



New Fellow Spotlight: Michelle Alletto **Chief Program and Services Officer** **Texas Health and Human Services**

Michelle Alletto serves as the Texas Health and Human Services Chief Program and Services Officer (CPSO). In this role, Michelle provides oversight and support to the programs that make up the full Texas HHS medical and social service array utilized by over 7 million Texans.

Some key programs that Michelle oversees as CPSO include, Medicaid, CHIP, Substance Use Disorder programs, behavioral health services, food assistance programs, women's health programs, and the Health and Specialty Care System, which is comprised of state psychiatric hospitals and state supported living centers for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Michelle has over a decade of experience working in public health and public management. She most recently worked in health policy at the Milbank Memorial Fund, where she advised a multi-state collaborative on Medicaid long-term services reform and identified best practices in Medicaid-financed mental health and substance use disorder services.

Michelle previously served as deputy secretary for the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH). In that position, she provided leadership in several areas, including services for the aging and disabled, mental health and substance use disorder, and public health. Before that, she led maternal and child health initiatives in Louisiana, including serving as the deputy director for the LDH Birth Outcomes Initiative. Alletto was also the assistant director for public policy at the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs in Washington, D.C.

She has a master's degree in public administration from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University.

What are you most looking forward to as a NAPA Fellow?

As a new fellow, I am most looking forward to connecting with people that have the same passion for public service as I do. I'd like to contribute to moving the field forward, making it more inclusive, and supporting colleagues as well as those new to public service.

What inspires you during these challenging times?

A reminder that public service is just that - service. Government workers do of course get compensated for their work. However, how you do the work and the hours you put in are where the call to serve kicks in. You have to rethink "what's always been done" and "normal operating procedures" and rise to the challenges that working in our sector brings. I look around me and see my colleagues getting creative, working hard, and supporting one another and that inspires me to stay at it on the rough days.

What advice can you give to folks beginning careers in public service?

My advice would be to cultivate a good group of mentors. Mine have made all the difference in my career decisions and how I reflect on whether I'm making the difference I want to make or I need to switch gears. Remember that it is a relationship you have to nurture - mentors will likely be busy people but they'll make time for you if you're invested.