Presenter Bios

Aileen Ahiskali, PharmD
Aileen Ahiskali earned her Doctor of Pharmacy degree from Long Island University in Brooklyn, New York. She completed a general postgraduate year 1 and infectious diseases postgraduate year 2 pharmacy residency at Abbott Northwestern Hospital. Aileen is currently the Antimicrobial Stewardship Pharmacist for Hennepin Healthcare in Minneapolis. She monitors antimicrobial utilization, precepts residents, and develops tools and resources to guide appropriate use of antimicrobials across the system. In 2018, Aileen created a comprehensive institutional treatment guide based on guidelines and local resistance patterns called the Guide for Optimal Antimicrobial Therapy (GOAT). As a compliment to the GOAT, she is currently developing new tools to improve empiric antipseudomonal and anti-MRSA therapy via identification of patient-specific risk factors and local resistance patterns. Aileen also maintains an active clinical role and rounds with the infectious diseases consult team.

Amanda Beaudoin, DVM, PhD, DACVP
Doctor Beaudoin is Director of One Health Antibiotic Stewardship at Minnesota Department of Health. Amanda works with stakeholders of the state’s One Health Antibiotic Stewardship Collaborative to advance antibiotic resistance and stewardship activities in human, animal and environmental health, and agriculture. She holds a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from Cornell University, a PhD in veterinary epidemiology from the University of Minnesota, and board certification by the American College of Veterinary Preventive Medicine. Amanda has worked in equine and small animal clinical practice and conducted research on influenza in swine, poultry, and human populations. Amanda has worked for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, where she most recently worked in the area of antimicrobial resistance, providing infection prevention and control support to healthcare facilities and assisting foreign governments with antibiotic resistance surveillance.

Kimberly Boeser, PharmD, MPH, BCIDP
Kimberly Boeser completed her undergraduate, Doctor of Pharmacy and Masters of Public Health degrees from Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska. She completed her pharmacy residency training at the University of MN Medical Center. She has received her Board Certification in Infectious Diseases, Pharmacotherapy (BCIDP). Dr. Boeser is the Infectious Diseases Clinical Pharmacy Specialist and System Antimicrobial Stewardship Coordinator for the University of Minnesota Medical Center-M Health and Fairview Health Services. Dr. Boeser also serves as the Residency Program Director for the PGY2 Infectious Diseases residency since 2012. She is an Assistant Clinical Professor for the University of Minnesota College of Pharmacy. Dr. Boeser was appointed to the Minnesota Department of Health Antimicrobial Stewardship Taskforce in 2012 and has served as a leader for the Minnesota One Health Antibiotic Stewardship Collaboration since 2015.

Elisia L. Cohen, PhD
Dr. Cohen earned her PhD in Communication from the University of Southern California. Prior to joining the University of Minnesota as Director and tenured Professor in the Hubbard School of Journalism and Mass Communication, she served as the Gilford Blyton Endowed Professor and she chaired the University of Kentucky Department of Communication and led its Health Communication Research Collaborative. Dr. Cohen began her career at Saint Louis University, developing media and community-based outreach strategies to improve cancer prevention and detection behaviors in underserved communities. She is currently a co-investigator with the Minnesota Prevention Research Center and Center for Clinical and Translational Science’s Community Engagement to Advance Research and Community Health initiative. Her research has been supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institutes of Health, and private industry.

Janet Gonnella RN, BSN
Janet is a graduate of the University of Minnesota Nursing Program. She has spent her career serving the residents in long-term care and transitional care and has worked as a floor nurse, an MDS coordinator, a clinical consultant, a transition nurse and a TCU director before landing at her current position at Walker Methodist Health Care Center. She currently works as an Education Nurse Specialist and Infection Control Preventionist. In collaboration with the University of Minnesota Nurse Practitioner Doctorate Program, Janet has continued to build upon the work of her predecessor and oversees an active Antibiotic Stewardship Committee at the Health Center. Previous projects have included initiation of a UTI SBAR tool, education and feedback to staff and providers to ensure the appropriate ordering of UA/UCs, and coordination with the facility Medical Director to ensure the appropriate choice in antibiotic therapies. The efforts of this committee have led to Walker Methodist Health Center receiving the Minnesota Antibiotic Stewardship Honor Roll 2018 Gold Award.

Michelle Hinojos, PharmD
Michelle Hinojos completed a Doctor of Pharmacy degree as well as a Bachelor of Science degree in Microbiology at NDSU in Fargo, ND. She has been with Tri County Healthcare for 17 years. Tri-County Health Care includes a 25-bed Critical Access Hospital located in Wadena, MN, as well as six satellite clinics located in its surrounding communities. She is currently the lead Antimicrobial Stewardship Pharmacist at that facility and developed its Antimicrobial Stewardship Committee.

James Hougas, III, MD, FAAFP
Dr. Hougas joined the University of Minnesota St. John’s Hospital Family Medicine Residency in 2017. Before this, he served on active duty with the United States Air Force for five years after residency. His assignments included outpatient practice at Malmstrom Air Force Base in Montana, residency faculty and full spectrum Family Medicine at Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska, and deployment to Afghanistan, Qatar, and elsewhere. He is interested in infectious diseases, antimicrobial stewardship, trauma care and systems, office based procedures, physician leadership, and colonoscopy. He is also an instructor in Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS) and Advanced Life Support in Obstetrics (ALSO). Dr. Hougas has managed the immunization clinic at Malmstrom AFB, including Anthrax and Smallpox vaccine programs, and immunization programs at Headquarters RESOLUTE SUPPORT (NATO) in Kabul, Afghanistan. He has been teaching medical learners about antimicrobial use and stewardship for almost a decade.

Barbara Joyce, RN
Barbara Joyce is a Registered Nurse, and has worked in Skilled Nursing and Long Term Care for 28 years. She has served as a Charge Nurse and a Rehab Nurse Manager. She is certified in Geriatrics. In 2015, she participated and received the Leading Age Leadership Academy certification. Currently, she is the Infection Preventionist and Clinical Educator at Jones Harrison. Jones-Harrison is a nonprofit senior living community in Minneapolis, offering assisted living apartments, comprehensive rehabilitation services, long term memory care and 24-hour skilled nursing care. Jones Harrison has recently partnered with Care Choice and AHRQ to implement the Antibiotic Stewardship Program for that facility.
Emma Leof, MPH
Emma Leof is a Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) Fellow in the Healthcare-Associated Infections and Antimicrobial Resistance unit at the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). She holds a Master’s in Public Health degree in Epidemiology and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Physiology from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. She has conducted survey research and analysis as a research assistant at Mayo Clinic and as a student worker in the MDH Zoonotic Diseases Unit. In her current role at MDH, Emma has focused on supporting outpatient healthcare facilities antibiotic stewardship and prescribing practices and improving our understanding of the National Healthcare Safety Network and Emerging Infections Program Clostridium difficile surveillance data. Emma chairs the Minnesota One Health Antibiotic Stewardship Collaborative One Health Engagement Work Group, which is focused on professional and public engagement and awareness of antibiotic resistance and stewardship. She also leads a quarterly call on One Health antibiotic stewardship, which is attended by over 20 states, CDC, Pew Charitable Trusts, FDA, USDA, and other national organizations working in antibiotic stewardship.

Ruth Lynfield, MD
Dr. Lynfield received her medical degree from Cornell University Medical College and did postgraduate training in pediatrics and in pediatric infectious diseases at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH). She was an attending Physician in pediatric infectious disease at MGH, and was Assistant Director of the New England Regional Newborn Screening Program at the Massachusetts State Laboratory. Dr. Lynfield joined the Minnesota Department of Health as a medical epidemiologist, and appointed State Epidemiologist in 2007 and Medical Director of the department in 2010. She is the co-principal investigator of the Minnesota Emerging Infections Program. She has conducted infectious disease investigations and responses to outbreaks; she has also developed surveillance systems, and conducted public health research, evaluation and planning. Her research focuses on emerging infections, antimicrobial resistance and prevention of infectious diseases. Dr. Lynfield has also worked on antimicrobial stewardship tools and guidance across the continuum of care. Dr. Lynfield has chaired and served on multiple public health workgroups and committees. She is an Adjunct Professor of Medicine, and of Epidemiology and Community Health at the University of Minnesota.

Emily Medcraft, PharmD, BCPs
Emily Medcraft graduated a Doctor of Pharmacy degree from the University of Minnesota College of Pharmacy in 2008. She completed her pharmacy residency training at the University of Minnesota Medical Center in 2009. After completing residency, Emily worked as a Clinical Pharmacist at the University of Minnesota Medical Center primarily in the Surgical and Neurocritical Intensive Care Units. She has also received her Board Certification in Pharmacotherapy. Emily is currently practicing as a Clinical Pharmacy Specialist at Fairview Southdale Hospital and is the pharmacy lead for the site’s Antimicrobial Stewardship Program. She serves on various committees for regulatory and quality initiatives at the hospital and system level. She recently helped develop and coordinate pharmacist antimicrobial stewardship education for the Fairview system acute care hospitals. In addition, Emily serves as the Residency Program Director for the PGY1 pharmacy residency program at Fairview Southdale Hospital. She is an Assistant Clinical Professor for the University of Minnesota College of Pharmacy.

Stephanie Nixon, PharmD
Stephanie Nixon is the Antimicrobial Stewardship Program Manager with Essentia Health (EH). She holds a Doctor of Pharmacy Degree from the Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences at the University of California, San Diego. As a Clinical Pharmacist with Essentia for the past 10 years, she has served on the Critical Care and Surgery Teams, Antimicrobial Stewardship Pharmacist Team and was the Pharmacy Team Lead for the Emergency Services Department for six years at EH St. Mary’s Medical Center. She assumed her current role in February 2018.

Kimberly Prigge, APRN, CNP
Kimberly Prigge is a nurse practitioner at Mayo Clinic, Rochester, where she has been employed for 23 years. She has worked in Employee and Community Health for the past six years as a nurse practitioner. During her six years in ECH, she has been involved in updating department practice guidelines, which helped spark her interest in antimicrobial stewardship. She is one of the authors of the Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement Respiratory Illness in Children and Adults. Diagnosis and Treatment Fifth Edition. She presented the updated guideline at the MDH Antibiotic Stewardship Conference in 2018. She has participated in the MDH Outpatient Antibiotic Stewardship Advisory Group and is part Mayo Clinic's Enterprise Antimicrobial Stewardship Program.

Hailey Soukup, PharmD
Hailey completed her doctor of pharmacy at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska. She then went on to complete her PGY1 Pharmacy Practice Residency at Abbott Northwestern. Hailey has always had a strong passion for infectious diseases and decided to further pursue the Infectious Diseases PGY2 at Abbott Northwestern. She recently presented her research on evaluation of a Staphylococcus aureus treatment checklist at IDWeek in San Francisco, and is currently evaluating outpatient parenteral prescribing within the Allina Health System. Following her PGY2 residency, Hailey aims to work as an infectious diseases specialist to improve antibiotic stewardship to combat antibiotic resistance.

Kaia Sreen, MS
Kaia Sreen earned her MS in Environmental Public Health from UW-Eau Claire, completed her practicum and thesis research at Wisconsin Department of Health Services in Madison, and began her career in Minnesota as an Environmental Specialist for Washington County. She continued as a Health Educator at Ramsey County, where she launched the Environmental Health Section's Facebook and Twitter accounts in 2009. Kaia joined the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) in 2016 as the social media manager and videographer in the Communications Office. Kaia manages MDH’s Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube accounts.

Julia E. Szymczak, PhD
Doctor Szymczak is an Assistant Professor of Epidemiology in the Department of Biostatistics, Epidemiology and Informatics at the University of Pennsylvania’s Perelman School of Medicine, where she also holds a secondary appointment in the Division of Infectious Diseases and is a faculty affiliate in the Center for Health Incentives and Behavioral Economics (CHIBE). Dr. Szymczak received her PhD in Sociology from the University of Pennsylvania and completed a postdoctoral research fellowship in the Division of Infectious Diseases at the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia. Her research focuses on understanding how the social organization of medical work shapes the implementation of efforts to improve the safety and quality of healthcare. She has examined various case studies of efforts to improve healthcare quality including resident duty hour restrictions, healthcare associated infection prevention, and the integration of palliative care into pediatric oncology. Her current research focuses on understanding the social determinants of antibiotic prescribing and the sociobehavioral factors that shape clinician acceptance of antibiotic stewardship interventions.

Amy Tong, DNP, APRN, ACNS-BC, CNE
Amy Tong is an Adult Clinical Nurse Specialist and the former Project Director for the Resident Centered Medication Safety PIP Project that included 18 CareChoice skilled nursing facilities. She has worked in nursing education, numerous geriatric care environments, acute care, and skilled home care prior to her roles at CareChoice. She is currently the Project Director and Clinical Nurse Specialist for the Resident Centered Behavioral Health PIP Project that began in January of 2019.