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For Immediate Release

Arbor Research Collaborative for Health Announces New Board Members

Leaders in public health and social justice, Deborah Klein Walker, EdD, Med, BA and Gerald M. Croan, SB, MCP join Arbor Research's Board of Directors



Deborah Klein Walker, EdD, Med, BA

February 8, 2022 - Ann Arbor, MI - Arbor Research Collaborative for Health announced today the appointment of Dr. Deborah Klein Walker and Gerald M. Croan to the Arbor Research Board of Directors. Dr. Walker is a behavioral sciences researcher, public health leader, and advocate for public health and social justice, with more than 45 years of experience conducting research and evaluation in community settings and developing and implementing programs and policies at the local, state and federal levels. Mr. Croan has over 40 years of research and consulting expertise and has been a leader in program strategy development, technical assistance and evaluation for multiple US health and social programs for the Department of Health and Human Services, Justice, Labor; Education; and the US military's personnel and family support programs.



Gerald M. Croan, SB, MCP

In their current roles Dr. Walker is an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Community Health Sciences at Boston University School of Public Health and in the Department of Public Health and Community Medicine in the Tufts University School of Medicine. Mr. Croan advises government, non-profits, and businesses, and serves as a Senior Fellow at Third Sector Capital Partners, a non-profit focused on outcomes-driven programming and social innovation financing for a broad spectrum of health and social programs.

“These latest appointments are among the best and brightest thinkers in public health. They believe in our mission and have strong histories of transforming lives through their leadership. We are delighted to welcome them to our Board,” said Dr. Chris Spera, President and Chief Executive Officer of Arbor Research Collaborative for Health.

Prior to joining the Arbor Research Board of Directors, Dr. Walker was Vice President and Senior Fellow at Abt Associates for 13 years after spending 16 years at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, where she was the Maternal and Child Health Title V Director, Acting Director for Substance Abuse Services, and Associate Commissioner for Programs and Prevention.

“Arbor Research’s mission is strong and I’m looking forward to helping leverage and expand their work to advance solutions to improve the health and well-being of individuals and populations facing chronic health issues,” said Dr. Walker. “It’s a pleasure and privilege to be part of an engaged and impactful board of directors.”

Dr. Walker is currently a Board Member of Family Voices, and the Institute for Community Health and on the Editorial Board of the Maternal and Child Health Journal. She was a faculty member for over ten years at the Harvard School of Public Health and Harvard Graduate School of Education; a former president of the American Public Health Association, the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs, and the Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice (formerly, the American Orthopsychiatric Association); a founder of New England SERVE and the Research Consortium on Children with Chronic Conditions; a former Board Member of the Massachusetts Public Health Association and Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies; and a former Trustee of the Cambridge Health Alliance and chair of its Cambridge Health Department subcommittee.

“I’m extremely excited to have Dr. Walker join our world-class board of directors, and help us continue expanding our scope of work,” said Arbor Research President and chief executive officer, Dr. Chris Spera. “Her expertise and research background will help accelerate our research in ways relevant to the research community, health care workers, and patients, and inspiring to our partners.”

Dr. Walker has authored over 100 peer reviewed articles, three books and a number of commentaries. She has been honored by organizations representing maternal and child health, disabilities and at-risk populations.

“Deborah’s and Jerry’s backgrounds and mission focus will complement the Arbor Research Board’s strength and existing skills and help us continue to expand our impact as we focus on improving quality and access to care,” said Marianne Udow-Phillips, MHSA, Chair of Arbor Research Collaborative for Health Board of Directors. “We are delighted to welcome both of them to the Arbor Research Board of Directors.”

Mr. Croan brings a range of experience having worked in mental health, early childhood education, child health and homelessness with non-profit service providers and foundations, as well as both state and local governments. Before starting Caliber Associates, Mr. Croan worked in the PA Department of Justice directing the juvenile justice and delinquency prevention program and led a program evaluation division. He has served on numerous national non-profit and university boards and advisory councils, and currently serves on the Boards of Communities in Schools and Altarum Institute.

“Jerry has a strong legacy of transforming lives and is passionate about Arbor’s mission. The Board and I are thrilled to have his partnership to guide Arbor Research’s future of building upon our research leadership” says Dr. Chris Spera.

Founder of Caliber Associates, Mr. Croan served as its Chief Executive Officer from 1983 to 2005 when it was sold to ICF, a \$1B international consulting organization focused on health and social programs, IT, energy, and infrastructure. From 2005 to 2013, Mr. Croan served as ICF’s Executive Vice President, directed two major operating groups, and led Corporate Strategy.

“I am impressed with Arbor Research’s track record for conducting high quality research to improve patient outcomes and look forward to working with the Board and management to expand the impact of its work,” Croan said.

About Arbor Research

Arbor Research Collaborative for Health, a non-profit organization based in Ann Arbor, Michigan, was founded in 1997 with deep expertise in clinical practice, health economics, public policy, database management and integration, biostatistical analysis, and project coordination. For over 25 years, Arbor Research has engaged in health outcomes research on chronic disease and end-stage organ failure, including major studies in epidemiology and public health, such as the international Dialysis Outcomes and Practice Patterns Study (DOPPS).

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