



2027 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CANDIDATES

PRESIDENT-ELECT

There is one candidate running for one open position. The candidate's biography is listed below.

KRISTI LADOWSKI

Stony Brook University Trauma Center



Kristi Ladowski has spent her career helping turn injury and violence prevention (IVP) evidence into practice, working alongside communities and partners to make it real. As Associate Director of Injury Prevention at Stony Brook Medicine, she brings 10+ years of experience growing programs that are practical, evidence-informed, and responsive to real-world needs. Her strengths include collaboration, relationship-building, and mentorship, and she is known for her ability to connect people, ideas, and resources to move work forward. Kristi has been a Safe States member since 2019 and is currently serving a second term as At-Large Member on the Executive Committee. She chairs the Policy Committee and is an active member of the Hospital Injury Prevention SIG and Conference Planning Committee. Safe States has been an important professional home for Kristi because of the people and shared commitment to the field. She appreciates how this community shows up for each other and is committed to helping ensure members feel connected, included, and supported. As President-Elect, Kristi will focus on strengthening the IVP workforce, fostering partnerships, and advancing Safe States' strategic priorities by listening closely to what members need to do their best work. She truly values giving back to the organization that has supported her own growth and leadership journey.

VICE PRESIDENT

There is one candidate running for one open position. The candidate's biography is listed below.

DAINA ZOLCK

Kansas Department of Health and Environment



Daina Zolck is the Section Director for Injury and Violence Prevention Programs at the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, bringing more than 25 years of public health experience to her role. She is deeply committed to reducing injury-related morbidity and mortality and oversees a broad portfolio of initiatives focused on promoting safety, preventing violence, and strengthening protective factors. Guided by Helen Keller's quote, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much," Daina actively fosters connections and values her participation in multi-sector partnerships, workgroups, advisory councils, and coalitions to maximize opportunities, leverage resources, and advance sustainable impact. A dedicated member of Safe States since 2009, Daina has demonstrated longstanding commitment to the organization through meaningful service previously as an At-Large Member of the Executive Committee, Chair of the State Designated Representatives SIG, and participant on three State Technical Assessment Teams. She is currently serving her first term as Vice President of the Executive Committee. Daina's collaborative leadership, strategic insight, adaptability, and passion for the field make her highly qualified to serve a second term as Vice President.

SECRETARY

There are two candidates running for one open position. This is a special election, and the term is only one-year. The biographies for each candidate are listed in alphabetical order below.

JESSICA RITTER

Safe Kids Pennsylvania



Jessica Ritter (she/they) is a Certified Nonprofit Professional who has been working to improve public health in Pennsylvania for over eight years. They strive to prioritize health equity throughout their work and life and are passionate about promoting justice and health for all people. Jessica holds a master's degree from Drew University and is committed to lifelong learning, whether that be in a classroom or in lived experience. As the Safe Kids Pennsylvania State Office Coordinator, Jessica works to foster strong collaborative relationships, coordinate resource development and distribution, and provide support and technical assistance to 20+ groups across the Commonwealth that work to prevent unintentional childhood injuries. Jessica has appeared on the INdepth podcast twice and sits on the Safe States Conference Planning Committee, Membership

Development Committee (as vice chair), and the Upstream Solutions Working Group (previously as chair). Jessica is a part of the de Beaumont Foundation's 40 Under 40 in Public Health, class of 2025, an honor that uplifts their collaborative efforts, creativity, innovation, and passion for equity throughout their work in PA. She understands that public health is still enduring ongoing attacks from various directions, and is dedicated to upholding Safe States' values of building partnerships, supporting health for all, and strategic leadership in the field of violence and injury prevention.

STEWART WILLIAMS

Dell Children's Medical Center



Stewart Williams has focused on strengthening injury prevention across state health departments, hospitals, EMS, nonprofits, coalitions, and national organizations over the course of his career. He's served on the Safe States Executive Committee, founded the Hospital-based Injury Prevention SIG, contributed to Standards and Indicators and revised Core Components, participated in STAT initiatives, and led the first hospital-based injury prevention program to undergo a STAT assessment. Throughout his career, he's worked to build connections, improve systems, streamline processes, and advocate for injury prevention professionals. If elected, he will help ensure Safe States

remains collaborative, member-focused, and responsive to the evolving needs of our workforce. Stewart would truly appreciate your vote.

AT-LARGE MEMBER

There are three candidates running for three open positions. The biographies for each candidate are listed in alphabetical order below.

LILIAN CHIMUMA

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment



Lilian Chimuma, PhD., is a mixed methods evaluator and researcher with a passion for translating research to practice in interdisciplinary contexts for nuanced and complex problems. Lilian is currently supporting efforts around evaluation and research practices grounded in social justice across the lifespan (data collection, analysis, evaluation design and implementation, and dissemination of findings) for the sexual violence prevention program with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE). Specifically, Lilian has served as an evaluator for different injury and violence areas including substance misuse, sexual violence prevention, and sex education hence strongly witnessing and advocating for the need to take a shared risk protective stance in IVP work. A member of Safe States since 2023, Lilian is excited to engage further as part of the Executive Committee. She commits to working with esteemed members to ensure member voices are not only heard but that action is taken for all members to feel included, welcome, and valued despite their varied capacities, identities, values, and beliefs. In her view, a healthy organization is one that listens, advocates for, and works on member requests pertinent to arising and existing needs to truly ensure a meaningful productive and thriving community.

STACEY PECENKA

Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt



Stacey Pecenka, MPH has worked as the Trauma Injury Prevention Program Manager at Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt in Nashville, TN, for 3.5 years. If given the opportunity to serve on the executive committee, I will work to ensure that Safe States continues to uphold its unwavering commitment to strengthening the practice of injury and violence prevention. This includes promoting equity and inclusion in all decision-making processes, supporting evidence-based strategies that address the root causes of injuries and violence, and fostering a culture of innovation to adapt to emerging challenges. I am particularly passionate about advancing trauma-informed practices and advocating for policies that prevent unintentional injuries, and I look forward to bringing this focus to my work with Safe States as I start a doctorate in Public Health at George Washington University this fall.

AT-LARGE MEMBER - continued

JOSEPHINE PETERSON

NYU Langone Hospital - Long Island



Josephine Peterson, MPH, is an Injury Prevention Specialist at NYU Langone Hospital – Long Island and a doctoral student in Public Health Leadership at Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. Her work bridges trauma care, public health, and community engagement through evidence-based injury and violence prevention programming, coalition building, and health communication initiatives focused on health equity and systems change. Josephine brings strengths in strategic communication, partnership development, community-based participatory approaches, and cross-sector collaboration. She has led and expanded programs reaching thousands of community members annually and has experience building sustainable partnerships across healthcare, public health, education, EMS, and community organizations. Her leadership experience includes serving on Safe States Alliance workgroups such as the Upstream Solutions and the Communications SIG, presenting nationally on injury prevention and health communication, and mentoring students and emerging professionals interested in public health careers. As a member of the Executive Committee, Josephine would prioritize collaboration, inclusion, and workforce development while helping Safe States continue to strengthen the practice of injury and violence prevention through innovation, relationship-building, and a strong commitment to advancing equity-centered public health approaches.