

Keynote Speakers

(alphabetically by last name)



Elena Ríos, MD, MPH, FACP – President and CEO of NHMA

Dr. Ríos serves as President & CEO of the National Hispanic Medical Association, (NHMA), representing 50,000 Hispanic physicians in the United States. The mission of the organization is to improve the health of Hispanics. Dr. Ríos also serves as President of NHMA's National Hispanic Health Foundation affiliated with the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, New York University, to direct educational and research activities. Dr. Ríos also serves on the Care First Blue Cross Blue Shield, Better Medicare Alliance and the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda Boards of Directors, Centene Health Policy Advisory Committee, Cancer Treatment Centers for America Hispanic Advisory Council, Office of Research on Women's Health Advisory Committee, NIH, US Department of Health and Human Services, and the VA National Academic Affiliations Council. Prior to her current positions, Dr. Ríos served as the Advisor for Regional and Minority Women's Health for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office on Women's Health from November 1994 to October 1998. In 1998-2004, Dr. Ríos served as Executive Director, Hispanic Serving Health Professions Schools. In 1993, Dr. Ríos was appointed to the National Health Care Reform Task Force as Coordinator of Outreach Groups for the White House. From 1992-94, Dr. Ríos worked for the State of California Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development as a policy researcher. Dr. Ríos has also served as President, Chicano/Latino Medical Association of California, Founder of the National Network of Latin American Medical Students, member of the California Department of Health Services Cultural Competency Task Force, the Stanford Alumni Association, Women's Policy Inc., Commission to End Healthcare Disparities, Nurse Family Partnerships, Campaign Against Obesity, and Partnership for Prevention Boards of Directors, PacifiCare-UnitedHealthcare California Investment Committee, ASU Health Futures Council and the AMA's Disparities Commission and Minority Affairs Consortium Steering Committees. Dr. Ríos earned her BA in Human Biology/Public Administration at Stanford University in 1977, MSPH at the UCLA School of Public Health in 1980, MD at the UCLA School of Medicine in 1987, and completed her Internal Medicine residency at the Santa Clara Valley Medical Center in San Jose and the White Memorial Medical Center in East Los Angeles in 1990, and her NRSA Primary Care Research Fellowship at UCLA Division of General Internal Medicine in 1992.



Mónica Vela, MD – Professor of Medicine, Associate Dean for Multicultural Affairs, Associate Vice Chair for Diversity, Department of Medicine University of Chicago Medicine

Dr. Mónica Vela is deeply enmeshed in supporting and advocating for diversity throughout the University of Chicago Medicine. As Director of the innovative Health Care Disparities in America course, Dr. Vela introduces all first-year medical students at Pritzker to many ongoing issues that affect underserved populations. She serves as a visible leader and faculty advisor to multiple student organizations, including the Health Professions Recruitment and Exposure Program and the Latino Medical Student Association. Her advocacy efforts extend to our faculty and residents, as Dr. Vela serves as the Associate Vice Chair for Diversity in the Department of Medicine. In this role, Dr. Vela works to improve recruitment, retention, scholarship, leadership, and mentorship of qualified minority students, residents, fellows, and faculty in an environment rich with cultural awareness, and sensitivity.