

# Defending Drug Overdose Homicides in Pennsylvania

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## **Carrie Allman (Montgomery County Public Defender, Norristown, PA)**

Carrie Allman is the Homicide Chief for the Montgomery County Office of the Public Defender, located in Norristown, Pennsylvania. In this role, Ms. Allman represents clients charged with varying degrees of homicide, most typically first degree murder, but has also provided representation in cases where a drug delivery has resulted in death. She has also represented juvenile lifers in their resentencing hearings as well as PCRA proceedings for juveniles with life sentences. Additionally, Ms. Allman assists with in-office trainings and will second seat attorneys handling their first jury trial or in cases with serious felony charges.

Prior to joining the Montgomery County Office of the Public Defender, she was a Trial Manager and Training Manager for the Allegheny County Office of the Public Defender, located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Ms. Allman was appointed to the Appellate Procedural Rules Committee in 2014 and has served as a faculty member for the Trial Skills Training Program in Carlisle, Pennsylvania since 2014. Ms. Allman is a 2003 graduate of the University of Pittsburgh School of Law and lives in Collegeville with her husband and two sons.

## **Leo Beletsky ([Health in Justice Lab](#) and Department of Health Sciences, Northeastern University School of Law, Boston, MA; Division of Infectious Diseases & Global Public Health, University of California, San Diego, School of Medicine)**



Leo Beletsky is a Professor of Law and Health Sciences at Northeastern University, where he is the faculty director of the Health in Justice Action Lab. Beletsky's expertise is in the public health impact of laws and their enforcement, with special focus on drug overdose, infectious disease transmission, and criminal justice reform through a public health lens.

**Douglas Coffey (Forensics Division, Maryland Office of the Public Defender, Baltimore, MD)**



Ms. Coffey began her career as a public defender with the public defender's office in Guilford County, NC. She joined the Baltimore City Parental Defense Division of Maryland OPD in 2015, and developed a specialty in medically complex child abuse cases. She transferred to the Forensics Division in June 2018, where she provides litigation support to public defenders across the state of Maryland and coordinates challenges to all forensic science disciplines. She received her law degree from the University of North Carolina School of Law and her undergraduate degree from the University of Virginia.

**Dr. Jasmine Drake ([Barbara Jordan-Mickey Leland School of Public Affairs](#), Texas Southern University, Houston, TX)**



Jasmine M. Drake, PhD, is a Graduate Program Director and an assistant professor in the Administration of Justice Department in the Barbara Jordan- Mickey Leland School of Public Affairs at Texas Southern University in Houston, TX. She also currently serves as a Governor-appointed commissioner on the Texas Forensic Science Commission. In 2018, She was awarded with a prestigious Research Fellowship at the TSU Center for Justice Research (CJR). Drake's research projects focus on the development of reliable and objective methods for the collection and analysis of seized drug evidentiary materials in an effort to mitigate the effects of cognitive bias and the unreliable use of forensic feature- comparative methods, such as DNA,

latent print analysis, ballistic test interpretations, bite-mark comparisons, and hair and fiber testing, which are contributing factors to the large number of wrongful convictions that have disproportionately plagued fragile communities. More specifically, her research focuses on the evaluation and error management of forensic methods and their resulting expert witness testimonies in wrongful conviction cases with the goal of identifying root-cause analyses in order to recommend best practices and the implementation of policies, which will address the imbalance of justice faced by fragile communities.

Previously, Drake worked as a forensic chemist at the Drug Enforcement Administration in Dallas, TX. During her tenure at DEA, Drake's primary professional responsibilities included controlled substance identification, quality control testing, and the analysis of evidence submitted by law

enforcement officials. She also assisted with clandestine laboratory operations and testified findings of technical laboratory reports in court.

Drake has also worked in the Department of Forensic Science at Sam Houston State University as an assistant professor. Additionally, Drake has worked as a K-12 public school teacher in Irving, Texas and as a National Academy of Sciences postdoctoral researcher at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) in Gaithersburg, MD. She earned a B.Sc. in Chemistry from Southern University and a Ph.D. in Chemistry from Louisiana State University.

With over 6 years of experience as a forensic chemist, Dr. Drake's research interests also include creating and implementing innovative methods for the rapid determination and screening of controlled substances using analytical instrumentation to support law enforcement efforts in the field. She is also very passionate about introducing science and in particular, forensic science, to the youth, K-12 educators, and law enforcement officials through the various hands-on forensic science workshops and training opportunities she has organized and conducted for K-12 educators and students, litigators, and law enforcement officials.

**Jeremiah Goulka ([Health in Justice Action Lab](#), Northeastern University School of Law, Washington, DC)**



Jeremiah Goulka, JD, is a senior fellow at the Health in Justice Action Lab at Northeastern University School of Law. The Lab works to infuse a public health lens into criminal justice and drug policy by connecting research with practice. He leads the Lab's policing work and is a co-author of the Lab's *Drug-Induced Homicide Defense Toolkit*.

Prior to joining the Lab, Jeremiah was a researcher at the RAND Corporation, where he led justice and security research projects for several federal and local agencies. He was a member of the RAND Center for Quality Policing and a professor of criminal justice policy in the Pardee RAND Graduate School. After Hurricane Katrina, Jeremiah was the co-creator (with the U.S. Attorney (ED LA) and a Coast Guard admiral) and director of a joint local-state-federal task force that worked to rebuild and reform the criminal justice systems in the New Orleans area (which laid the groundwork for creating the city's first professional public defenders' office). He has also been a Trial Attorney in the Civil Division of the U.S. Justice Department. Jeremiah clerked on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, has law degrees from the universities of Chicago and Edinburgh, and is a member of the District of Columbia bar.

**Brie Halfond (Montgomery County Public Defender, Norristown, PA)**

Brie Halfond is a trial attorney for the Montgomery County Office of the Public Defender, located in Norristown, Pennsylvania. Ms. Halfond defends clients charged with various offenses, including Drug Delivery Resulting in Death. Prior to this role, Ms. Halfond worked for the Berks County Office of the Public Defender, located in Reading, Pennsylvania.

Ms. Halfond graduated in 2002 from Ithaca College with a degree in Psychology. For several years thereafter, Ms. Halfond worked with chimpanzees in a variety of settings, focusing on their care and rehabilitation. Ms. Halfond returned to school, earning a J.D. from Vermont Law School in 2010, and has since dedicated her practice to indigent criminal defense.

**Andrea Lantz Harris (Federal Public Defender, Western District of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA)**



Education: BA 1988, University of Notre Dame; JD, 1994, University of Louisville

Professional: Solo practitioner, Charlottesville, Virginia, 1995-99; assistant public defender, Charlottesville Public Defender Office, 1999-2006; assistant federal public defender, WDVA, Charlottesville, Virginia, 2006-present

**Miriam Harris (Internal Medicine Physician, Boston University Medical Center, Boston, MA)**



Dr. Harris is an Assistant Professor of Medicine and Addiction Medicine Fellow at Boston University School of Medicine. She has a secondary appointment of Instructor of Medicine at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver Canada. She completed her MD at McMaster University, Internal Medicine residency at the University of British Columbia, and General Internal Medicine Fellowship and Epidemiology Masters at McGill University.

Dr. Harris's research interests focus on the intersection of women's health and addiction including: risk communication, contraceptive access in addiction treatment settings, assessing the value of urine toxicology testing for breast feeding guidelines, and opioid prescribing postpartum. Clinically, she provides primary care and office based addiction treatment in the CATALYST and SOFAR clinics for young adults and postpartum women at Boston Medical Center. She dose advocacy work to advance the integration of harm reduction services in addiction treatment and increase access to treatment in the criminal justice system.

**Amy Hawes ([Hawes Forensic Consulting](#); Knox County Medical Examiner, Knoxville, TN)**



Dr. Amy Hawes has approximately 19 years' experience in forensic pathology. She received her medical degree at Meharry Medical College, completed residency in anatomic and clinical pathology at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, and completed a fellowship in forensic pathology at the Dade County Medical Examiner's Office in Miami, Florida. She is board certified by the American Board of Pathology in anatomic, clinical, and forensic pathology. She has served as assistant medical examiner, deputy medical examiner, and chief medical examiner in local and state jurisdictions in Tennessee. Her special area of focus is investigation of drug-related deaths. She is an invited

speaker to many stakeholder agencies in death investigation throughout the United States.



**Rep. Sara Innamorato (Member, Pennsylvania House of Representatives, Pittsburgh, PA)**



State Representative Sara Innamorato believes in a Pennsylvania for us all: one where our working families don't have to live paycheck-to-paycheck and your health and wellbeing are more important than corporate interests. Representing the 21st Legislative District in the Pennsylvania General Assembly, Sara's legislative initiatives always put people first and center the most vulnerable. As a member of the House Health, Transportation, and Urban Affairs committees, she is committed to healthcare justice, access to affordable housing, and public transit expansion for Pennsylvanians. This session, she'll be focusing on securing democracy by promoting her automatic voter registration legislation, pushing forth commonsense solutions to save lives in the opioid crisis, and fighting for a fair share tax system in our

state.

**Brian McNeil (York County Public Defender, York, PA)**



Brian McNeil is an Appellate Public Defender and Intern Coordinator at the York County Public Defender's Office. He represents indigent criminal defendants in direct appeals and PCRA matters. He moved to Pennsylvania in 2016, after 11 years at the Office of the State Appellate Defender in Chicago.

**Lisa Newman-Polk ([Law Office of Lisa Newman-Polk, Ayer, MA](#))**



Lisa Newman-Polk, Esq. LCSW, is a lawyer and social worker in private practice. She is a former public defender with the Committee for Public Counsel Services (CPCS) in Massachusetts, where she worked in the district, superior, and drug courts. In the middle of her legal career, she pursued a Masters in Social Work and worked as an outpatient therapist providing addiction treatment to men and women on probation and parole, and then as a mental health clinician at the men's maximum security prison in MA. Today her law practice focuses on representing juvenile lifers at parole hearings and special litigation in criminal cases involving drug addiction. Lisa received national attention for the case, *Commonwealth v. Eldred*, 280 Mass. 90 (2018) in which she argued that it is unconstitutional to order a probationer with substance use disorder to be drug-free and then incarcerate the person for relapse. In the wake of

the Supreme Judicial Court's decision rejecting Lisa's argument, she initiated currently pending legislation in MA that would prevent the courts from incarcerating a probationer for relapse if the person is engaged in treatment. Lisa co-wrote an amicus brief on behalf of CPCS in support of the defendant in *Commonwealth v. Carrillo* (oral argument Feb. 2018), who was convicted of drug distribution and involuntary manslaughter after buying heroin for his friend. Based on her experiences as a clinician and public defender, Lisa is an outspoken advocate for criminal justice reform as it relates to the "war on drugs" and prison conditions, and for reentry services that focus on holistic wellness, including healing from trauma and addiction. Lisa is on the Board of Directors for MA Prisoners' Legal Services and she is an active member of the National Association of Social Workers. She has a B.A. from Columbia University, a J.D. from the University of Montana School of Law, and an M.S.W. from Boston College.

**Devin Reaves M.S.W. (Executive Director, [Pennsylvania Harm Reduction Coalition](#))**



Devin is a person living in recovery since 2007. He is a community organizer and grassroots advocacy leader. Devin has worked on the expansion of access to the lifesaving medication Naloxone, implantation of 911 Good Samaritan policies, and the development of youth-oriented systems. He wants to build constituencies of consequence that will lead to meaningful public health policy changes around substance use disorders. Devin is the founder and Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Harm

Reduction Coalition (PAHRC). The mission of PAHRC is to promote the health, dignity, and human rights of individuals who use drugs and communities impacted by drug use. Recognizing

that social inequity, criminalization, and stigma silence those affected most, we advocate for policies that improve the quality of life for people who use drugs, people in recovery, and their communities.

Devin received a Master of Social Work from the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy & Practice with a focus on community and organizational change and has a BA in Human Services from Lynn University. Devin also serves on Pennsylvania Overdose Task Force and the Advisory Committee for the National Institute of Drug Abuse

**Joshua Vaughn ([The Appeal](#), Waynesboro, PA)**



Joshua Vaughn is a staff reporter for The Appeal. Although his writing covers a broad array of criminal justice issues, it has a special focus on sex offender policies, the use of cash bail, and substance use in rural Pennsylvania. He was a 2016 John Jay/Harry F. Guggenheim criminal justice reporting fellow, a 2016 president's award for excellence in news reporting recipient from Lee Enterprises and a 2017 John Jay/Measures for Justice reporting fellow