

Ethics and Pandemic Science: A National Dialogue

November 12 – 13, 2024 | National Academy of Sciences Building

Participant list

Gloria Addo-Ayensu, MD, MPH, is the Director of Health for Fairfax County. In this capacity, she provides overall leadership and direction for public health programs for the Fairfax Health District, which includes the Cities of Fairfax and Falls Church. She has led local, regional, and statewide public health initiatives in the areas of emergency preparedness, health promotion, and health equity. Throughout her public health career, she has promoted community health and resiliency through partnerships, and has successfully leveraged community assets to create innovative, practical, and sustainable community-based approaches to complex public health challenges. Dr. Addo-Ayensu received her medical degree from Tulane University School of Medicine and her residency training in preventive medicine from the Loma Linda University Medical Center.

Community Expert

Gloria.Addo-Ayensu@fairfaxcounty.gov

Kristin Adkins Population Health Manager, Roanoke City & Alleghany Health Districts, Virginia Department of Health, has 17 years of community health and community development experience - 15 years in the Roanoke Valley. She is a champion for whole health, health equity, and trauma informed care. She utilizes data by working to bring analyzed, visualized data and stories to community members and facilitate community engagement processes to develop improvement plans with broad buy in and support.

Community Expert

Kristin.Adkins@vdh.virginia.gov

Shweta Bansal, PhD, is professor at the Department of Biology at Georgetown University. With a passion for interdisciplinary approaches, she has made significant contributions to mathematical epidemiology, disease ecology, network science, and public health. Dr. Bansal's research has garnered widespread recognition for its practical applications in public health. Her work often involves leveraging large-scale datasets and advances computational techniques to understand disease dynamics and inform public health and animal health decision-making. She actively engages with policymakers and public health practitioners to ensure that her work has a tangible impact on global health outcomes.

Speaker

sb753@georgetown.edu

Mitra Basu, PhD, joined NSF's Computer Information Science and Engineering (CISE) Directorate in 2008 as the Lead Program Director for the Expeditions in Computing program – the Center scale program in CISE. During her tenure at NSF, she has served as acting Deputy Division Director in CISE. Mitra is a co-Lead for NSF PIPP Working Group.

mbasu@nsf.gov

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Sophia Booker is responsible for identifying advocacy opportunities, developing traditional, digital, grassroots community engagement and advocacy strategies, and mobilizing youth advocates to support policy priorities. Her expertise spans many areas, including youth engagement, advocacy training and facilitation, leadership development, independent-living workshops, youth-adult partnerships, and implementing the Youth Welfare Approach Framework in training environments. Sophia is passionate about youth voice, fostering authentic engagement, and strengthening youth-adult partnerships throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. Sophia served on Virginia's State Executive Council for Children Services for two terms and is currently serving on the Court Improvement Program Advisory Committee for the Supreme Court of Virginia. Sophia earned her Bachelor of Social Work and Master of Social Work from Virginia Commonwealth University.

Community Expert

sophia@vakids.org

Deron Campbell, MPH, is the Director of Community Health, Access, and Prevention at Inova Health System. His current role involves leading community outreach initiatives outlined by Inova's Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA), emphasizing diversity, equity, and inclusion with the goal of improving health equity for all. During the COVID pandemic he also served as the clinical manager for the COVID results and notification team leading multiple teams to support both internal and community leaders.

Community Expert

Deron.Campbell@inova.org

Jon Catherwood-Ginn is an assistant professor of applied theatre in the School of Performing Arts and co-director of research for the Center for Communicating Science at Virginia Tech. As an educator, practitioner, and scholar, his creative research has focused on community engagement, democratic deliberation, intercultural learning, civic visioning, and communicating science. He is presently pursuing his Ph.D. in Planning, Governance, and Globalization at Virginia Tech, researching the perspectives and practices of foundation staff in participatory grantmaking.

Speaker

rjginn@vt.edu

MacKenzie Chitwood, MPH, serves as prevention and wellness development and evaluation coordinator for Blue Ridge Behavioral Healthcare with services focused on enhancing protective factors and reducing risk factors in our community. In her role, she is dedicated to promoting factors in people's lives that help them be as physically and mentally healthy as possible with efforts focused on preventing youth use of alcohol, nicotine and cannabis; preventing youth and young adult opioid abuse; reducing depression and suicide at all ages and; preventing problem gambling in all ages.

Community Expert

mchitwood@brbh.org

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Pamela Chitwood serves as a Health Equity Specialist for the West Piedmont District of the Virginia Department of Health. She puts her skills to work in education and policy advocacy to improve health and address the social determinants of health (SDOH) that are fundamental to health equity movements. She is a Virginia-certified Community Health Worker and also serves as the Population Health Community Coordinator.

Community Expert

Pamela.Chitwood@vdh.virginia.gov

Terry Clark, II, MPH, is a Health Equity Project Manager at the Virginia Department of Health. Terry has expertise in community engagement and has managed a group charged with addressing vaccine hesitancy in racial and ethnic minority population. He has also coordinated program strategies that facilitated access to evidence-based outreach material and best practice to combat vaccine misinformation and disinformation in social media to advance vaccine equity.

Community Expert

Terry.clark@vdh.virginia.gov

Veronica Cosby, MAHS, MS, serves as a Program Manager for the Virginia Partners in Prayer and Prevention, Office of Health Equity, within the Virginia Department of Health. Her work centers around faith-based coalitions which serve as trusted resources for the community and provide continuous engagement between the VDH central office, local health districts, community partners, and partnering congregations.

Community Expert

veronica.cosby@vdh.virginia.gov

Mindy Eckstein, MPH, is a lifelong Virginian and graduate of Virginia Tech. She holds a Master of Public Health, specializing in grants management and capacity building for non-profits. In her downtime, Mindy enjoys horseback riding, learning new skills, and traveling with her family.

Community Expert

mindy@vrha.org

Kevin Esvelt, PhD, is an associate professor at the MIT Media Lab and director of the Sculpting Evolution Group studying gene drives, directed evolution, genome engineering, molecular biology, microbiology, and ecological engineering. As a research scientist he has been committed to accelerating beneficial advances while safeguarding biotechnology against mistrust and misuse. Projects include pioneering new ways of developing ecotechnologies with the guidance of local communities, developing early-warning systems to reliably detect any catastrophic biological threat, and advising policymakers on how best to mitigate global catastrophic bio risks.

Speaker

esvelt@media.mit.edu

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Maurice Ferrell, MBA, PhD, is the Pastor at Vance Street Baptist Church in Danville, VA. He also serves as the Vice President for Technology and CIO for the North Carolina Higher Education System.

Community Expert

vilma.ferrell@gmail.com

Vilma I Ferrell, MSN, RN, serves as an Assistant Professor in Nursing at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. Her areas of expertise are pediatric and community health nursing. She is currently pursuing a Doctor of Nurse Practice with a focus on Population Health, where she is developing evidence-based health initiatives and effective dissemination strategies within minority faith-based communities. Her scholarly interests also includes promoting community-based experiential learning and fostering interdisciplinary learning collaborations.

Community Expert

vilma.ferrell@gmail.com

Monica Fuller is a School Counselor at Ridgeview Middle School, in Dickenson County, Virginia.

She began her career as a teacher and has a total of 23 years experience of working in a rural public school setting. Monica obtained her Bachelor of Science Degree in Psychology from The University of Virginia's College at Wise and her Master's in School Counseling from Morehead State University. She collaborates with school and community organizations (Communities in Schools, Endless Opportunities, TTAC, Virginia Cooperative Extension, etc.) to improve student outcomes and experiences in the school community.

Community Expert

msfuller@dcps.k12.va.us

Ashley Garcia-Rivera is a dedicated advocate for systemic change in child welfare and mental health, particularly for children and youth affected by foster care and adoption. Serving as a Policy and Advocacy Fellow at the Center for Adoption Support and Education (C.A.S.E.), she champions mental health support for families and youth impacted by adoption, kinship care, and foster care. Ashley's work is deeply rooted in her lived experience, which she shares widely to elevate awareness and inspire change. Ashley earned her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Philosophy from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Community Expert

garcia-rivera@adoptionssupport.org

Julie Gerdes, PhD, is an assistant professor of technical communication and rhetoric at Virginia Tech. She studies equitable prevention messaging about and during public health emergencies of international concern, and her forthcoming book examines urgency rhetorics in the face of infectious disease outbreaks. Prior to coming to Virginia Tech, she served as the regional coordinator and an advisor in USAID's Zika response.

Speaker

jgerdes@vt.edu

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Joshua Glasser joined OSTP in March 2024, where he serves as Assistant Director for Combatting Antimicrobial Resistance and Integrated Health Innovation. He came to OSTP having previously served as acting Head of Strategy for the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Global Health Security and Diplomacy. During his decade at the State Department, he held a portfolio focused on health security, climate change and the global environment, including in the Arctic region, the Asia-Pacific region, Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa and in multilateral contexts such as WHO and the UNFCCC. He graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a degree in political science and public policy analysis; he holds a Master of Science in Global Health and Population from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. He has also studied as a Fulbright Scholar in Vietnam (2007-2008).

Joshua.L.Glasser@ostp.eop.gov

Brian Hairston serves the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service as a 4H Agent for Youth Development in Henry County/Martinsville City.

Community Expert

bhairsto@vt.edu

Brittney S. Harris, MFA, is an Assistant Professor of Applied Theatre and Co-Director of Research at the Center for Communicating Science, focusing on Race and Performance, Performance as Activism, and Community-Engaged Theatre. Her work explores creativity as a space for individual growth, using Performance as Research (PaR) to examine social media's impact and storytelling for resilience. Addressing racial injustice, mental health, and gender equality, her projects foster community activism. She has led workshops and community projects internationally, employing methods by Augusto Boal and Michael Rohd. In 2023, she received a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship and conducted research in Rwanda on theatre for community healing.

Speaker

bsharris001@vt.edu

Kathy W. Hosig, PhD, serves as Director for the Virginia Tech Center for Public Health Practice and Research (CPHPR) and core faculty member in the Master of Public Health program in the Department of Population Health Sciences at Virginia Tech (public health education concentration). The Center for Public Health Practice and Research is housed in the Department of Population Health Sciences in the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine, and supported by the Institute for Society, Culture and Environment. The mission of CPHPR is to foster interdisciplinary, collaborative public health practice and research activities at Virginia Tech and among external public health agencies, organizations, practitioners and researchers. Dr. Hosig has experience with developing collaborative partnerships at the local and state levels for federally-funded community-based projects.

Speaker

khosig@vt.edu

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La Tika Jeffery serves as a youth development specialist for Virginia Department of Social Services and is dedicated to empowering youth through comprehensive training programs and strategic initiatives. With a rich background in partnering with organizations such as AdoptUSKids, the Children's Bureau, and Health and Human Services, she advocates for the integration of youth voices in policy-making and practice. Jeffery has facilitated national events, delivered impactful keynote speeches, and maintained a commitment to systemic change and community resilience.

Community Expert

latika.jeffery9@dss.virginia.gov

Christine Johnson, VMD, MPVM, PhD, is Professor of Epidemiology and Ecosystem Health and Director of the EpiCenter for Disease Dynamics at the University of California, Davis. Her work is committed to transdisciplinary research to characterize impacts of environmental change on animal and human health and guide public policy to mitigate pandemic threats and conserve biodiversity. She has developed new approaches to characterizing emerging health threats at animal-human interfaces in rapidly changing landscapes that constitute “fault lines” for disease emergence, spillover, and subsequent spread. She leads the EpiCenter for Emerging Infectious Disease Intelligence, one of NIAID’s Centers for Emerging Infectious Disease, together with an international team of scientists investigating drivers for spillover and spread of emerging viruses. She is the Director for NSF’s Center for Pandemic Insights, which is advancing transdisciplinary team science to advance the ability to investigate, understand, and detect the pre-emergence phase of pandemics. She served as US Science Envoy for the Department of State, traveling to four continents to advance science diplomacy and international collaboration. She is a member of the National Academy of Medicine and a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Speaker

ckjohnson@ucdavis.edu

Jessica Jones is a Virginia Cooperative Extension agent and Family and Consumer Sciences Agent for Greensville and Dinwiddie Counties/City of Emporia. During her career Jessica has established many community partnerships with the goal of strengthening families and providing security for children. Her ability to encourage, educate, and inspire created consistent and solid community partnerships with local schools, community organizations, stakeholders, and local faith-based communities.

Community Expert

jessicaj19@vt.edu

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Pinar Keskinocak, PhD, is the William W. George Chair and Professor in the H. Milton Stewart School of Industrial and Systems Engineering at Georgia Tech. She is also co-founder and director of the Center for Health and Humanitarian Systems. Her research focuses on the applications of operations research and management science with societal impact, particularly health and humanitarian applications, supply chain management, and logistics/transportation. Her recent work has addressed infectious disease modeling (including Covid-19, malaria, Guinea worm, pandemic flu), evaluating intervention strategies, and resource allocation; catch-up scheduling for vaccinations; hospital operations management; disaster preparedness and response (e.g., prepositioning inventory); debris management; centralized and decentralized price and lead time decisions.

Speaker

pinar@isye.gatech.edu

Troy Knighton, LPC, EdS, serves at the National Seasonal Flu & IDPIO Program Manager for the Veteran's Administration where he oversees special programs related to hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, pandemic influenza, and other public health outbreaks. He is also a skilled trainer and curriculum developer who has conducted workshops, seminars and presentations in a variety of university settings as well as local, state, and national professional conferences.

Community Expert

troy.knighton@va.gov

Carolyn (Carrie) Kroehler, PhD, is associate director of Virginia Tech's Center for Communicating Science. A biologist, writer, and editor, she teaches a graduate-level Communicating Science course at Virginia Tech and facilitates communicating science workshops for faculty, students, and industry partners. Over her career, much of her work focused on translating research for non-scientists. While raising her children and working with school groups, she came to believe in the power of play, experiential learning, and hands-off teaching. She has put those beliefs to use in helping researchers learn to communicate more effectively with people outside their specialties. Dr. Kroehler's hope is to empower people to listen and learn from one another as we transform our global society into one that sustains all of us and our beautiful, threatened, life-supporting earth.

Speaker

cjkroehl@vt.edu

Stewart Lamerdin serves as a program manager for the National Science Foundation, Directorate for Biological Sciences (BIO) Division of Biological Infrastructure (DBI).

slamerdi@nsf.gov

Lisa M Lee, PhD, MA, MS, serves as Associate Vice President for Research and Innovation and Professor, Population Health Sciences at Virginia Tech. She is an infectious disease epidemiologist and bioethicist who has worked in public health at the state, federal, and global levels for the past 30 years, including 14 years at the US CDC and 5 years at the Presidential Bioethics Commission.

Speaker

lmlee@vt.edu

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Abigail E. Lowe, PhD, is an associate professor in the UNMC College of Public Health where her interests include ethics, health policy, and health security, and her research focuses on ethics in public health emergencies. In March 2020, she convened the Global Center for Health Security Ethics Advisory Committee with national and international experts in disaster and public health emergency ethics to provide guidance on emerging issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The committee has provided ethics consultations to numerous organizations including hospitals, universities, unions, school systems, and public health agencies nationwide.

Speaker

abigail.lowe@unmc.edu

Amber Lowery, MLIS, is Assistant Director for the Roanoke Public Libraries where she manages the Youth and Family Services Department. Her work is primarily focused on promoting reading, developing literacy based programs for youth and building strong relationships with community organizations that can better serve the public's needs.

Community Expert

amber.lowery@roanokeva.gov

Donald K Milton, MD, DrPH, is a Professor Environmental & Occupational Health at the University of Maryland School of Public Health. His contributions include demonstrating an association of increased ventilation with reduced illness absence from work, a mathematical model using indoor carbon dioxide as a measure of infection risk, and the concept of anisotropic viral respiratory infection. He led development of the Gesundheit-II (G-II) a novel exhaled breath bioaerosol collector that enabled detection and measurement of infectious influenza and SARS-CoV-2 viruses in breath and the effectiveness of masks and respirators as source control to prevent airborne infection transmission. He currently leads human studies of influenza virus transmission and the effectiveness of germicidal UV.

Speaker

dmilton@umd.edu

Danielle Montague, MPH, DSL, is a health and wellness program coordinator with the Virginia Rural Health Association. Danielle's work has been centered around health equity in the Southside region with efforts towards filling gaps in rural healthcare among other initiatives. She has also been involved in the Virginia Rural Health Association's Workforce Initiative which is a collaboration with local workforce boards to train people in a variety of health care jobs.

Community Expert

danielle@vrha.org

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T. M. Murali, PhD, is Professor and Associate Department Head for Research in Computer Science at Virginia Tech. He directs the NSF COMPASS Center and the Pandemic Prediction and Prevention Destination Area. Murali's research group develops phenomenological and predictive models dealing with the function, behavior, and properties of large-scale molecular interaction networks in the cell.

Speaker

murali@cs.vt.edu

Maria Murillo-Valdez, MPH, serves as a Virginia Cooperative Extension agent and Regional Coordinator for the Collaborative Opioid Prevention Education program serving the counties of Lancaster, Northumberland, Richmond, and Westmoreland. Maria has 3 years of planning and implementing health and wellness programs for children, adolescents, and adults in diverse communities.

Community Expert

mariam19@vt.edu

Michelle Reed has worked at LGBT Life Center for the past 18 years, is currently the Director of Client Engagement, and has worked in HIV prevention for the past 20 years in various capacities. Ms. Reed completed her BA of Psychology at North Carolina State University in 2002 and completed her MA of Urban Affairs at Norfolk State University in 2017. Connecting with various communities and its members, as well as encouraging positive health outcomes, have always been passions for Ms. Reed. She also looks forward to the day where quality healthcare is equitable and accessible for everyone and the day where people can live their authentic lives in peace.

Community Expert

mreed@lgbtlifecenter.org

Michelle Rodgers, PhD, serves as the Project Direct for the Extension Collaborative on Immunization Teaching and Engagement (E.X.C.I.T.E.) This adult immunization education effort by Cooperative Extension, which is part of the Land Grant Universities (LGUs) is funded through an interagency agreement of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the United States Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture and implemented through the Extension Foundation. Michelle spearheads this national project starting in 2022 while serving as the associate dean and director of extension at the University of Delaware Cooperative Extension.. During the COVID pandemic, extension agents, trusted community messengers from 72 LGUs, were involved in the delivery of immunization education to increase vaccine confidence in medically underserved and rural audiences. The project continues with the same audience focus but now includes all adult immunization education integrated into ongoing extension education programs.

Community Expert

michellerodgers@extension.org

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Roopal Saran, MA, JD, is the executive director of the English Empowerment Center in Falls Church where she oversees strategic planning, management, and implementation of adult literacy programs teaching adults the basic skills of reading, writing, speaking, and understanding English in order to empower them to participate more fully and confidently in their communities. Before her move to the nonprofit sector, she worked as an attorney representing school districts and state departments of education.

Community Expert

rsaran@englishempowermentcenter.org

Lauren Sauer, MSc, is an Associate Professor at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Her research focuses primarily on human subjects protection in bioemergencies, emergency research operations, natural disaster preparedness and response, and outbreak response operations. She previously served as Director of Operations for the Johns Hopkins Office of Critical Event Preparedness and Response and the Director of Research for the Johns Hopkins Biocontainment Unit where she ran the inpatient COVID-19 biobank and served on the COVID-19 research steering committee for JHU. She also previously served as the JHU focal point for their partnership with the World Health Organization's Global Outbreak and Alert Response Network.

Speaker

lsauer@unmc.edu

Joanna Shisler, PhD, serves as a program director for the National Science Foundation, Directorate for Biological Sciences, Division of Integrative and Organismal Systems. A microbiologist with 20 years of experience, her primary area of interest is in virology. She is current a program director in the PSS cluster of IOS and the Predictive Intelligence for Pandemic Prevention Phase II (PIPP Phase II Centers Program).

jshisler@nsf.gov

Paul R. Skolnik, MD, FACP, FIDSA, is an infectious diseases physician, professor, and chair of the Department of Basic Science Education at the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine (VTCSOM). He helped to guide the Ebola Virus response while chair of medicine at the University of Connecticut and the COVID-19 response in southwestern Virginia while chair of medicine at Carilion Clinic and VTCSOM. His research has focused on immune response during viral infections, including HIV/AIDS, and clinical trials of antiviral agents, especially during his time at Tufts University and Boston University.

Speaker

paskolni@vt.edu

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Kerry M. Smith, PhD candidate, is a writing instructor and graduate student at George Mason University. She researches hostile rhetoric in legal language and online communication. Her other work has been on the transfer of learning in writing classrooms and equitable course design and pedagogy. She designs and teaches first-year writing courses with emphasis on digital and multimodal literacies.

Community Expert

ksmit37@gmu.edu

Katie Strong, MS, RD, is a Virginia Cooperative Extension Area Specialized Agent, Community Engaged Health, serving VCE's Northeast District. She cultivates community health and wellness educational programs, giving more Virginians access to these vital resources. This, in turn, strengthens communities and the commonwealth, helping people prevent chronic disease, handle food safely, and spend money wisely.

Community Expert

kstrong@vt.edu

Natalie Talis, MPH, is the Population Health Manager for the Alexandria, VA Health Department. In this role, she works with residents and community partners to identify local health issues and develop policy and system solutions. During the COVID response, she served as the Health Department's Public Information Officer and Health Equity Officer, leading communications, outreach, and supporting the design of equitable mass testing and vaccination efforts.

Community Expert

Natalie.Talis@vdh.virginia.gov

Marco Thomas, MNS, CCHW, is the Lead CHW Mentor at CHW Strength working to empower communities through health leadership. Community Health Workers (CHWs) are pivotal public health advocates, integrating culturally relevant health strategies within their communities and acting as vital links between health services and the public. His skill set helps teams seamlessly integrate practical strategies, ensuring that they are not only understood but also effectively implemented.

Community Expert

Mentor@CHWStrength.com

Leslie Thornton-O'Brien, MA, serves as Project Manager for the U.S. NSF COMPASS Center and Program Coordinator for the Pandemic Prediction and Prevention Destination Area at Virginia Tech. She is a strategic communications specialist who has worked in the higher education sector for over 20 years.

Speaker

lthornto@vt.edu

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Todd Treangen, PhD, is an associate professor in computer science and bioengineering at Rice University where he strives to develop efficient and accurate computational solutions to emerging problems in these fields. His primary research interests lie at the intersection of computer science and genomics, and his research group is focused on the development of novel computational methods and software tools with relevance to real-time monitoring of microbial community dynamics, infectious disease, and biothreats.

Speaker

treangen@rice.edu

Alexandre White, PhD, is an assistant professor in sociology at Johns Hopkins University where his work examines the social effects of infectious epidemic outbreaks in both historical and contemporary settings as well as the global mechanisms that produce responses to outbreak. His book project, *Epidemic Orientalism: A Social History of International Disease Response*, explores the historical roots of international responses to epidemic threats and examines how the risk of epidemic outbreak is determined as well as what sort of threats trigger responses and interventions from the World Health Organization (WHO).

Speaker

alexandrewhite@jhu.edu

Eric Young, JD, is the County Administrator for Tazewell County. The county administrator is responsible for ensuring the decisions of the Board of Supervisors are followed and to ensure the county runs efficiently. A graduate of the University of Virginia School of Law, Young previously served as the Tazewell County Attorney for 12 years.

Community Expert

eric.young@tazewellcounty.org