



Committee on Safety, Housing, Education and Homelessness Special Hearing: Understanding Substance Misuse as a Medical Condition

February 1, 2023

Panelist bios

Dr. Kimberly Nordstrom



Dr. Nordstrom received her medical and legal degrees at Southern Illinois University, School of Medicine and School of Law, respectively. She trained in psychiatry at the University of Colorado Denver, School of Medicine where she also served as Chief Resident. Dr. Nordstrom has worked clinically in the fields of general adult, emergency, and forensic psychiatry.

Dr. Nordstrom joined the Rocky Mountain Health Plans/United team as Chief Medical Officer in November of 2022 and continues to be the Medical Director of Signal Behavioral Health and an emergency psychiatrist at the University of Colorado Hospital. Prior to this she held the posts of Medical Director for Behavioral Health & Health Strategy at Colorado Access, Medical Director of the Office of Behavioral Health and the Division

Director for the Colorado Mental Health Institutes for the State of Colorado. For years, she worked as the Medical Director for Psychiatric Emergency Services at Denver Health Medical Center which was an administrative, clinical and teaching position. She is an Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry with the University of Colorado School of Medicine and board certified in general adult psychiatry. Dr. Nordstrom has researched and written extensively in the field of behavioral emergencies. Her work can be found in both psychiatry and emergency medicine journals and texts. In fact, she is the editor of three textbooks in the field of behavioral emergencies. She was a lead contributor for the ICAR2E Tool (emergency department recommendations for suicide prevention), the American Psychiatric Association resource document on boarding of mentally ill patients in the ED, and the "BETA" Guidelines for the American Association for Emergency Psychiatry. Dr. Nordstrom has spoken on various behavioral emergency topics nationally and internationally. She has served as the Chair of the Coalition on Psychiatric Emergencies and President of the American Association for Emergency Psychiatry. She is a Distinguished Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association.

Dr. Bryon Adinoff MD



Dr. Adinoff is an addiction psychiatrist and academician. Presently a Clinical Professor at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, he retired in 2018 as the Distinguished Professor of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Research at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center and as a psychiatrist for 30 years with the Veterans Affairs. Dr. Adinoff has published more than 200 articles, reviews, and book chapters on the biology and treatment of addiction and is the Editor of *The American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse*. He is a Distinguished Fellow in the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry and the American Psychiatric Association. In his semi-retired status, he has become increasingly involved in advancing drug policy reform. In this capacity, he is President of Doctors for Cannabis Regulation, on the advisory board of SPORE (Society for Psychedelic Outreach, Reform and Education), and on the Drug Policy Alliance's

Marijuana Justice Coalition.

Dr. Christian Thurstone



Dr. Thurstone is Director of Service of [Behavioral Health Services at Denver Health](#) and a professor of psychiatry at the University of Colorado Denver, where he conducts research on youth substance use and addiction and has served as director of medical training for the university's addiction psychiatry fellowship program. He is one of about four dozen physicians in the United States who are board-certified in general, child and adolescent and addictions psychiatry — and of those, he is the only one also serving in the U.S. Army.

Because more than 85 percent of people with Substance Use Disorder have a co-occurring mental health problem, and because mental and physical health are absolutely interrelated, Dr. Thurstone is dedicated to the integration of mental and physical healthcare, addiction treatment — and to the research and development of practical, real-world approaches to helping young people have healthy, happy, productive and fulfilling lives that, in turn, help them build healthy families and communities.

Dr. Thurstone's career and professional training reflect his commitment to integrated healthcare and research. He completed medical training at the University of Chicago, Northwestern University and UCD. In 2010, he completed five years of mentored research training through the National Institute on Drug Abuse/American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry K12 Research Program in Substance Abuse. In 2022, he was accepted by the University of Michigan Medical School to complete a master's degree in Learning Health Systems, a program focused on development and maintenance of networks for continuous "self-study and adaptation using data and analytics to generate knowledge, engage stakeholders and implement behavior change to transform practice." Dr. Thurstone is also currently working to become a certified Pilates instructor because he enjoys helping his patients achieve great health by connecting mind, body and soul.

Teens and young adults in Colorado, metro Chicago and beyond call him "Dr. T," the name under which he serves as a team physician for the National Football League and as a founding medical director of one of Colorado's largest youth substance-treatment programs — which gave rise to the school-based mental health and addiction care clinics he also helped found on the campuses of more than a dozen of Denver's public high schools and middle schools. For nearly a decade, "Dr. T" also fielded students' health and relationship-related questions for a weekly advice column he wrote for The Tribune Co.-owned student newspaper, *The Mash*.

Dr. Thurstone is also an advocate for public policies that increase access to mental healthcare and addiction treatment. He is a past president of the [Colorado Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Society](#). In October, 2012, the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy honored his work by naming him an Advocate for Action for his efforts nationwide to reduce drug use and its consequences. He also has received gubernatorial and mayoral appointments to state and local commissions.

In June 2012, the United States Congress awarded Dr. Thurstone another title: U.S. Army Major — and approved his promotion to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in November 2017. As an Army Reserve officer, Dr. Thurstone has deployed to the Middle East, Europe and throughout the United States to treat American service members who need mental healthcare in the field and to train Army Mental Health Specialists. His current assignment is to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, the country's largest military hospital outside the continental U.S. In August 2021, the Army awarded Dr. Thurstone The Meritorious Service Medal for his service in support of Operation Enduring Freedom for the 1493rd Medical Detachment Combat and Operational Stress Control.

Dr. Thurstone is a fluent Spanish speaker and enjoys working with many of his young patients and their families in his second language. He also likes to talk tennis. He plays his favorite sport competitively and was ranked among the top 10 players in the United States Tennis Association's Men's 40s Division. When he's not in the office, you stand a good chance of finding him on a tennis court — especially at Valor Christian High School, where he is the assistant coach for his children's tennis teams — or at home, where he enjoys spending time with his wife, Christine Tatum; their kids; and their rascally dog.