

2024 Massachusetts ME/CFS & FM Association Board of Directors



President: Susan Buckley, B.E.S., has twenty-five years of experience in publishing, with the last fifteen years in scholarly publishing. She is currently Acquisitions Editor for Education and Science Fiction at The MIT Press. She has volunteered with the Association in event planning and volunteer coordination, served as Treasurer from 2020 to 2023, and as Co-President in 2023. She lives in Cambridge, MA.



Treasurer: Leah Williams, Ph.D. (Physical Chemistry), is a Principal Scientist and Vice President at Aerodyne Research, Inc. where she studies air pollution. She has served on the Association board in the past, as Treasurer from 2016 to 2018 and as President from 2019 to 2020. Leah has also served on the board of the American Association for Aerosol Research as Treasurer and President.



Clerk: Kathryn Ruhf, M.Ed., M.S., has worked in agriculture and food systems for over 35 years. She directed the New England Small Farm Institute (1987-2004), the Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (1992-2002) and Land for Good (2004-2015) where she continues to serve as Senior Program Advisor. Kathy brings experience in nonprofit fundraising, organizational management, program development, communications, and advocacy at local, state and federal levels. She lives in Belchertown, MA.



Board Member: Patricia Woods, R.N., M.S.N., is a clinical research nurse manager at a major Boston teaching hospital. During her 40 years of practice, she has been involved in research in the areas of cardiac medicine, Alzheimer's disease and spinal cord injuries. She is an experienced, successful grant writer, and has authored a number of peer-reviewed publications. In addition to her work with the Association, she currently serves on an institutional research review committee that provides scientific, ethical and regulatory oversight of human-subject research. She has served on the board since 2019.



Board Member: Hayla Sluss, Ph.D. (Biochemistry), was born in Brazil. She is an Assistant Professor at the Univ. of Mass. Chan School of Medicine, Worcester, MA. Throughout her research career, she has researched the role of the tumor suppressor p53 in the childhood disease Ataxia telangiectasia (A-T), mitochondrial function and metabolism. She also applies her expertise in stress pathways to the study of ME/CFS and related diseases. Dr. Sluss also helps develop medical education in infection-associated chronic illness. She has served on the board since 2022.



Past President: Phil Chernin, B.S. (Civil Engineering), is a professional engineer and management consultant who advised corporate, government and non-profit Boards of Director on best practices in environmental and infrastructure management at the local, regional, and national levels. His expertise includes business process re-engineering and the development of policies and procedures to support risk-based decision-making. He is recently retired. He served as Treasurer in 2019 and as President from 2021 to 2022 and as co-President in 2023.

Directors Emeriti:

Ken Casanova, B.A. (Government), has spent his career in community organizing and anti-poverty efforts, including serving as Welfare and Tenant Housing Development Organizer and Legislative Advocate for Children. Ken has been an active member of the Association Board since 1990, serving as President twice, Vice President, and Treasurer. In Patient Services he has served in physician referrals, disability counseling and wrote our Disability Handbook.

Bonnie Gorman, B.S.N., M.S. (Human Services), is a retired nurse and public health consultant and spent her career developing community health programs in the Boston area, including at the Martha Eliot Health Center, MCI Norfolk, ESAC Boston and Levine Associates. She founded the Massachusetts ME/CFS & FM Association in 1985 and served on the board until 2003. She continues to be an active volunteer.

Alan Gurwitt, M.D. (Psychiatry and Child Psychiatry), is a retired child psychiatrist. He served as President of the Association from 2008 to 2012 and as Chair of the Association's Medical Advisory Committee from 2008 to 2019. While still in practice, he saw nearly 100 adults and children referred for evaluation for ME/CFS. In 1992 he helped write the first primer for ME/CFS (then called CFIDS) which was published by our Association. He was the initiator and an author of the 2012 and 2014 adult primers published by the International Association for CFS/ME and the pediatric primer published in 2017 by Frontiers in Pediatrics.

Charmian Proskauer, M.S. (Cell Biology), began her career in medical research and after 15 years transitioned into financial services. She served as President of the Association from 2012 to 2018 and as Director at Large from 2019 to 2020. In addition, she chairs the U.S. Action Working Group, a collaborative group of ME/CFS organizations and advocates representing over 25 states across the U.S.

*** Each member of the board has a personal connection to ME/CFS.*

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