



WEBINAR GUEST BIOS

Data and strategies for disability equity and inclusion

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Bonnielin Swenor

Founding director

Johns Hopkins Disability Health Research Center

Endowed professor of Disability Health and Justice

Johns Hopkins School of Nursing

Dr. Bonnielin Swenor is the endowed professor of Disability Health and Justice at the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing with joint appointments at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine Wilmer Eye Institute and Departments of Epidemiology and Health Policy and Management at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. She is the founding

director of the [Johns Hopkins Disability Health Research Center](#), which uses data-driven approaches to shift the paradigm from “living with a disability” to “thriving with a disability.” Motivated by her personal experience with disability, her work focuses on advancing health equity for people with disabilities, promoting disability inclusion and accessibility in research, and developing evidence-based and disability-inclusive policies. Swenor has provided advice and expertise to multiple organizations and agencies, including the World Health Organization, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Governors Association. Her work has been published in leading academic journals including the New England Journal of Medicine, the Journal of the American Medical Association, and the Lancet, and has been featured in multiple news outlets including the New York Times, The Washington Post and TIME magazine. Swenor also has a track record of translating research into policy change, as she played a pivotal role in efforts that led the NIH to designate people with disabilities as a health disparity population.



Kimberly Tissot **President and chief executive officer** **Able SC**

Kimberly Tissot proudly serves as the president and chief executive officer of Able SC where she guides the staff in applying the philosophy of independent living to real situations. She believes in the value of individualized and community-based empowerment as she wants people to recognize their full potential. Under Kimberly's leadership, Able SC has experienced years of growth and has become a nationally recognized Center for Independent Living. Her road to disability rights began at an early age after having her leg amputated from a rare childhood cancer,

alveolar rhabdomyosarcoma. Tissot began deciding her style of mobility, becoming the first soccer player with a disability in her town and speaking up anytime she was treated differently. She has over 20 years of experience advocating for disability inclusion on local, state and federal levels, and internationally.

Tissot holds a bachelor's degree in human development from Boston University, Wheelock College of Education, and a Master of Social Work from the University of South Carolina. In 2017, Tissot led passage of progressive legislation in South Carolina, "Persons with Disabilities Right to Parent Act," and in 2018 and 2022, ending subminimum wage in South Carolina. She mentors other Centers for Independent Living across the nation. Tissot also serves as an executive director mentor to other South Carolina nonprofit organizations via the state's nonprofit association. In addition to Tissot's role at Able SC, she has successfully held multiple state-appointed responsibilities and serves on various state and national committees. Tissot was also the mastermind behind several statewide initiatives that have led to major systems change in South Carolina. Those efforts include SC's first statewide youth transition conference, Advocacy Day for Access and Independence, SC Disability Employment Coalition, and SC Disability Partners in Disasters.

Tissot's special interests include parenting with a disability, Americans with Disabilities Act/civil rights, engaging in early youth transition, universal design, developing new disability rights leaders, legislative disability rights advocacy, and advancing disability employment and awareness. When Tissot isn't at Able SC, she is making precious memories with her husband and son!