



Lesbian and Bisexual Women's Health in Los Angeles County Advocacy, Communication, Policy, and Healthcare Delivery

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Made possible by support from the Executive Advisory Board of the Iris Cantor-UCLA Women's Health Center, the City of West Hollywood, and the UCLA Center for the Study of Women

Speaker Biographies

Margaret Armbruster, BSN, MSN

Margaret Armbruster, BSN, MSN is an experienced leader in health care management, operations and regulatory affairs. She effectively leads diverse multi-disciplinary teams within challenging clinical settings. Over her many years as a healthcare leader Margaret has developed processes to optimize care for complex, high risk vulnerable patient populations while ensuring organizational compliance to multiple regulatory agencies.

Margaret's career began at UCLA Health as a bedside nurse, followed by several years as assistant manager of the Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center emergency department. Margaret has spent a decade as Director of various clinical areas and since 2012 has had oversight of Clinical Regulatory Affairs for UCLA Health. Most recently Margaret has become the Executive Director for system-level operations and strategy of the Emergency, Trauma and Observation services, clinical regulatory affairs, and occupational health for UCLA Health. Margaret received a Baccalaureate Degree in nursing from the University of Dundee in the United Kingdom and a Master's Degree in nursing administration from UCLA.

Dannie Cesena, MPH

Dannie Cesena has worked with non-profit organizations for over 10 years in program development and advocacy. Passionate about LGBT Healthcare, he is a member of World Professional Association of Transgender Health (WPATH) and Gay Lesbian Medical Association (GLMA). Dannie strengthened the Trans*itions Health and Wellness Program while creating the LGBT Health Department at the LGBT Center Orange County. He has trained major hospitals and community clinics on LGBT healthcare disparities, guest lectured at various California universities and medical schools, and provided pro bono legal services. He now works at the CA LGBTQ Health and Human Services Network, taking his advocacy and program building skills Statewide.

Dannie has been awarded Community Icon of the Year by Orange County Pride, Pro Bono Community Partner of the Year by UC Irvine School of Law, The Girl Scout Gold Star Award for his work with Transgender Youth and the Diversity Spirit Achievement Award by City Career Fair for his advocacy for Trans Employment Rights. He sits on the LGBTQ Health Research Advisory Board for UCLA TRDRP Grant and UC San Diego's Transgender PrEP/PEP Study, while participating as a Board Member for Orange County Equality Coalition. He is a graduate of CSU Long Beach with Bachelor Degrees in English and Political Science, and is a graduate of National University with a Master Degree in Public Health.

Frankie Darling-Palacios

H. Frankie Darling-Palacios is the child of Salvadoran immigrants, born and raised in Los Angeles. Using 'They/Them' pronouns, Frankie identifies as Genderqueer. Frankie received their undergraduate education at Cal State University Northridge with a focus on Gender/Women Studies and a minor in Queer Studies. The undergraduate education Frankie received helped them create physical space and social support for their local queer community in the County of Los Angeles. They got started with a performance space called

Trans/giving where they found acceptance in the trans community through providing a creative space for self-expression. That was over ten years ago throughout that time Frankie continues to be a community leader in the LA LGBTQ community. They currently serve as a Commissioner for the Commission on HIV, secretary of the Transgender Service Provider Network, Community Advisory Board member for LA Pride! and was recently named an Employment Development Department/Paid Family Leave advocate for the state of California.

Allison Diamant, MD, MSHS

Allison Diamant, MD, MSHS is a professor of medicine in the Division of General Internal Medicine and Health Services Research, UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine. She is a trained Internal Medicine physician, educator and health services researcher. She has a particular clinical interest in caring for adult LGBTQ individuals including the provision of preventive care as well as evaluation and treatment for acute and chronic medical conditions. She developed the modules for 1st year medical students around taking a sexual history and an overview of LGBT health issues. She also provides residency and community training on LGBT health issues. At UCLA she developed and implemented a survey of medical students regarding their knowledge and perceptions around caring for LGBT adults. Working in conjunction with the Los Angeles County Lesbian and Bisexual Women's Health Collaborative she assisted in the implementation of training for clinicians and administrators regarding lesbian and bisexual women's health. She is currently part of the working group for the UCLA Health System around the implementation of provider education for LGBT access to care and health. Dr. Diamant is the author of peer reviewed articles, book chapters and policy briefs regarding LGBT health issues, and continues to participate in population-based research of LGBT populations including access and quality of care, health status and risk for chronic conditions.

Ellen Eidem, MS

A longtime proponent of women's health, Ms. Eidem serves as the Director of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health's Office of Women's Health (OWH). The OWH works at the individual, community, and systems level to improve health equity, decrease health disparities and improve the health status of women in LA County through education; advocacy and policy recommendations; program planning and promotion; data analysis and reporting; facilitating and building county and community collaborations; promotion of evidence-based programs and policies; and increasing access to services for low income and underserved women. She is responsible for the Women's Health Policy Council, the advisory body to the OWH. Prior to 2002, Ms. Eidem served as the Director of Programs and Administration for the Los Angeles Free Clinic (dba: The Saban Community Clinic) and as the Director of Quality Improvement for the California and Los Angeles Regional Family Planning Councils, (dba: Essential Access Health), and an administrator and instructor at Planned Parenthood Alameda/San Francisco and the Berkeley Women's Health Collective.

Mieko Failey, Esq.

Mieko Failey, Esq. is the Director of Legal Services at the LGBTQ Center Long Beach, overseeing LGBTQ-specific legal services for the greater Long Beach area, including comprehensive direct legal services to LGBTQ survivors of domestic and sexual violence, stalking, and hate violence. From 2011 to 2018, Mieko served in various legal advocacy roles in Legal Services at the Los Angeles LGBTQ Center, including as the Supervising Attorney for the department and Manager of the Domestic Violence Legal Advocacy Project. Mieko began working in anti-violence in 2007 and concentrates on LGBTQ anti-violence legal issues. She has served many LGBTQ survivors and trained thousands of service providers, including judges, law enforcement, attorneys, mental health professionals, physicians, and more. With the ACLU of Southern California's LGBT Student Rights Project and The Center for Juvenile Law and Policy, Mieko has advocated for those wrongfully convicted or unfairly sentenced as juveniles. Mieko is a recipient of the Post-Graduate Loyola Law School Public Interest Legal Fellowship, enabling her to provide legal advocacy on behalf of LGBTQ youth survivors of violence. Mieko currently serves on the Executive Board of the Los Angeles County Domestic Violence Council as Co-Chair of the LGBT DV Issues Committee. She serves on the Advisory Board of the Family Violence Appellate Project, is a Board Member of the California Conference for Equality and Justice (CCEJ), and faculty for the American Bar Association's Commission on Domestic and Sexual Violence. She has

received awards from Loyola Law School, the LGBT LA Bar Association, and The National LGBT Bar Association for her advocacy for the LGBTQ community. Mieko received her Bachelors in Sociology from UC Berkeley and received her Juris Doctor from Loyola Law School with a Public Interest Concentration.

Atara Geft, MD, MPH

Atara Geft MD, MPH is a board-certified attending physician and UCLA Health Science Clinical Instructor at the WLA VA Medical Center Women's Clinic. She completed her internal medicine internship and residency at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, followed by a UCLA Kennamer Fellowship, focused on women's health issues and research. Dr. Geft also received her MPH from UCLA, completing her internship study at the Iris-Cantor Women's Health Education and Research Center, working on various projects including the Lesbian and Bisexual Women's Health Study. Dr. Geft co-created the GLA VA interdisciplinary Transgender Care Team, which provides hormone treatment, mental health services, and wrap around care for transgender veterans, including referrals to both VA and local social support organizations. In addition to culturally responsive, respectful patient care, the team established a well-functioning consult system for both direct patient care and e-consults. She received the "I Care Award for LGBT Veterans Services" in 2018 for her work in transgender care.

William D. Geis, MD

Dr. Geis was born and raised in Salt Lake City, where he attended college and medical school, and completed his residency at the University of Utah. He has since moved throughout the West, always getting closer to the warm weather of Southern California. Dr. Geis has been in Los Angeles for many years, and is very happy to call this home. From a very young age, he planned to be a physician and is very happy to have achieved that dream. The practice of obstetrics and gynecology allows many unique and special opportunities in medicine. Dr. Geis is able to help women maintain good health throughout their lives as well as assist them through critical life changes. He has the opportunity to share beautiful experiences, such as pregnancy and childbirth, with them and their families. Likewise, he also has the opportunity to assist patients through difficult health concerns and disease processes. It is his goal to help members and others understand more about themselves, their general health, and what can improve and impact their well-being. It is a special opportunity to be able to provide both medical and surgical care to women, and to maintain those medical relationships throughout a lifetime.

Amanda Goad

Amanda is the Audrey Irmis Director of the LGBTQ, Gender & Reproductive Justice Project at the ACLU of Southern California. Amanda was previously a senior staff attorney at ACLU SoCal, focusing on LGBTQ Rights, and a staff attorney in the LGBT & HIV Project of the National ACLU. She has contributed to advancing the rights of LGBTQ people in the areas of education, employment, health care, public accommodations, identity documents, child welfare system, prisons, and more. Amanda previously served as Director of Litigation at Inner City Law Center in Los Angeles, as Senior Counsel in the New York City Law Department, and as Legal Coordinator for a group providing pro bono name change assistance to transgender New Yorkers. In 2015, Amanda was named one of the 40 Best LGBT Lawyers under the age of 40 by the National LGBT Bar Association. Amanda is an alum of Harvard Law School and Rice University. She is also a member of the Board of Directors of Genders & Sexualities Alliance Network.

Robyn Harrod, MSW, LCSW

Robyn Harrod is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with over 23 years of experience working with individuals and couples needing assistance with family planning. Her expertise is in helping all people create their families through foster care, adoption and third party reproduction. She specializes in working within the LGBTQIA+ community, helping her clients navigate the family building process. Robyn was the director of a foster family and adoption agency for 15 years before leaving to start her private practice and consulting work. She has been registered with the state of California for over 15 years as an Adoption Service Provider (ASP), working closely with birthparents to support them through their adoption journey. Robyn has received multiple awards at the National level for her work in adoption. While helping prospective parents manage

their stress and anxiety throughout the family building process Robyn also provides psycho education on raising adopted children, or children conceived through third party reproduction. Additionally, she works with children and families post adoption, through individual and/or family therapy, and working with issues that may arise as children age. Having personal experience in third party reproduction, second parent adoption and LGBTQIA+ parenting, Robyn has a deeper understanding of what many of her clients may be experiencing. Another area of significant importance to Robyn is working with parents of transgender, gender non-conforming and gender expansive children. In providing a safe space for parents to voice their concerns and gain knowledge, she supports parents and relatives through their family's transition and helps them champion the path that is best for their child.

Marki J. Knox, MD

Dr. Knox is a Gynecologist in private practice in Santa Monica, specializing in minimally invasive gynecologic surgery. She has been an out lesbian throughout both her medical school and residency at the University of Washington Affiliated Hospitals and as a partner of Women's Medical Group. She has worked at the Center as a part-time Gyn Consultant in The Audre Lord Clinic the Center's clinic for Lesbian Health. She later worked as a part-time Gynecologist at the Lambda Clinic, the Center's fee-for-service primary care clinic. During the height of the AIDS epidemic in Los Angeles, she treated the largest private practice group of women with HIV/AIDS and was the only woman to serve on the LA Physicians AIDS Forum, a group of both private and public practice physicians committed to delivering expert medical care to those diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. In 1999 she received a LACE Award for Outstanding Contributions in Professional Achievement. In the last seven years she has added transgender care to her practice and sees a steadily increasing number of both FTM and MTF patients for both hormonal and surgical care. Outside of her medical contributions, she is a veteran of 14 (soon to be 15) AIDS rides. She joined the Board of Directors in 2005 and has chaired the Board Development Committee, the Board Institutional Giving Committee and served on the Fundraising Committee.

Alexandra Magallon

Alexandra Magallon is an Afro-Latinx Intersex Trans-Fem Woman of Color. Alexandra studied at Clare's Beauty College, the Art Institute of Seattle and The Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising. With 9 years of Cosmetology experience Alexandra became Regis Salon Corporation's first Out Trans woman of color to become District/Regional Artistic Director. In 2016, after a violent incident in the work place fueled by transphobia, Alexandra shifted her career path into advocacy as a Trans Client Advocate in Policy at St. John's Well Child and Family Center. In 2017, she started her new role as Work Force Development Case Manager and Lead at The Trans Latin@ Coalition. In 2018, Alexandra started working at The LA LGBT Center as the Client Advocate for The Transgender Economic Empowerment Project, assisting clients with Economic Development, Financial Literacy, and Legal Name and Gender Marker Change. Beyond the work setting, she has become a member of the Board of Directors of CSW LA Pride and a Co-Chair of the Transgender Service Provider Network Los Angeles. Recently, in December 2018, Alexandra discovered she was born intersex and is navigating her identities but continues to use her voice for undeserved Transgender, Non-Binary, and Intersex people in Los Angeles County. She serves as an advocate both for herself and her communities with goals of one day working in policy or becoming your next senator, governor, or president.

Christy Mallory, JD

Christy Mallory oversees state law and policy work at the Williams Institute. In that capacity, she focuses on a variety of topics, including sexual orientation and gender identity non-discrimination protections, bans on the use of the gay and trans panic defenses, conversion therapy bans, and other state and local level laws and policies impacting LGBT people. Her work has been published in several media outlets, journals, and books including *When Mandates Work* (UC Press, 2013), the *Loyola of Los Angeles Law Review*, the *LGBTQ Policy Journal* at the Harvard Kennedy School, and the *Albany Government Law Review*. Christy received her J.D. from UCLA School of Law and her B.A. from the University of Arizona.

Angie Magaña, NP

Angie Magaña, NP is a Nurse Practitioner at the Los Angeles LGBT Center, she is a provider of whole person health and wellness, specializing in Endocrinology and Gynecology. Angie is the manager of the Audre Lorde Health Program for lesbian and bisexual women, and is the lead clinician in the Transgender Health Program. She is committed to creating and delivering patient-centered health care utilizing a holistic approach and multiple modalities. Angie's work at the Center ensures this vulnerable population is provided culturally competent, quality healthcare. Angie is also a certified nurse midwife and began her career in medicine working with birthing mothers. Successfully helping reacquaint women with their natural capacity to give birth without fear contributed to the development of her underlying practice philosophy of empowerment through education and engagement. Angie earned her Bachelor's Degree in Nursing Science from California State University Long Beach in 2007, and then her Master's Degree in Nursing Science from California State University, Fullerton in 2012.

Johanna Olson-Kennedy, MD

Johanna Olson-Kennedy, MD is an Adolescent Medicine physician specializing in the care of gender non-conforming children and transgender youth. Board certified in Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, Dr. Olson-Kennedy has been providing medical intervention for transgender youth and young adults including puberty suppression and cross sex hormones for the past twelve years. She is considered a national expert in this area. Dr. Olson-Kennedy is the Medical Director of The Center for Transyouth Health and Development at Children's Hospital in Los Angeles, the largest transgender youth clinic in the United States. She has appeared frequently on national television, and spoken all over the country to educate providers, parents, and other communities about the needs of transgender youth.

Kiera Pollock, MSW

Kiera Pollock, Director of Senior Services, joined the Los Angeles LGBT Center in Spring, 2017. Kiera oversees residential and nonresidential case management services and activities for more than 5,700 members of Los Angeles LGBT Center's Senior Services. Her responsibilities include oversight of Triangle Square, the nation's first affordable housing community for LGBT seniors. She also oversees program planning and advising on space design for the new 8,000 square foot Senior Services Center and affordable housing community scheduled to open on the Center's 1.86-acre intergenerational campus in 2019. In October 2018, Kiera was elected to the Los Angeles County Commission for Older Adults. Kiera earned a Master's Degree in Clinical Social Work from Fordham University and is a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW) in New York State. She has more than 15 years of social services leadership experience during which she created and implemented a variety of multidisciplinary collaborative programs, including a child advocacy center, special victims center, and a comprehensive crime victims program.

Janet Pregler, MD

Janet Pregler, MD is Professor of Clinical Medicine at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. She is the director of the Iris Cantor-UCLA Women's Health Center, which promotes comprehensive women's healthcare through model clinical care, research, professional education, and community partnerships. She is also director of the UCLA National Center of Excellence in Women's Health, established by a contract awarded by the Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women's Health in 1997.

Dr. Pregler is co-editor of the textbook "Women's Health: Principles and Clinical Practice". She has developed educational programs on women's health for the American College of Physicians, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, and the Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women's Health. Dr. Pregler received the 2017 Health Honoree award from the Los Angeles County Commission for Women, presented by the Commission and the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. The award acknowledged exceptional work improving the lives of women in Los Angeles County.

Arielle Sommer, MD

Arielle Sommer is a faculty member at the Iris Cantor-UCLA Women's Health Center and a Clinical Instructor at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. She is an internist who provides comprehensive care for adults, both women and men.

April Soto, MD, AAHIVP

Dr. Soto is of Puerto Rican descent, and grew up in Guatemala, as her parents were missionaries in Central America. She loves living in Los Angeles, with its wonderful mix of people. Dr. Soto practices family medicine. The specialty is a good fit for her because she is able to treat patients of all ages from every walk of life. Her practice is rainbow friendly. She has additional specialty training in HIV care, and also performs small procedures in the surgical walk-in clinic on Sunset Boulevard. She takes a harm-reduction approach to medicine, and works in partnership with her patients to provide the information they need to make educated decisions regarding their health. They are a team on an equal playing field. Working together makes visits much more pleasant. Dr. Soto's family medicine practice is in the Pasadena office, and her specialty services are on the main campus at Los Angeles Medical Center in Hollywood.

Elaine Suranie

In 2006, Elaine Suranie was appointed to a four year term on the California Commission on the Status of Women where she organized the first televised public hearings on The Status of Lesbians in California. In 2007, as a commissioner, she worked with the Department of Women and Minority Veterans Deputy Secretary Barbara Ward to create the first California Women Veteran's Conference. In 2009 she hosted the first California Women Veterans Summit with Senator Lois Wolk, and as Chair of the CCSW in 2010, Suranie organized a public state hearing for women's issues in rural communities near Sacramento. As Chair of the Commission, she initiated the first statewide survey on women veterans by the California State Library Research Bureau and sought to add LGBT identifiers to all state census forms. Elaine Suranie spent eight years as an active public speaker for GLIDE - Gays and Lesbians Initiating Dialogue for Equality, and has been an active board member for Friends of Project 10, helping to give college scholarships to high school students who have worked to help advance positive LGBT social action. Since 2009 Elaine has been a member of the steering committee of the Los Angeles County Lesbian and Bisexual Women's Health Collaborative, helping to create a curriculum for physicians and caregivers on cultural competency for lesbian and bisexual women. In 2015, Elaine Suranie was awarded a Rainbow Key Award by the Gay and Lesbian Advisory Board of the City of West Hollywood for her contributions to the gay and lesbian community. She is a full time respiratory therapist working in critical care. Her short story, "The Good Girl" is published in the book, "Women of Spirit," by Katherine Martin.

Amy Weimer, MD

Dr. Amy Weimer is Associate Professor of Medicine – Pediatrics at UCLA. She completed her dual residency in internal medicine and pediatrics at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in 2003. She served as chief resident in internal medicine, then spent several years practicing general primary care before joining UCLA faculty in 2013. She became deeply interested in health care for transgender and gender-diverse patients during this time, and founded the UCLA Gender Health Program in 2016. She is committed to providing excellent care for transgender and gender-diverse patients of all ages, as well as improving the education of physicians and physicians-in-training on transgender health.