorities; developed a data-monitoring system for substance abuse prevention; and identified strategies and funding to sustain the work of the coalition.

She earned a master's in public administration degree from the University of Colorado, focusing on organizational management, which included coursework in organizational change, leadership, strategic planning, evaluation, and data analysis for decision-makers.