

2/24/23 KFA Presenter Bios

Kristen Pendergrass Bio

Kristen Pendergrass serves as the Vice President, State Policy at Shatterproof. Previously, she worked at the Pew Charitable Trusts leading state relations and strategy for the Substance Use Prevention and Treatment Initiative and for the Pew-MacArthur Results First Initiative helping state and local governments incorporate evidence-based policymaking into the budget and policy processes.

Before joining Pew in November 2015, Ms. Pendergrass worked as a policy advisor for the House Majority Caucus in the Oregon Legislature, chief of staff to the Oregon House Majority Whip, and as a legislative assistant in the Massachusetts House of Representatives.

Kristen holds a master's degree in social welfare policy from the Boston University School of Social Work and a bachelor's degree from Vanderbilt University.



Kimberly Freese (Nelson) is the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Regional Administrator serving Region 7: Kansas, Iowa, Missouri, and Nebraska, since 2015. Kim has worked in the behavioral health care field since 1992. Her clinical work mainly focused on addiction services, in both community-based settings for women and children and in prison-based therapeutic communities. She then moved into executive leadership roles.

Kim worked for the state of Kansas as the Medicaid Coordinator for Behavioral Health serving as the liaison between the behavioral health and Medicaid agencies. Her primary responsibility was to ensure Medicaid policy was aligned with the state goals for addiction services. She ended her tenure with the state as the Director of Managed Care for the Behavioral Health and Disabilities division.

In her position of Vice President of Marketing and New Business Development for a large integrated health services provider, prior to becoming the SAMHSA Regional Administrator, Kim led the team that launched their Health Home program for those with serious mental illness.

Kim is a person thriving in long term recovery who is a Licensed Addictions Counselor and a Certified Peer Support Specialist. She earned her bachelor's degree in Sociology and her master's degree in Public Administration from the University of Kansas.

Longer bio here: <https://www.samhsa.gov/about-us/who-we-are/leadership/biographies/kimberly-nelson>
