



Biographies

Susan LaFlesche Picotte (1865-1915)

Dr. LaFlesche Picotte was the first American Indian woman to receive a medical degree in the U.S. She attended the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania and graduated as valedictorian of her class. She returned to the Omaha reservation where she was from and became the sole doctor for more than 1,200 people across 400 miles – all at the age of 24.

Dr. LaFlesche Picotte was also the first person to receive federal aid for professional education. Learn more about her life and career:

https://cfmedicine.nlm.nih.gov/physicians/biography_253.html

Margaret Chung (1889-1959)

Dr. Chung was born in Santa Barbara and is the first known first-generation Chinese American woman to become a physician. She established one of San Francisco's first medical clinics in the 1920's. Dr. Chung was considered a healer, political activist, humanitarian and “mom” to hundreds of military pilots who served in the 1930's and 40's. Dr. Chung also inspired a movie and comic book.

Learn more about here here: <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2001-jun-24-me-14223-story.html>

Virginia Alexander (1899-1949)

Dr. Alexander was a pioneering physician and public health practitioner. She started her own health clinic to care for the poorest members of her community. Dr. Alexander conducted research on race and public health, where she found health disparities among Black and white residents. She was also part of a network of Black healthcare professionals who identified the role of systemic racism in health disparities.

Learn more: https://cfmedicine.nlm.nih.gov/physicians/biography_5.html

Elizabeth Blackwell (1821-1910)

Dr. Blackwell was the first woman to receive a medical degree from an American medical school. In 1851, she and some friends opened a small clinic in New York City to treat women from low socioeconomic backgrounds. She was a champion for women and opened her own medical college for women. She returned to London and became a professor of gynecology. Dr. Blackwell also helped found the National Health Society.

Learn more: <https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/elizabeth-blackwell>

Helen Rodríguez-Trías (1929-2001)

Dr. Rodríguez-Trías was a public health expert, women's rights activist and the first Latina director of the American Public Health Association. She was born in New York City and spent much of her life in Puerto Rico, where she established the first infant health clinic. She worked at the medical director of New York State's AIDS Institute, advocating for women and children with HIV. She was a founding member of several organizations including the Women's Caucus of the American Public Health Association.

Learn more: <https://fpscopy.org/womens-history-month-dr-helen-rodriguez-trias/>

Rachel Levine (1957-)

Admiral Levine serves as the 17th Assistant Secretary for Health for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Dr. Levine is an American pediatrician, four-star admiral in the United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps and professor of pediatrics and psychiatry. She was previously secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health from 2017-2021. She has worked on programs battling the opioid crisis, HIV and LGBTQ health equity. She is the highest-ranking openly transgender federal official.

Learn more: <https://www.hhs.gov/about/leadership/rachel-levine.html>