



# Denny's Together: Mental Health/Wellness Series 1

**Saturday**

**April 22, 2023 • 8:30 am – 1:00 pm**

USC Upstate • Spartanburg, SC



## Dear Summit Participants,

Thank you for joining us for our first Denny's Mental Health/Wellness Summit!

This is a groundbreaking day to listen, learn, and engage with each other on a critical issue to the future of every company—and every community.

Over the past three years, the pandemic has forced us to rethink many aspects of our lives. An American Psychological Association survey states that nearly 3 in 5 employees (59%) said they have experienced negative impacts of work-related stress in the past month, and a vast majority (87%) of employees think actions from their employer would help their mental health.

Today's summit is the first of a series of Mental Health/Wellness Summits that Denny's is sponsoring in partnership with:

- The University of South Carolina Upstate (USC Upstate)
- The Institute of Global Health Equity at Meharry Medical College
- The University of North Texas

The purpose today and in our other summits is straightforward:

- Advance the narrative around mental health issues and its impact within the workplace and educational environments.
- Support the workforce, educational institutions, and the broader community by recognizing the challenges associated with mental health.
- Facilitate discussions around mental health issues that will uncover real-world strategies within the workplace and colleges by soliciting audience feedback (via surveys) on how to best address and mitigate these issues within the communities they serve.

At Denny's, we love to feed people's bodies, minds, and souls. It is our goal to have everyone leave the summit with a new awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the adverse effects of unrecognized and untreated mental health issues and how they impact the well-being of us all.

Enjoy today's sessions, and we hope you leave with valuable information and tools to help you better manage your mental health and wellness!

Sincerely,



Kelli Valade, CEO, Denny's Corp.

## DISCUSSION PANELS

### Food Connected to Wellness: Mindful Eating

We're all over-inundated coming out of this pandemic. There are things we all need to dive back into ASAP—and when we dive into our “to-do” lists, we often leave caring for our minds and bodies behind. It's easier to plan to eat out rather than in, and while improving, there still aren't a lot of fast but healthy food options out there. Our Mindful Eating discussion will explore the distinction between physical and emotional hunger, teach you how to pay attention to how the food you eat makes you feel emotionally and physically, help you appreciate your food, address and offer mitigating tips to curb disordered eating, and explain how to engage your senses while eating. Mindful Eating can help us all bring our best selves to the table.



### Wellness at Work: Wellness in the Workplace/Community

Studies over the past three years have revealed that the impact of COVID-19 reaches far deeper than our bodies. Depression and anxiety rates are up across every demographic. This reality is not something that employers or educational institutes can or should ignore. Mental health needs to be taken as seriously as physical health, which means it's incumbent on us to investigate ways we can address these issues from the top down. This panel discussion is a real step in not only facing mental health issues that affect our workforce, but to also remind us of how vitally important it is to cultivate workplaces and learning spaces that honor and respect the whole person.

## AGENDA

8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.	Onsite Registration and Check-in
8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	Mobile Relief Diner Healthy Breakfast (In-person Only)
9:00 a.m. – 9:05 a.m.	Opening Remarks/Welcome
9:05 a.m. – 9:10 a.m.	Keynote Intro
9:10 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.	Keynote Break
9:50 a.m. – 9:55 a.m.	Moderator Intro
9:55 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.	Panelists Intro

### Panel Topic 1:

10:00 a.m. – 10:50 a.m.	Food Connected to Wellness
10:50 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	Topic 1 Q&A
11:00 a.m. – 11:05 a.m.	Denny's Video
11:05 a.m. – 11:10 a.m.	Panelists Intro

### Panel Topic 2:

11:10 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Wellness at Work
12:00 p.m. – 12:15 p.m.	Topic 2 Q&A
12:15 p.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Action Items for Today
12:30 p.m. – 12:40 p.m.	Hungry for Education™/Special Acknowledgments



#### Moderator:

### Roland S. Martin

American Journalist/CNN Contributor and International Speaker

Roland S. Martin, often referred to as “The Voice of Black America,” is founder of the Black Star Network, an OTT network and host and managing editor of #RolandMartinUnfiltered, which both feature news, culture, finance, history, and wellness from an explicitly African-American perspective. The four-time book author also produces two daily commentaries on iHeartRadio’s Black Information Network, heard on 40 stations around the country. Martin was named a Fellow of the Society of Professional Journalists, the organization’s highest honor, and has been inducted as the youngest living member of the National Association of Black Journalists Hall of Fame. He’s also a member of the Texas A&M University Journalism Hall of Honor, where he received his undergraduate degree.



#### Panelist:

### Kelli Valade

CEO, Denny’s

Kelli Valade is Chief Executive Officer of Denny’s Corporation. She joined Denny’s in June 2022 and has spent more than 30 years in the restaurant industry as a purpose-driven leader with an uncompromising dedication to serving guests and her teams. Prior to joining Denny’s, Kelli served as CEO of Red Lobster and CEO of Black Box Intelligence. Kelli serves on the Board of Directors for the National Restaurant Association Education Foundation (NRAEF) and recently served on the board of the Women’s Foodservice Forum (WFF).



#### Keynote Speaker and Panelist:

### Daniel E. Dawes, J.D.

Senior Vice President of Global Health Equity and the Executive Director of the Institute of Global Health Equity at Meharry Medical College

Daniel E. Dawes, J.D., is the author of two groundbreaking health policy books: *150 Years of ObamaCare* and *The Political Determinants of Health*, both published by Johns Hopkins University Press. A respected healthcare and public health leader, health policy expert, educator, and researcher, he serves as Senior Vice President of Global Health Equity and the Executive Director of the Institute of Global Health Equity at Meharry Medical College. He serves as an advisor to the White House COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force and is an appointed member of the CDC’s Advisory Committee to the Director where he co-chairs the CDC’s Health Equity Working Group. Daniel also is an appointed member of the NIH’s National Advisory Council for Nursing Research.



## **Brenda Lauderback**

Chairman, Board of Directors, Denny's

Brenda Lauderback, who has extensive background in C-Suite positions, is chairman of the board for Denny's, Inc. and is the nation's first African American Board Chair at a public food service company. She is one of the National Association of Corporate Director's

Top 100 Directors, the *Nation's Restaurant News'* Power List of Most Influential People in Foodservice, and one of *Savoy Magazine's* Most Influential Women in Corporate America. She received the President's Lifetime Volunteer Service Award from the White House in May 2022, which resulted in the City of Charleston, SC, mayor proclaiming May 9, 2022, as Brenda Lauderback Day.



## **John Dillon**

President, Denny's

John Dillon is President of Denny's and is responsible for developing brand strategies, fostering collaborative synergies with Denny's dedicated franchisees, and leading marketing, operations, restaurant finance, and social impact for the purpose-driven iconic brand.

Before being named President of Denny's in 2022, John was Denny's Chief Brand Officer. Prior to joining Denny's, John held leadership roles at Yum! Brands/Pizza Hut and the NBA's Houston Rockets. John has been named one of *Forbes'* World's Top 50 CMOs, *PR Week's* Power 50, *Adweek's* 50, *Business Insider's* Top 50 Innovative Leaders, and *Nation's Restaurant News'* Power 50. John recently served on the Association of National Advertisers Board of Directors as Co-Chair of ANA's Alliance for Inclusive & Multicultural Marketing and currently serves on the Board of Directors for Baylor University's Hankamer Business School.



## **Host and Panelist:**

## **Dr. Bennie L. Harris**

Chancellor, University of South Carolina Upstate

Dr. Bennie L. Harris is the fifth chancellor at the University of South Carolina Upstate, where he fulfills his purpose to inspire and develop people to change the world. The first African American to lead USC Upstate, he believes higher

education offers unlimited opportunities and possibilities. Dr. Harris has more than three decades in higher education, serving at Washington State University, the University of Alabama at Birmingham, DePaul University, and Lipscomb University. At Morehouse School of Medicine, he served as senior vice president for Institutional Advancement, Marketing, and Communication. Dr. Harris serves on several boards: the Spartanburg Academic Movement, Upstate Alliance, One Spartanburg, the Greenville Chamber of Commerce, Prisma Health Medical Scholars, United Way of Piedmont, NCAA President Forum, American Association of State Colleges and Universities, Coalition of Urban & Metropolitan Universities.



## **April Kelly-Drummond**

Vice President, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Denny's

April Kelly-Drummond is an integral player in championing Denny's "Bold Way Forward," a company-wide effort to create diversity at all levels, improve corporate culture and strengthen/expand relationships with community partners. She is an effective collaborator, coordinating messaging and program implementation with corporate board members, the executive team, and the media to help raise the profile of Denny's work in diversity, its core products, and services. The award-winning executive has been named to *Savoy's* Top 100 Influential Women in Corporate America. Among her many accomplishments, April established Denny's first DEI Council, sponsored by the CEO and Denny's board members.



**Fasika Melaku-Peterson**

Vice President, Chief Learning and Development Officer, Denny’s

Fasika Melaku-Peterson has a cross-industry track record of successfully unlocking the potential of teams by tapping into the skills and passions of people and the leaders who guide them.

Prior to joining Denny’s, Fasika focused on building a culture of people and operational excellence throughout the organization and building department credibility by establishing collaborative relationships with her peers and operations management. Mrs. Melaku-Peterson is actively involved in the community and sits on the board of the Urban League of the Upstate.



**Panelist:**

**Sharon Lykins**

Vice President, Product Innovation, Denny’s

Sharon Lykins is a food science graduate from the University of Kentucky. While there, her contributions to the study of the effect of fermentation on protein digestibility were published in the *Journal of Food Science*.

She has continued her culinary education with short courses at both Johnson & Wales and the Culinary Institute of America.



**Panelist:**

**Rebecca O. Bagley**

President and CEO, The Kennedy Forum

Rebecca oversees the Kennedy Forum’s efforts to advance evidence-based practices, policies, and programming to ensure mental health is essential health. Utilizing a vast professional network of experts and resources to forge

partnerships, Rebecca is deeply focused on inspiring cultures of progress and innovation. Her previous experiences include being CEO of Cannex Scientific, Vice Chancellor of Economic Partnerships at the University of Pittsburgh, and CEO of NorTech and JPMorgan in NYC; and engagement in global efforts and organizations including the Clinton Global Initiative, SSTI, and the federally appointed National Advisory Council on Innovation & Entrepreneurship.



**Panelist:**

**Dr. Monique May**

“Physician in the Kitchen”

Dr. May graduated with honors from the Lewis Katz School of Medicine at Temple University, and studied plant-based culinary arts at the Auguste Escoffier Culinary School. She obtained her masters in healthcare administration from

George Washington University. She is the two-time bestselling author of *MealMasters: Your Simple Guide to Modern-Day Meal Planning* and *Doc, Fix My Plate! The Physician in the Kitchen’s Prescriptions for Your Healthy Meal Makeover*. Dr. May is passionate about educating people on the health benefits of plant-based foods while showing them ways to save time in the kitchen. She welcomes any opportunity to share her knowledge in any format, including social media, consulting, speaking, and blogging.



**Panelist:**  
**Shaneeta M. Johnson, MD, MBA, FACS, FASMBS**

Dr. Shaneeta Johnson is Professor and Interim Chair of Surgery, Chief of Minimally Invasive, Robotic, and Bariatric Surgery, and Program Director, General Surgery Residency Program, Morehouse School of Medicine, Department of Surgery. She is also a Senior Fellow in Global

Health Equity at the Satcher Health Leadership Institute and a prior inaugural Fellow in the National Medical Association Climate Change and Health Equity Fellowship. She is board certified in General Surgery and a Diplomate of the American Board of Obesity Medicine. Her work has been published in major journals, and she is a sought-after speaker on these topics both nationally and internationally.



**Panelist:**  
**Hannah Oakley**  
Sports Dietitian for USC Upstate, Presbyterian College, and Furman University

Hannah Oakley is a registered and licensed dietitian with two bachelor's degrees (University of South Carolina and Clemson University) as well as a master's degree in medical dietetics

from the Ohio State University. She is a certified specialist in sports dietetics and is currently pursuing her certification as an eating disorder specialist. She maintains her clinical role at Living Bread, a non-profit organization inspiring hope and healing in those struggling with eating disorders. Her passion is to help individuals develop a positive relationship with food, provide education on proper fueling and recovery, and equip them with the tools they need to impact the community they serve.

# COMING THIS OCTOBER



## Denny's Together: Mental Health/Wellness Series 2

Join us at Meharry Medical College  
in Nashville, TN, October 10, 2023  
for our next Mental Health/Wellness Series!

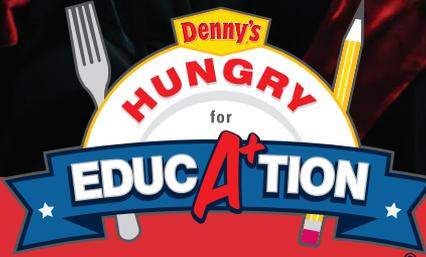
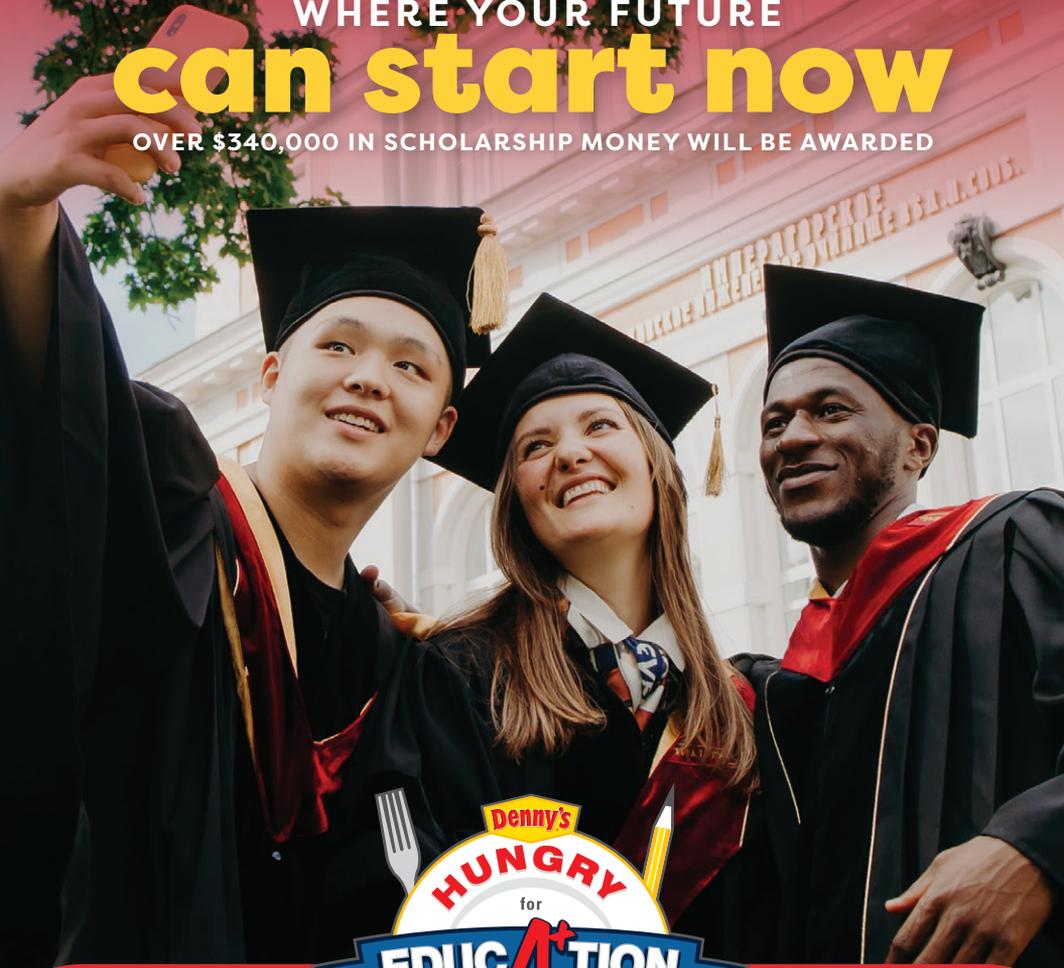


For more details visit:  
[dennystogetherformentalhealth.com](https://dennystogetherformentalhealth.com)



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