



**COMMUNITY
CONNECTIONS**

First Annual Partnership Convening

*Transformation •
Connections • Collaboration*

**October 23, 2025
2:30 – 5:30 PM**

**The Spire
750 First Street NE, #110, Washington, DC**

PROGRAM

OPENING REMARKS **Damien Cabezas**
President & CEO

**CONSUMER
TESTIMONIAL** **Andre Evans**

KEYNOTE **Christina Henderson**
DC Councilmember, Chair of the Council's
Committee on Health, as the Keynote
Speaker

FIRESIDE CHAT **Jeremy Attermann**, MSW, Senior Director
of Partnerships & New Business Ventures
National Council for Mental Wellbeing

Ed Barry, Chief Executive Officer,
Capital Bank

Dr. Ayanna Bennett, MD, MSPH, FAAP,
Director of the District of Columbia
Department of Health DC Health

Karen M. Dale, RN, MSN Market President
& CEO, AmeriHealth Caritas DC

**AWARDS
PRESENTATIONS**

Lifetime Achievement Award
Joe Cullinan

Bold & Courageous Partners of the Year
Capital One Bank &
Dr. Beverley Wheeler, DC Central
Kitchen, Chief Knowledge Officer

Consumer of the Year
Marcia Lee Hughes

CLOSING **Damien Cabezas**, President & CEO



Damien Cabezas, MPH, MSW **President & Chief Executive Officer**

Damien Cabezas leads Community Connections with a clear vision: that every person deserves access to care, housing, and opportunities to thrive. As President & CEO, he guides the agency's full range of behavioral health, housing, and integrated care programs, ensuring they reflect the mission of healing, stability, and justice for all.

With more than 20 years of leadership in healthcare and behavioral health, Damien is known for strengthening organizations and expanding access to underserved communities. Before joining Community Connections, he served as CEO of Horizon Behavioral Health in Virginia and President of Mercy Care in Atlanta, and held senior roles at community-based organizations in New York, California, and Massachusetts. Across each role, his focus has remained the same: removing barriers and building stronger, healthier communities.

Damien's leadership has been recognized through appointments to national and state advisory groups, including the Virginia Latino Advisory Commission, the National Quality Forum's CMS Health Equity Advisory Group, and the Massachusetts 988 Commission. He holds a Master of Public Health in Policy and Management from New York Medical College and a Master of Social Work from Fordham University.



Keynote Speaker

Councilmember Christina Henderson

Christina Henderson serves as an At-Large member of the Council of the District of Columbia and chairs the Committee on Health. Since her election in 2020, she has championed legislation to improve maternal and reproductive health, strengthen worker protections, combat food insecurity, and promote safer streets and good governance. A seasoned policy professional, Christina previously advised U.S. Senators, DC Councilmembers, and state and local education leaders on key issues impacting families and children. She earned her BA in Political Science from Furman University and her Master in Public Affairs from Princeton University. A proud member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and co-founder of the Black Women's Congressional Alliance, Christina lives in Petworth with her husband and two daughters.

FIRESIDE CHAT



Jeremy Attermann, MSW

Jeremy Attermann, MSW, is the Senior Director of Partnerships & New Business Ventures at the National Council for Mental Wellbeing. In this capacity, he leads national initiatives that strengthen behavioral health systems through collaboration with digital health, technology, and consulting partners. Jeremy has extensive experience designing and implementing programs that build workforce capacity and expand access to care across mental health and substance use services. He also serves on the Board of the Family Centered Treatment Foundation, supporting evidence-based interventions for families in crisis. His work reflects a deep commitment to innovation, partnership, and lasting community impact.



Edward Barry
Capital Bank, CEO

Edward Barry is Chief Executive Officer of Capital Bank, where he has led the company's rapid expansion across the DC area and Baltimore since 2012. Under his leadership, Capital Bank has been recognized among the top-performing banks in the U.S., earning honors such as Product Innovation of the Year by Retail Bankers International and inclusion in SmartCEO's Future 50. Edward's approach emphasizes innovation, customer trust, and long-term partnership. Prior to joining Capital Bank, he held senior positions at Capital One, Bank of America, and E&Y/Capgemini. Deeply committed to community service, Edward serves on the Board of the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

FIRESIDE CHAT



Dr. Ayanna Bennett, MD,
MSPH, FAAP

Dr. Ayanna Bennett, MD, MSPH, FAAP, serves as Director of the DC Department of Health, bringing over two decades of leadership in advancing health equity and systemic reform. Her career spans roles as co-founder of the 3rd Street Youth Center and Clinic in San Francisco and Director of Interdivisional Initiatives at the San Francisco Department of Public Health, where she led integration efforts across research, community engagement, and care delivery. Appointed by Mayor Muriel E. Bowser and confirmed by the DC Council in 2023, Dr. Bennett's work centers on data-driven strategies to improve health outcomes and eliminate disparities. She holds degrees from Stanford University, UC Berkeley, and UC San Francisco, and remains dedicated to creating a healthier, more equitable District.



Karen M. Dale, RN, MSN

Karen M. Dale, RN, MSN, is Market President and CEO of AmeriHealth Caritas DC, where she leads efforts to improve care quality, equity, and access for Medicaid members across the District. With decades of leadership experience, Ms. Dale has championed initiatives addressing maternal health, behavioral health, housing, food insecurity, and care coordination. She also serves as a Commissioner for the DC Access to Justice Commission and sits on several boards, including CRISP, the Greater Washington Community Foundation, and the Institute for Medicaid Innovation. Recognized as a 2025 *Washington Business Journal* Innovator in Health Care, Ms. Dale continues to advance her vision of wellness without barriers through collaborative, community-centered solutions.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



Joseph Cullinan **Senior Advisor to the CEO**

Joseph “Joe” Cullinan serves as Senior Advisor to the CEO at Community Connections, supporting the President & CEO during leadership transitions and providing historical perspective on the agency’s growth and evolution. In this role, Joe continues to strengthen the organization by offering guidance on long-standing practices, while also ensuring smooth continuity as the agency moves forward.

In addition to advising the CEO, Joe oversees the Information Technology department, supports the Electronic Health Record (EHR) system, and provides assistance to the medical billing team. His work ensures that the agency’s core systems run efficiently and effectively, empowering staff to focus on delivering the highest quality of care.

Joe’s career at Community Connections began in 2000, and over the years he has held roles as case manager, clinical supervisor, M.I.S. Manager, psychiatric clinic program manager, and Director of Operations. His unique path also includes earlier careers in retail management, high school teaching, and chaplaincy training after theological studies at the Washington Theological Union. Together, these experiences ground his leadership in both practicality and purpose.



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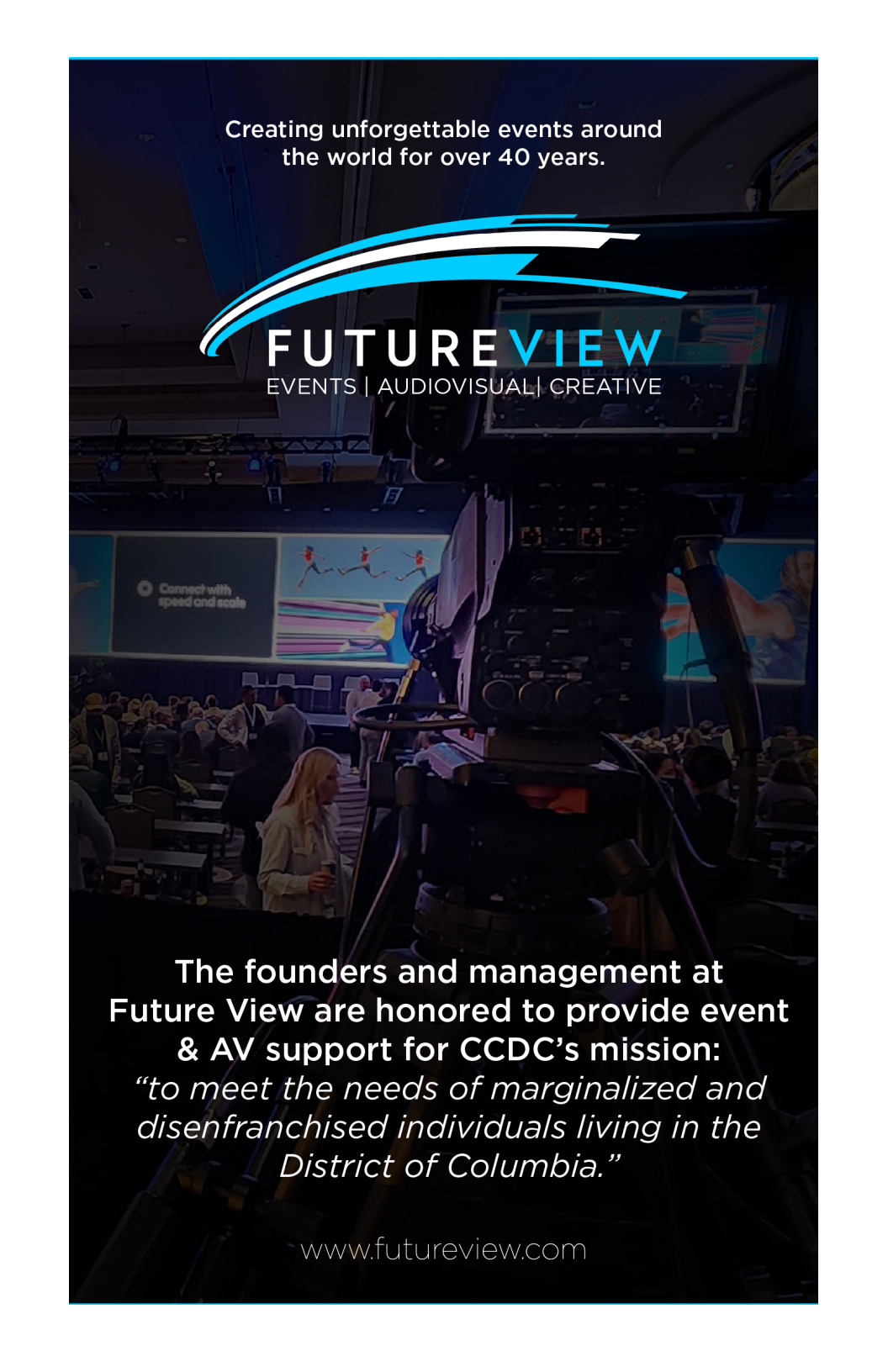
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Epstein Becker Green is a proud Platinum Sponsor of the first annual Community Connections Partnership Celebration, supporting vital programs that bring healing, stability, and hope to our community.

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