



Attorney General

**Josh Stein**

# **PROTECTING THE NEXT GENERATION OF NORTH CAROLINIANS**



## **Welcome**

Charlotte City Council Member Malcolm Graham

## **Keynote**

Baker Burleson, Parent Advocate

## **Panel Discussion: Youth Safety & Well-being Online**

Katie Peralta Soloff, Moderator

Panelists

- Spencer Merriweather, Mecklenburg County District Attorney
- Dr. Charlene Wong, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
- Ryan Etheridge, Cleveland County Schools
- Donnie Mitchem, Director Atrium Health Behavioral Health Services

## **Break**

## **Panel Discussion: Youth Substance Use**

Katie Peralta Soloff, Moderator

Panelists

- Robin Koval, CEO & President of Truth Initiative
- Debbie Dalton, The Hunter Dalton HDLife Foundation
- Kelly Little, Clinical Supervisor, Dilworth Center
- Maceo Mayo III, RHA Health Services Prevention Coordinator, member of Gaston Controlled Substances Coalition

## **Introduction of Attorney General Josh Stein**

Charlotte City Council Member Malcolm Graham

## **Closing Remarks**

Attorney General Josh Stein



**Baker Burleson** is a community volunteer and parent advocate focused on youth mental health in the Charlotte region. He is currently a member of the Advancement Committee at HopeWay, a Charlotte-based mental health treatment facility and Chairman of the Greater Charlotte Cultural Trust. Baker is a past member of the Board of Children's Scholarship Fund of Charlotte and the Board of Visitors at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Professionally, Baker has been a leader in the investment management industry for the last 20 years. In 2014, he founded Charlotte-based Banbury Partners, an institutional asset manager focusing on serving endowments and charitable foundations. Prior to founding Banbury, he spent eight years as Director of Research at Fox Point Capital Management, a subsidiary of TIGER Management, in New York. Earlier in his career, Baker was an associate at Bank of America, McKinsey & Company, and The Carlyle Group. Baker is a 1997 graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he was a

Morehead-Cain Scholar. He received his Masters in Business Administration with concentrations in finance and accounting from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania in 2004. Baker and his wife, Amy, live in Charlotte with their four children, Katie, William, Emily and Caroline.

### Panel Discussion: Youth Safety & Well-being Online



**Ryan Etheridge** serves as the Project ACTIVATE Director for Cleveland County Schools. Ryan started his career as an elementary school teacher at Boiling Springs Elementary School before taking a role as an Assistant Principal at Burns High School. There he managed student discipline, the Exceptional Children program, and communication. As a doctoral candidate in Educational Leadership and Policy at Vanderbilt University, Ryan explores the unique challenges students in rural communities face when accessing education, job opportunities, and behavioral health services. Ryan received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Early Childhood Education from Clemson University. Ryan earned his Master of School Administration from Appalachian State University. Ryan loves to spend time with his 3 young sons hiking North Carolina's beautiful trails.



**District Attorney Spencer B. Merriweather III** has served as the chief prosecutor of Mecklenburg County since 2017. DA Merriweather removed financial barriers that prevented some defendants from participating in deferred prosecution programs, and he broadened referrals to treatment programs. He established a Violent Crimes Team, which focuses on shootings and felony assaults, and a Special Victims Team, a group of trauma-informed prosecutors and staff who seek justice for adult and child survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence. DA Merriweather is actively involved in efforts to establish a family justice center in Mecklenburg County to serve survivors of domestic violence, child abuse, elder abuse, sexual assault and human trafficking. Before becoming District Attorney, he served as an Assistant District Attorney for more than a decade, prosecuting an array of cases. A champion of recruiting attorneys from under-represented communities, DA

Merriweather created the office's Diversity and Inclusion Team. Outside of the courtroom, DA Merriweather is engaged in the community, as well as in national prosecutorial organizations. For several years, DA Merriweather has been involved with Charlotte's Community Building Initiative, which seeks to promote equity and inclusion among both public and private community stakeholders. He currently serves as Vice Chair of the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys' Major County Prosecutors Council, and in 2021, he joined the National District Attorneys Association's Board of Directors. DA Merriweather is also an active member of the National Association of Black Prosecutors. DA Merriweather earned his undergraduate degree from Princeton University and his law degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



**Donnie Mitchem** is the Director, Behavioral Health Services, Outpatient Therapy & Community Services at Atrium Health. Ms. Mitchem is a licensed psychologist with 30 years of clinical experience, 17 of those years providing school-based mental health therapy. She manages a team of 23 licensed child and adolescent therapists and 18 licensed adult therapists. She oversees the School-Based Mental Health Program which provides in-person and virtual psychotherapy services in 22 elementary, middle, and high schools and virtual psychotherapy in 31 middle and high schools in 5 different school systems and also oversees the Counseling Team at Queen's University. Prior to assuming this role, Ms. Mitchem was a psychologist who provided school-based therapy for 17 years. Ms. Mitchem has been a licensed psychologist in North Carolina for 29 years. Ms. Mitchem earned her Master's Degree in Psychology from Radford University. In 2022 Donnie's Team Received

a Silver Touchstone Award for Improved access to care for rural students utilizing virtual therapy. In 2021 Donnie's team received a Bronze Touchstone Award for the Design and Implementation of Virtual Therapy During the COVID-19 Pandemic. She was recently interviewed by HealthCareExecIntelligence for the podcast Boosting Pediatric Mental Healthcare Through School-Based Telehealth.



**Dr. Charlene Wong** serves as the inaugural Assistant Secretary for Children and Families in the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), providing vision and leadership for supporting whole-child and family health in North Carolina. Her responsibilities have included overseeing the Division of Child Development and Early Education and launching the new Division of Child and Family Well-Being in 2022. She leads cross-Departmental work in child behavioral health, child welfare, nutritional security for children and families, and maternal and infant health. In the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Wong served as the Chief Health Policy Officer for COVID-19 at NCDHHS. She is an associate professor of pediatrics and public policy at Duke University and is a practicing primary care pediatrician, specializing in adolescent and young adult medicine. She also serves as the Executive Director of North Carolina Integrated Care for Kids (NC InCK), an innovative model serving ~100,000 Medicaid-insured children in

central North Carolina that integrates supports and data across health care, educational, and social sectors (e.g., schools, housing, food, early care and education, child welfare). Her research and policy training includes fellowships at the CDC and in the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Clinical Scholars Program. She received her undergraduate degree at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill as a Morehead-Cain scholar and completed her medical and research training at Emory University, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, University of Washington, Seattle Children's Hospital, University of Pennsylvania, and Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

### Panel Discussion: Youth Substance Use



**Debbie Dalton** is a speaker, advocate and founder of The Hunter Dalton HDLife Foundation. Her life was forever changed when she lost her 23-year-old son Hunter to an accidental overdose on December 4, 2016. Hunter's death shocked his family and friends and inspired them to start the Hunter Dalton HDLife Foundation. The foundation focuses on prevention and awareness regarding recreational drug use, especially in light of the introduction of illicit Fentanyl to today's drug culture. Debbie's life is now a life of advocacy.



**Robin Koval** is CEO and President of Truth Initiative®, the national public health organization dedicated to achieving a culture where all young people reject smoking, vaping, and nicotine. Since joining Truth Initiative in 2013, Koval has transformed the national award-winning truth® youth tobacco prevention campaign and grown the organization's world-class research, youth activism, and digital cessation programs. Under her leadership, truth has prevented millions of young people from becoming smokers and helped drive the youth smoking rate to a historic low of less than 2%. As youth e-cigarette use skyrocketed, Koval expanded the organization's reach to be a leader in the fight against the youth e-cigarette crisis and all forms of youth nicotine addiction. Research now shows that truth campaign awareness is significantly associated with lower likelihood of vaping among young people 15-24. She has led the expansion of the

truth brand to include innovative quitting tools and resources designed to protect and empower young people to live nicotine-free lives, including the first-of-its kind, text message quit vaping program for teens and young adults, This is Quitting, which has enrolled over 570,000 since launch and a national youth e-cigarette prevention curriculum Vaping: Know the truth, now reaching almost 6,000 schools across the country.

Koval has also led Truth Initiative's efforts to translate its expertise to address our nation's opioid crisis. The Emmy® Award-winning The Truth About Opioids campaign has been proven to increase knowledge of the risks of opioid misuse among youth and young adults and decrease attitudes around stigma. Truth Initiative is continuing to contribute expertise to this crisis by launching a peer-to-peer opioid misuse prevention digital curriculum modeled after the success of Vaping: Know the truth. During her tenure, truth has been voted one of the most influential campaigns of the 21st century and named the most effective brand of the year by the American Marketing Association. Fast Company has recognized Truth Initiative as one of the World's Most Innovative Companies and a top ten non-profit organization in 2022.

Prior to joining Truth Initiative, Koval, a highly acclaimed leader in the advertising and marketing world, was co-founder and CEO of the Kaplan Thaler Group, which she grew from a fledgling start-up in 1997 to a billion-dollar agency working with leading brands such as Procter & Gamble, Pfizer, Wendy's, and Aflac. She was named CEO when her agency merged with Publicis to become Publicis Kaplan Thaler and led the 700-person agency to become the fifth largest in New York City. In addition, Koval is a New York Times best-selling author. She and co-author Linda Kaplan Thaler have written several books, including Grit to Great: How Perseverance, Passion and Pluck Take You from Ordinary to Extraordinary, The Power of Nice, and The Power of Small.





**Kelly Little** has been working in substance use disorder treatment since 2011, specializing in the treatment of adolescents. She received her master's in social work from The University of North Carolina Charlotte in 2014. Kelly is a Licensed Clinical Addiction Specialist and Certified Clinical Supervisor. Currently, she is employed as the clinical supervisor at Dilworth Center, a local intensive outpatient treatment program for substance use disorders. In addition to supervising the clinical staff, Kelly works directly with adolescent and young adult patients and their family members. Kelly finds her work to be an honor and a privilege, as she is able to witness families heal through recovery.



**Maceo Mayo III** is the Prevention Services Coordinator for RHA Prevention in Gaston and Rutherford Counties, Executive Director of Power of Prevention (P.O.P.) Inc., and past Prevention Director for Freedom House of Mecklenburg, Inc. Maceo served as a member of the Expert Panel in prevention for the State of North Carolina. Maceo has served on the Prevention Providers Association in North Carolina. He served as a consultant for HUD's (Housing and Urban Development) Drug Elimination Technical Assistance Program and provided technical assistance to public housing authorities and resident groups in Smithville, TN; Fairmont, NC; Lumberton, NC; Asheville, NC; Greenville, NC and Charlotte, NC. His expertise includes substance use prevention, working with youth, community organizing and development through coalitions, building neighborhood associations, creative problem solving, building diversity, and drug information and advocacy. Maceo has presented at numerous conferences. Maceo was born and raised in Washington D.C. where he graduated from Archbishop John Carroll High School. He has a B.A. in Sociology from Barber Scotia College. Maceo attended the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and has pursued a Master of Arts degree in Human Services Counseling at Liberty University. Maceo is a Certified Prevention Specialist, an Internationally Certified Prevention Specialist and a Certified Peer Support Specialist.



**Attorney General Josh Stein** was sworn in for his first term as North Carolina's 50th Attorney General in 2017 and his second term in 2021. As Attorney General, he is focused on protecting North Carolina families from crime and consumer fraud. Stein works to protect taxpayers, seniors, students, and military families from fraud. His Department of Justice has won awards or settlements of more than \$2.5 billion from scam artists since he's taken office, and he's won back more than \$260 million in restitution for Medicaid fraud. He is working to keep children safe online, improve data security, and leading a national effort to combat robocalls. Stein is also leading national efforts to combat the opioid crisis and get treatment and recovery resources for North Carolinians struggling with addiction. He's helped secure more than \$50 billion toward opioid recovery and is working hard to confront the fentanyl crisis by prosecuting dealers and traffickers. Stein is also working to make North Carolina's law enforcement and criminal justice systems fairer, protecting clean air and water, and fighting the teen vaping epidemic. Stein previously served as a state Senator and as Senior Deputy Attorney General in the North Carolina Department of Justice. In those roles, he successfully led efforts to put more violent criminals behind bars by expanding the state's DNA database, wrote the School Safety Act and the Identity Theft Protection Act, worked to protect kids from online sexual predators, and helped run payday lenders charging loan shark interest rates out of the state. Stein grew up in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. He is a graduate of Dartmouth College, and earned law and public policy degrees from Harvard University. He and his wife Anna have three children.