



Mathematica

Progress Together

The Vital Role of Health Care Payers in Addressing Social Determinants of Health to Advance Equity

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Sinsi Hernández-Cancio, National Partnership for Women & Families

Sinsi Hernández-Cancio is a vice president at the National Partnership for Women & Families, where she leads the Health Justice team. She is a thought leader on national health and health care equity policy and advocacy with 25 years of experience advancing equal opportunity for women and families of color and almost 20 years of experience advocating for increased health care access and improved quality of care for underserved communities. Hernández-Cancio is deeply committed to transforming our health care system to meet the needs of our rapidly evolving nation so we can all thrive together. She believes that our future prosperity depends on ensuring our health care system routinely provides care that is excellent, comprehensive, culturally centered, and affordable for every single person, family, and community and that this requires the dismantling of structural inequities including racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, and religious bigotry. Her extensive experience in health and health equity policy and advocacy spans the state government, labor, and nonprofit arenas. Before joining the National Partnership for Women & Families, she was the founding director of Families USA's Center on Health Equity Action for System Transformation. Before that, she advised and represented two governors of Puerto Rico on federal health and human services policies, and she worked for the Service Employees International Union as a senior health policy analyst and national campaign coordinator for its Healthcare Equality Project campaign to enact the Affordable Care Act. Born in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Hernández-Cancio is bilingual and bicultural. She earned an A.B. from Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs and a J.D. from New York University School of Law, where she was an Arthur Garfield Hays Civil Liberties Fellow and won the Georgetown Women's Law and Public Policy Fellowship.



Chris DeMars, Oregon Health Authority

Chris DeMars is the interim director of the Delivery Systems Innovation Office and the director of the Transformation Center at the Oregon Health Authority, overseeing policy and programs that support delivery system innovation and quality improvement for Oregon's health system reform efforts. She also plays a lead role in the agency's value-based payment and social determinants of health work. Before joining the Oregon Health Authority in 2013, DeMars spent eight years as a senior program officer at the Northwest Health Foundation, where she managed the foundation's health care reform grantmaking, including providing support for Oregon's delivery system reform initiatives and health reform advocacy organizations. Before working for the foundation, she spent six years as a senior health policy analyst for the U.S. Government Accountability Office, authoring numerous reports for Congress on Medicaid, Medicare, and private health insurance payment policy. She also worked at Kaiser Permanente Northwest and health policy consulting firms, including Health Management Associates. DeMars holds an M.P.A. from the University of Michigan School of Public Health and a B.A. in English literature from the University of Michigan.



Len Nichols, Urban Institute

Len M. Nichols is a non-resident fellow of the Health Policy Center of the Urban Institute and professor emeritus of health policy at George Mason University. He is a health economist and the principal investigator of the Collaborative Approach to Public Good Investments (CAPGI) project and was the coauthor, with Lauren A. Taylor, of the paper that initiated this work. Nichols has been intimately involved in health reform debates, policy development, and communication with the media and policymakers for more than 25 years since he began as senior advisor for health policy at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in the Clinton administration. Since that time, he has testified frequently before Congress and state legislatures; published extensively; and spoken to a wide range of hospital associations, hospital systems, physician groups, boards of directors, and health policy leadership forums around the country. After OMB, Nichols was a principal research associate at the Urban Institute, vice president of the Center for Studying Health System Change, and director of the health policy program at the New America Foundation. Len continues to serve on the board of directors of the National Committee for Quality Assurance and is a payment reform advisor for the Virginia Center for Health Innovation. Nichols was an innovation advisor to the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation at the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services in 2012 and a member of the Physician-Focused Payment Model Technical Advisory Committee from 2015 to 2019. Nichol's first job was teaching economics at Wellesley College from 1980 to 1991. There, he became associate professor and chair of the Economics Department after receiving his Ph.D. in economics from the University of Illinois in 1980. Nichols got his M.A. in economics from the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville and his B.A. from Hendrix College in Conway, Arkansas.



Kara Odom Walker, Nemours Children's Health System

Kara Odom Walker is executive vice president and chief population health officer for Nemours Children's Health System. She leads Delaware Valley Primary Care, the Value Based Services Organization, and the Nemours National Office of Policy and Prevention. A highly accomplished executive, family physician, and scientist, Walker has focused her career on transforming health care delivery to achieve optimal health and health equity. She has led efforts that address critical social determinants through her career in academia, patient-centered outcomes research funding, state government and health systems. Walker joined Nemours after public service to the state of Delaware as the secretary of the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services and serving in Governor Carney's first elected term from February 2017 to 2020. Before her leadership roles in Delaware, Walker served as deputy chief science officer at the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute and was on faculty at the University of California, San Francisco in the Department of Family and Community Medicine. Walker is a board-certified family physician and holds an M.D. from Thomas Jefferson University, an M.S. in health sciences with a specialization in research from UCLA, and an M.P.H. from Johns Hopkins University.



Toni Abrams Weintraub, Mathematica

Toni Abrams Weintraub is a physician-researcher at Mathematica with more than two decades of experience in public and community health, health promotion, and health policy research. She specializes in social determinants of health, linkages between clinical care and social services, and community-based and cross-sector health initiatives, with a focus on underserved communities. Abrams Weintraub is currently the principal investigator for Mathematica's implementation, learning system, technical assistance, and monitoring contract for the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation's Accountable Health Communities Model which bridges clinical care with community support services to identify and address health-related social needs through screening, referral, and community service navigation. Before joining Mathematica in 2017, Abrams Weintraub spent two decades conducting community health needs assessments and designing, implementing, and evaluating community-based health promotion programs for nonprofit, private, and government health care organizations. Abrams Weintraub established and directed TAW Consulting and held positions at Health Resources in Action and Tufts Health Plan, among other organizations. She directed the Preventive Medicine and Public Health Residency and the Community-Oriented Primary Care Program at Carney Hospital in Boston. She holds an M.D. from Cornell University Medical College and an M.P.H. from Boston University.



Deliya Wesley, Mathematica

Deliya Wesley, a senior director of health equity at Mathematica, works to advance equity in health and health care through impactful research and improved programs. She is also an assistant professor at Georgetown University School of Medicine in the Department of Family Medicine. Before joining Mathematica, Wesley was the founding scientific director for the MedStar Health Research Institute's Center for Health Equity Research. She brings more than 12 years of health care experience and health disparities research focused on the unique cultural and contextual factors that affect how racial and ethnic minorities access and use health services. In addition to establishing and building a portfolio of health equity research for the MedStar Health Research Institute, some of her recent work focused on how patient-facing digital technologies can be optimized for use among people who are underserved and marginalized. She is interested in adapting health services (including technology) to address the needs of vulnerable populations. Wesley is passionate about using research to improve health outcomes and foster health equity by addressing the systems and structures that prevent all people from achieving and maintaining optimal health. She earned her Ph.D. in behavioral and community health from the University of Maryland School of Public Health and her M.P.H. from The George Washington University.

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