

MEET THE IOWA

LEADERSHIP BOARD

2024-2025

Dr. Alicia Gerke is committed to saving lives through the improvement of lung care throughout Iowa. She takes care of patients whose lives are greatly affected by cough, shortness of breath, and decreased function due to life-limiting lung disease. During her time on the Local Leadership Board, she hopes to continue to advocate, educate, and participate in fundraising events to provide necessary services and education to Iowans suffering from lung disease. In her spare time, she enjoys tennis, puzzles, reading, and jogging.



Alicia Gerke, MD, MBA
Division of Pulmonary Diseases
University of Iowa Hospitals & Clinics
Board Chair



Kyla Routson
Sr. Project Manager
Holmes Murphy
Vice Chair

Kyla Routson joined the American Lung Association in memory of her father, Jerry Kiester, who passed away in 2019 from COPD. Jerry had told her that his only regret in life was starting smoking. He was never able to quit. This is why she is passionate about the Lung Association's prevention and cessation efforts, particularly in preventing vaping among youth.

In addition to her father's legacy, her oldest daughter, Paige, has asthma, and her husband is a firefighter and an advocate for lung health in the fire community. During her time on the Local Leadership Board, she hopes to impact advocacy efforts that support and further the mission of the Lung Association while also addressing the issue of vaping in schools, promoting awareness of the Lung Association, and raising funds through the Fight for Air Climb.

Outside of her work with the Lung Association, she enjoys various outdoor activities such as running, golf, tennis, and playing sports with her kids.

Dr. Thomas Gross is a Pulmonologist. His passion for respiratory medicine led him to join the American Lung Association Local Leadership Board, where he strives to promote education, research, and advocacy related to lung health. Dr. Gross's involvement with the American Lung Association began in 1987 when he received a Fellowship training grant. Since then, he has been actively engaged with the organization in various capacities. He believes that by serving on the Local Leadership Board, he can influence policies at the local and national levels, positively impacting the lives of those affected by lung diseases. Dr. Gross enjoys cooking, traveling, and outdoor recreation in his spare time.



Thomas Gross, MD
Division of Pulmonary Diseases
U of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics



John Bergman, CPM Emeritus
President
SPMC Global

John Bergman was motivated to join the Local Leadership Board to help defeat lung disease. A close friend's lung cancer diagnosis ignited his passion for the cause. He has had the honor of being the guy who said yes to the inaugural Fight For Air Climb in Iowa. Participating in the event for over twenty years and seeing the amount of money raised has given him immense satisfaction. As a Board member, he aims to raise awareness and money to support the mission. In his spare time, he enjoys spending quality time with his six grandchildren, serving as a football official, and engaging in running and biking for exercise and competition.

Board Purpose:

The purpose of the Local Leadership Board is to enhance the American Lung Association's presence in the community, promote lung health advocacy, and increase resources to support local programs and services. Through their involvement, Local Leadership Board members significantly impact the Association's initiatives, including programs, services, public policy, research, and revenue generation.

Amber Lenhardt is passionate about the prevention of lung disease. Her father is a lifelong smoker, and she has witnessed first-hand the impact that smoking cigarettes have had on his health. She hopes to contribute her time, skills, and expertise to further initiatives toward education and prevention of lung disease. She enjoys outdoor activities, traveling to new places, Kansas City Chiefs Football, and watching her sons excel in their personal endeavors.



Amber Lenhardt
Chief Financial Officer
The Iowa Clinic



Jeanie McCarville Kerber, PhD
Dean of Health and Public Services
DMACC

Dr. Jeanie McCarville Kerber's motivation for joining the American Lung Association Local Leadership Board stems from both personal and professional interests. Her mother's diagnosis with lung cancer and COPD, along with her own professional interest in health advocacy and outcomes, inspired her to become involved in the organization.

Dr. Kerber hopes to accomplish greater awareness and better outcomes for individuals affected by lung disease during her time on the Local Leadership Board. Outside of her work, Dr. Kerber enjoys exercising, traveling, animals, and holistic health policy/education. Additionally, she is a wife, mother of three and a fierce advocate for mental health.

Laura Montgomery's motivation to join the Local Board stems from her shared vision of a world free of lung disease. Her personal connection to lung disease includes her daughter and granddaughter, who both have asthma, and her mother, who sadly passed away from COPD at the age of 58. During her time on the Board, she hopes to create more awareness about the importance and need for improved lung health. Beyond her professional pursuits, she cherishes spending quality time with her family.



Laura Montgomery
Executive Assistant
Hubbell Realty Company

Jean M. Rommes is a COPD advocate who believes in the power of sharing lived experiences to make a difference. Diagnosed with COPD nearly 25 years ago, she has learned to live well with the condition and is dedicated to helping others do the same. Jean hopes to contribute to the work of the American Lung Association by making suggestions and adding her lived experience to activities undertaken by the Board. In her free time, she enjoys reading, listening to music, watching TV, and traveling.



Jean Rommes
COPD Patient Advocate
Retired



Denise Waddingham
Director of Councils and Networks
SEMA

Denise Waddingham is committed to raising awareness and funding for lung diseases through her involvement with the American Lung Association of Iowa. Inspired by her mother, Marcia Johnson, who lost her 15-year battle with COPD, Denise has climbed the Fight for Air Climb in her memory since 2018. In 2019, she formed a family and friends team, Team Marcia Marcia Marcia, to continue honoring her mother's legacy.

Serving on the Local Leadership Board, Denise seeks to gain a deeper understanding of the organization's processes and contribute to efforts that support individuals suffering from lung disease, their caregivers, and family members. Her top priority is raising awareness. She wants people to understand the efforts and help provided to all.

Beyond her advocacy work, Denise enjoys spending time with her family, reading, and walking three miles a day with her dog, Sarge. Coffee also holds a special place in her heart.

Katie Vine is a passionate advocate for lung health and prevention. Her personal mission aligns with the American Lung Association's mission to save the lives of those living with lung disease. In 2022, Katie's father was diagnosed with Stage 3b Squamous Cell Carcinoma and previously with COPD, which inspired her to become more involved in lung health advocacy. After enduring extensive treatment, her father is now in remission!



Katie Vine

Director of Philanthropy
Girl Scouts of Greater Iowa

Katie hopes to become a larger advocate within Iowa for lung health, educational and prevention programming to reduce the number of people living with lung diseases. Additionally, she is passionate about board development and nonprofit fundraising. She would love to utilize her skills to grow funding for the American Lung Association in Iowa and the engagement of the leadership board itself. Katie lives in Ankeny, Iowa, with her husband and three children, Jensen, Andersen, & Hayes. She enjoys spending time with her family outdoors, trying new breweries, traveling, and spending time with her parents and five siblings.



Kasey Vogel

Director of Marketing and Business
Development
BrownWinick Law Firm

Kasey Vogel was motivated to join the Local Leadership Board in honor of her mother, who unfortunately passed away from lung cancer in 2018. As a board member, she aims to create an impact around information and access to resources on Lung Health. Outside of her commitment to the cause, Kasey enjoys traveling, reading, listening to live music, and spending time outdoors.

Mel Appenzeller joined the Local Leadership Board in 2021. As a representative of EMC Insurance Companies, she brings a deep commitment to community engagement, particularly evident through the company's longstanding support of initiatives like the Fight For Air Climb. Mel is dedicated to the Lung Association's mission and is passionate about community and youth education on the dangers of e-cigarettes and vaping.



Mel Appenzeller

Vice President - Actuarial Operations
EMC Insurance Companies