Ken Ulman, County Executive, Howard County

In 2010, Ulman was sworn in for his second term as County Executive of Howard County. As one of his first actions as County Executive, Ulman created the Howard County Office of Environmental Sustainability with a mission to protect and enhance natural resources and the quality of life in our community through the conservation, preservation and restoration of our land, air and water.

In addition to environmental issues, Ulman has a strong commitment to public health. At a young age, he witnessed his younger brother battle and beat cancer. Driven by this personal experience and the belief that everyone should have access to affordable and preventive healthcare, Ulman and Health Officer Dr. Peter Beilenson launched Healthy Howard.

In 2008, Howard County became one of the first in the nation to offer affordable access to health care for uninsured residents. The Healthy Howard Access Plan has earned numerous awards, including the “Government Innovation Award” from the Maryland Society of Public Administration and was the winner of the “Bright Ideas” award from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Last year the Ulman Administration led the way on yet another national front – Howard County became the grant sub-recipient responsible for managing $72 million of the $115 million awarded to the state of Maryland to direct the Inter-County Broadband Network (ICBN), a collaborative intergovernmental consortium comprised of 10 central-Maryland jurisdictions.

In 2011, Ulman was named “Regional Visionary” by the Greater Baltimore Committee for his innovative approach to governing and was also recognized as an “Innovator of the Year” for a second time by The Daily Record for his efforts with broadband. For three consecutive years, Howard Magazine readers voted the Executive “Best Elected Official.” Ulman was also named the 2009 and 2010 “Dignitary of the Year” by the American Red Cross for his Summer of Service initiative. In 2008, The Daily Record recognized Ulman and Health Officer Dr. Peter Beilenson with the “Innovator of the Year Award” for the Healthy Howard Health Plan, and Ulman was among Baltimore Magazine’s “15 Most Intriguing People of 2007.”

He is a member of numerous boards and committees including:

- Board of Directors for Maryland Association of Counties (President)
- National Associate of Counties Board (Vice-Chair of Health Policy)
- National Democratic County Officials (Treasurer)
- Democratic National Committee
- Baltimore Metropolitan Council Board
- Baltimore Regional Transportation Board
- Maryland Highway Safety Foundation Board
- Board of Trustees for the Greater Washington Initiative
- The Comprehensive Energy Outlook Advisory Committee
- Board of Directors of the Economic Alliance of Greater Baltimore
- Board of Visitors for the R. Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center, University of Maryland Medical System

Ken Ulman is a graduate of The University of Maryland, College Park and earned his law degree from Georgetown University Law Center. He and his wife, Jacqueline, reside in Columbia with their two daughters, Maddie and Lily.
Dr. Maura Rossman, County Health Officer, Howard County

Dr. Rossman assumed the role of County Health Officer in October 2012 after Dr. Peter Beilenson stepped down from the position. Dr. Rossman has been with the Howard County Health Department since 2007 and served as Deputy Health Officer for Clinical Services from 2010 until her promotion earlier this year. As Deputy Health Officer, she was responsible for administrative (programmatic and fiscal) oversight to all clinical operations. From 2007 – 2010, she was the Health Department’s Medical Director responsible for the medical oversight of all the County’s Health Department clinics. Prior to joining the Howard County Health Department, Dr. Rossman served for a decade as Medical Director for Baltimore City’s School Health program.

Dr. Rossman specializes in pediatrics, and presently serves on several professional and community boards and organizations. She is married, has two adult children, and is a resident of Ellicott City.
Dr. Renee Foose, Superintendent of the Howard County Public School System

Renee A. Foose, Ed.D. made history by becoming the first female Superintendent of the Howard County Public School System, effective July 1, 2012. She was unanimously selected by the Howard County Board of Education to a four-year contract to lead the school district with over 50,000 students and 8,000 employees.

As Superintendent, Dr. Foose manages a $703.7 million budget, oversees business and instructional operations covering 82 schools and facilities, develops strategic and long-range objectives for the school system, and maintains partnerships with parents, businesses and the community at large.

Prior to coming to Howard County, Dr. Foose spent the past two decades serving the state of Maryland, including 15 years in Maryland public schools. She is credited with implementing numerous education initiatives aimed at closing the achievement gap and preparing children for college and the workforce. Dr. Foose is widely respected for her success in building collaborative rapport with stakeholders and union officials to implement reform efforts and increase teacher professional capacity.

Dr. Foose has a solid foundation in the education arena. She has served as a classroom teacher, assistant principal, principal, associate superintendent, and most recently as the deputy superintendent of Baltimore County Public Schools. Dr. Foose has been involved with numerous education reform initiatives. She has a proven success rate in moving schools from No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the Maryland State Department of Education watch lists to high achieving status.

From 2006-2011, Dr. Foose served Montgomery County Public Schools with superintendent and nationally-recognized education reform advocate Dr. Jerry D. Weast. While principal of the Earle B. Wood Middle School, she is credited with implementing an innovative middle school reform model. Dr. Foose was later promoted to director of school performance and then associate superintendent during her tenure in Montgomery County.

In addition to her work in Baltimore and Montgomery Counties public schools, Dr. Foose served as a school administrator in Washington and Frederick Counties. Prior to beginning her career in education, Dr. Foose proudly served as a Maryland State Trooper for six years.

Dr. Foose received a doctorate of education from the University of Delaware, a Master of Business Administration and Master of Science from Loyola University, and a Bachelor of Science from Towson University.
Nicolette (Nikki) Highsmith Vernick, Horizon Foundation President & CEO

Nicolette (Nikki) Highsmith Vernick is President & Chief Executive Officer of The Horizon Foundation. The Horizon Foundation is an independent health philanthropy dedicated to improving the health and wellness of people living and working in Howard County, Maryland. Its strategic priorities are promoting healthy lifestyles and increasing access to health care services.

Ms. Highsmith Vernick cares passionately for improving health and health care for vulnerable Americans and has almost 20 years of health policy and philanthropic experience. Before her tenure at the Foundation, she served as Senior Vice President for Program at the Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS). CHCS is a nationally recognized center on improving care for beneficiaries of this country's publicly financed health care programs. CHCS received support from major health care philanthropies including The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Commonwealth Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and the California HealthCare Foundation, corporate community benefit programs, and the federal government.

Ms. Highsmith Vernick has led quality and equity work in state capitols all across the country. She has brought together disparate stakeholders, including Medicaid agencies, private payers, providers, community organizations, state departments of health, and social service agencies to improve health outcomes and achieve common health care reform objectives. Ms. Highsmith Vernick has served as Project Director, Deputy Project Director, and Principal Investigator for many national philanthropic programs, including the Medicaid Managed Care Program, which has given over $15 million in grants to states. Ms. Highsmith Vernick sits on several national committees and advisory groups related to health care redesign and quality, including for the National Committee for Quality Assurance, the National Quality Forum, and the Agency for Health Care Research and Policy, and has published frequently.

Prior to joining CHCS, she was the Deputy Director of the Medicaid Managed Care Program for the Massachusetts Medicaid Program, worked as a senior Medicaid analyst during the Clinton Administration at the Executive Office of the President, U.S. Office of Management and Budget, and was a professional staff member for U.S. Congressman Michael A. Andrews of Texas.

Ms. Highsmith Vernick holds a master's degree in public administration from American University, and a bachelor's degree in history from the University of Texas. She lives in Ellicott City with her husband and two children, Zach and Ellie.
Reverend Robert Turner, Senior Pastor, St. John Baptist Church, representative from People Acting Together in Howard County (PATH)

In 1993, Reverend Robert Turner was a guest preacher and pastoral candidate at St. John Baptist Church in Columbia, MD. Just a few months later, the congregation called him to be their pastor.

Rev. Turner is Vice-Chair of the Board of Directors of Healthy Howard, the county initiative aimed at creating a public health model that can improve the health and well being of every resident.

Rev. Turner has a Bachelor’s Degree in Political Science from Boston University, a Masters of Divinity from Gordon Conwell Theological School and Doctor of Ministry from New York Theological School, focusing on church-based community development. He and his wife, Kimberly, have two school-aged children.

People Acting Together in Howard County

People Acting Together in Howard (PATH) is a multi-racial, multi-faith, strictly non-partisan, County-wide citizens’ organization, rooted in local congregations and associations. PATH is affiliated with the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), the oldest and largest national, congregation-based, community organizing network in the United States.

Founded more than 50 years ago, the IAF works with more than 60 community organizations like PATH across the United States, and in Canada, Germany, and the United Kingdom. These organizations have produced impressive results in training thousands of ethnically, culturally, and economically diverse leaders to take action on community, city, and state issues.

PATH's Agenda comes from the top issues raised in thousands of face-to-face conversations throughout the county each year. They include:

- **Jobs:** Create green jobs in Howard County, particularly for students and young adults.
- **Aging in Place:** Increase the number of Medicaid Waivers for Older Adults to give seniors options to stay in their homes, avoid institutionalization before it is necessary, and save the state money.
- **Health Care**
- **Affordable Housing**
- **Usury:** Address the high interest rates on credit cards and loans that are gauging families and individuals in our community.
Example of “healthcare victory” from PATH:
Over 300 PATH leaders went door-to-door and spoke to 4,380 people face-to-face to help those going without health care get free or affordable coverage. They found 605 people going without healthcare and helped 395 people sign up for the care they needed through the Healthy Howard Plan and other programs run by the state and federal government. This is equal to bringing approximately $2.4 million in healthcare coverage to Howard County for just the first year people are covered.
Siri Neerchal, Student Council President, Burleigh Manor Middle School

Siri Neerchal is an eighth grader and the current President of the Student Council at Burleigh Manor Middle School (BMSS).

Before being elected to the Student Council, she was a Student Ambassador and a member of the Newsletter Committee. Neerchal was the winner of the Burleigh Manor Middle School Spelling Bee in 2010 and 2011 and the second place winner of the Howard County Spelling Bee in 2010. She placed eighth in the 2012 Baltimore-Chesapeake Chapter MathCOUNTS competition and first in two multimedia competitions at the county and state levels.

As President of the Student Council, she heads meetings and is often responsible for representing the Student Council and the student body at various events. The BMMS Student Council has worked, and is working, to encourage all students to lead healthy lives. Due to this commitment, Burleigh Manor Middle School recently achieved the distinction of “Healthy School” by Healthy Howard.

Neerchal is a violinist and violist and has played in local youth orchestras for the past several years. She is also a Carnatic (South Indian classical) vocalist and violinist. She is an active volunteer at Chinmaya Mission, Washington Regional Center and a youth editor of its bimonthly magazine.

Siri lives in Ellicott City, Maryland with her parents and her older brother.