



Reproductive Health and the Environment in Los Angeles County Communities, Science, and Policy

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The California Endowment Center for Healthy Communities
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Speaker Biographies

Martha Dina Argüello

For the past 32 years, Martha has served in the non-profit sector as an advocate, community organizer, and coalition builder. She joined PSR-LA in 1998 to launch the environmental health programs, and became Executive Director in November 2007. She is committed to making the credible voice of physicians a powerful instrument for transforming California and our planet into a more peaceful and healthy place. Martha grew up in the Pico-Union area of Los Angeles. At the young age of 14, she made a lifelong commitment to effect social change after seeing her friend killed by a school security guard. While working as a health educator in the 1990s, Martha had an epiphany — she realized that although early detection can prevent death from breast cancer, it does not prevent breast cancer, which has been increasingly linked to the exposure of environmental toxicants. Since that realization, Martha has dedicated her career to the environmental justice movement, and has lectured nationwide on the use of precautionary principle policies. As a coalition builder, Martha has emphasized the need for local grassroots advocacy working in partnership with statewide policy actions. She is an active board member of numerous organizations, including Californians for Pesticide Reform, the California Environmental Rights Alliance, and Californians for a Healthy and Green Economy. She also co-founded the Los Angeles County Asthma Coalition and the Coalition for Environmental Health and Justice, and was appointed to Cal/EPA's Environmental Justice Committee and the California Air Resources Board's Global Warming Environmental Justice Advisory Committee.

Angelo J. Bellomo, REHS, OEP

Angelo J. Bellomo is Deputy Director for Health Protection for the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health. Previously he was Director of Environmental Health for Los Angeles County. Before coming to the Department of Public Health, Mr. Bellomo was Director of

Environmental Health and Safety for LAUSD, where he led reforms in the areas of school emergency planning, sustainable building design, and regulatory review of proposed school sites. Mr. Bellomo began his work in environmental health in 1973. In 1981, he was appointed by the Governor to serve as California's first Chief of Permits, Surveillance and Enforcement within the Toxic Substances Control Division. Mr. Bellomo has held positions in both the public and private sectors, and has carried out a range of assignments dealing with the assessment of environmental risks and reforms in environmental public policy.

Mr. Bellomo has served on U.S EPA's Children's Health Protection Advisory Committee and CDC's Boards of Scientific Counselors. Mr. Bellomo currently heads the County's Toxic Threat Strike Team formed by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and directed to work with local, state, and federal authorities to reduce the toxic risk associated with non-compliant facilities situated in close proximity to people. Mr. Bellomo's leadership in the environmental health field has been recognized by the California Legislature, U.S. EPA, the California League of Conservation Voters, and the National Environmental Health Association

Linda Goler Blount, MPH

Linda Goler Blount is the president and CEO of the Black Women's Health Imperative and a Public Voices Fellow with The OpEd Project. At the Black Women's Health Imperative, Linda oversees the strategic direction for the Imperative and is responsible for moving the organization forward in its mission to achieve health equity, reproductive and social justice for Black women across the lifespan. Before joining the Imperative, Linda served as the Vice President of Programmatic Impact for the United Way of Greater Atlanta and the National VP of Health Disparities at the American Cancer Society, where she was responsible for providing strategic vision and leadership to the Society and its 12 geographic divisions for nationwide health equity policy and social determinants initiatives. Linda has a distinguished career that includes successful tenures at The Coca-Cola Company leading strategic business initiatives and the CDC as an Expert Scientist. She also has extensive international health expertise and has served as a consultant to government ministries in Germany, Barbados, Malawi and Trinidad and Tobago. A Michigan native, Linda holds a Master of Public Health, Epidemiology from the University of Michigan and Bachelor of Science in Computer Engineering/Operations Research from Eastern Michigan University.

Cindy Donis

Cindy Donis is a Community Organizer at East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice. Cindy grew up in the city of Maywood and graduated with a BA in Chicana/o Studies and Gender & Feminist Studies at Pitzer College. As a daughter of Guatemalan immigrants, she has always valued her roots and history of struggle. She became involved in social movements and organizing in college, fighting for worker rights through the Claremont Student Worker Alliance as well as connecting local and international movements through the Chiapas Support Committee. She spent 3 years working at the Labor/Community Strategy Center, as a youth organizer challenging the mass criminalization of black and brown youth and the militarization of communities. Cindy is committed and passionate about creating a world where black and brown communities are truly free.

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 decrease health disparities and improve health equity for women in LA County through education, advocacy, program planning and promotion, data analysis and reporting, facilitating and building collaborations, policy recommendations, 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. Previously, 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.

Felicia Federico, D.Env.

Dr. Federico is the Executive Director of the California Center for Sustainable Communities at UCLA within the Institute of the Environment and Sustainability. Felicia has over 30 years of combined experience in academia, consulting, and the private sector, managing science and engineering projects. Her interdisciplinary education combines expertise in engineering and environmental sciences with an understanding of the legal, policy, economic and social science elements critical to addressing complex environmental challenges. Her research interests include: water, energy, and climate change, as well as issues of social equity around these fields. Dr. Federico is a lead author on the 2015 and 2017 Environmental Report Cards for Los Angeles County, now sponsored by the UCLA Sustainable LA Grand Challenge.

Gisele L. Fong, Ph.D.

Gisele Fong was appointed as Long Beach Program Manager for the Building Healthy Communities (BHC) initiative in May 2017. Prior to joining The California Endowment, Gisele served as Executive Director of EndOil / Communities for Clean Ports, an environmental health and justice community based agency in Long Beach, and served as chair of the Environmental Health Work Group for Building Healthy Communities Long Beach. Prior to her environmental health and justice work, Gisele worked for many years as a college professor in Ethnic Studies, Asian American Studies and U.S. History at UCLA, Cal State University and California community college campuses.

Gisele has served on numerous boards, commissions, and advisory boards, including the California Air Resources Board's Environmental Justice Advisory Committee, a community based performance arts organization, and a social justice oriented bilingual charter school. Gisele earned her MA in Asian American Studies and PhD in History from UCLA, and is a resident of Long Beach.

Cynthia A. Harding, MPH

Cynthia A. Harding, MPH, is Chief Deputy Directory of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. Previously, she served as the department's Interim Director for two-and-a-half years, overseeing a budget of nearly \$1 billion and more than 39 distinct programs that promote and protect health, and prevent disease in Los Angeles County. She has worked in the

Department of Public Health for over 30 years in a variety of different public health programs, including Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health; Tobacco Control; Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention; Tuberculosis Control and AIDS prevention. Ms. Harding has a bachelor's degree in Community Health from Brown University, a master's of Public Health from UCLA, and a Certificate of Management from USC's Center of Excellence in Health Care Management.

Angelica Hernandez

Angelica Hernandez is a District Representative and Policy Deputy for Senator Dr. Ed Hernandez, O.D. representing District 22 in the California State Senate. Her policy expertise includes K-12 and Higher Education, Immigration, Environmental Quality & Water, Food and Agriculture, Healthcare and Latino Affairs. Ms. Hernandez obtained her Master of Science degree in Public Administration & Public Policy, Bachelor of Arts in History and Bachelor of Science in Political Science: Pre-Law from Cal State LA. She is a MTO Law Fellow with Munger, Tolles & Olson LLP, a James R. Galbraith Fellow at the Edmund G. "Pat" Brown Institute of Public Affairs and is a member of Hermanas Unidas & Hispanas Organized for Political Equality (HOPE). She currently sits on the Pat Brown Institute and COFEM Scholarship Committees. In her free time she volunteers with various nonprofit organizations advocating for immigrant rights and social justice, as well as private consulting

Nancy Halpern Ibrahim, MPH

Nancy Halpern Ibrahim, MPH, has led Esperanza Community Housing Corporation as the Executive Director since November 2006. She joined Esperanza in 1995 as the founding Director of Health Programs and designed Esperanza's model Community Health Promoters Program, which has graduated 494 bilingual Community Health Promoters/ *Promotores de Salud* over the past twenty-one years. As Executive Director, she leads a staff of 28, addressing five major program areas: Affordable Housing, Health, Environmental Justice, Economic Development, and Arts and Culture.

Ms. Ibrahim's efforts have been central to pioneering environmental health strategies in the region, and to advancing the visibility of Mercado La Paloma, Esperanza's economic development venue, as a cultural and culinary hub in South Central Los Angeles. Her work has also focused on the development of a new workforce for community health in Los Angeles. Esperanza's Community Health Promoters programs have engendered innovative community health initiatives such as the South Los Angeles Healthy Homes Project, Better Neighborhood/Same Neighbors, and the Healthy Breathing Program, providing asthma management home-visitation services; and the People Not Pozos campaign that struggles against oil and gas extraction activities in residential neighborhoods. She is a founding member of South Los Angeles Health and Human Rights Coalition, The Asthma Coalition of Los Angeles County (ACLAC), UNIDAD (United Neighbors Against Displacement) Coalition, STAND-LA (Standing Together Against Neighborhood Drilling – Los Angeles.), the South LA Healthy Homes Collaborative, and Los Angeles Department of Public Health's Prevention and Population Health Task Force.

Jill Johnston, Ph.D.

Dr. Johnston graduated with her PhD in Environmental Sciences and Engineering with a specialization in public policy from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. She is

currently an assistant professor of Preventive Medicine and Director of Community Engagement for the Division of Environmental Health at USC. Her research focuses on addressing unequal exposures to harmful contaminants that affect the health of working poor and communities of color. Dr. Johnston worked as a community organizer on issues of environmental and economic justice in South Texas since 2003. Most recently, she worked at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with Dr. Steve Wing to examine disparities in exposure to industrial animal operations. She will continue to collaborate with grassroots organizations to conduct community-engaged action-oriented research at USC to support environmental justice.

Trish Koman, MPP, Ph.D.

Trish Koman leads community-engaged environmental research at the University of Michigan and is a contractor to UCSF's Program on Reproductive Health and the Environment. Trish was previously an environmental scientist at U.S. EPA where she initiated a partnership to reduce diesel emissions at U.S. marine ports as part of the National Clean Diesel Campaign, which grew to a \$100 million EPA grant program with projects on every coast. She forged key alignments with port authorities, the maritime industry and other federal and state partners. Her strategy of multi-sector partnerships revolutionized the technology used in major sectors of the economy, contributed to the establishment of standards for ocean going vessels under an international treaty, achieved top EPA executive buy-in to strategies spanning two presidential administrations, and led to quantifiable public health benefits that continue to grow today. Additional highlights of Dr. Koman's policy achievements include her air quality and policy analyses forming the rationale for setting landmark national ambient air quality standards, and her work on the Clean School Bus USA team, where she developed a public-private partnership to provide clean transportation and environmental education to children and community partners. Dr. Koman's work was recognized with the EPA Administrator's Award for Excellence and four EPA Gold Medals for Exceptional Service.

Yvette Lopez-Ledesma, MPA

Yvette Lopez-Ledesma is Deputy Director of Pacoima Beautiful, an organization invested in promoting environmental justice through education, policy, and cultural arts in the San Fernando Valley. She has over 10 years of experience in program planning, project management, social justice, sustainability, and community engagement. She currently serves on the RE:Code LA Zoning Advisory Committee, and the San Fernando Valley METRO Service Council. Yvette earned her master's degree in public administration as well as her bachelor's degree in urban studies and planning at Cal State University, Northridge.

Angelo Logan

Angelo Logan is the Moving Forward Network, Policy Director out of the Urban & Environmental Policy Institute at Occidental College. Angelo grew up in the City of Commerce and lives in Long Beach CA. Angelo is the co-founder of East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice and has worked with a wide variety of coalitions to achieve health protective policies specifically regarding goods movement and Green Zones. Currently Angelo serves on several committees, such as: SCAQMD's Environmental Justice Advisory Group, I-710 Corridor Advisory Committees, Southern California Association of Governments Goods Movement Task Force and City of Commerce's Environmental Justice Task Force and Green Zones-Policy Working Group.

Yvette Martinez

Yvette Martinez serves as Vice President at Imprenta Communications Group and has 25 years of experience managing campaigns, communications, coalition building and federal policy implementation. She is the Director of the Our Water LA Program at Imprenta. Prior to joining Imprenta, Yvette served as U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer's Deputy State Director and worked in communities throughout California representing the Senator on key public policy initiatives such as protecting the environment, enhancing public safety and transportation measures, and expanding access to healthcare for children and families. She has served as campaign manager and lead strategist to numerous Latino/a elected officials. Yvette also served as Director of Executive Communications for City of Hope, a world leader in the research and treatment of cancer, diabetes, and other serious diseases. Yvette contributes her experience and skills to advancing the mission of critical non-profit organizations. She serves as an appointed Commissioner for First 5 LA and is on the Board of Directors of Planned Parenthood Los Angeles. Yvette earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science from the University of California at Santa Barbara.

Ana Mascareñas, MPH

Ana Mascareñas was appointed as the California Department for Toxic Substance Control's (DTSC) first Assistant Director for Environmental Justice in May 2015. Prior to joining DTSC, Mascareñas was a membership coordinator, then policy and communications director at Physicians for Social Responsibility-Los Angeles, where she promoted environmental health protections and fought for social and environmental justice in local, state, and national policy efforts. From 2006-2008, Mascareñas served in the Los Angeles and Washington D.C. offices of Congressman Xavier Becerra, directly assisting constituents in their claims and applications with federal agencies. She was a member of the East Los Angeles Residents Association board of directors from 2007 to 2015, where she organized alongside community, youth, and business leaders to improve East Los Angeles' social, educational, economic and structural resources through advocacy and civic engagement. Mascareñas graduated from Brown University with bachelor degrees in Human Biology and Sociology, and received a Master of Public Health in Environmental Health Sciences from the Fielding School of Public Health at the University of California, Los Angeles. She is a 2010 graduate of Hispanas Organized for Political Equality (HOPE) Leadership Institute. Mascareñas was born in northern California, raised in New Mexico, and proudly comes from a three-generation California farmworker family.

Janet Pregler, M.D.

Janet P. Pregler, M.D. 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.

Michele Prichard, MA

Michele Prichard is the Director of Common Agenda at the Liberty Hill Foundation. The Common Agenda program guides collaborative efforts to change public policy through cutting edge research, alliance-building and community organizing, including current efforts to establish Green Zones in toxic hotspot communities and to end neighborhood oil drilling. In 2014, she led the UCLA Community Scholars which engaged graduate students and community leaders to research strategies to address climate change in low-income neighborhoods of LA. Michele was appointed by Mayor Villaraigosa in 2011 to the Harbor Community Benefit Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to improving the Port communities of Wilmington and San Pedro. Michele has served as Senior Advisor to California Calls since 2012, and as a Senior Fellow in the UCLA School of Public Affairs since 2007, where she earned her M.A. in Urban Planning in 1989. Michele is co-author of Hidden Hazards, Drilling Down, and LA Rising, found on the Liberty Hill website. In April 2012, Michele received the Distinguished Service Award from the Council on Foundations, the association's highest honor and Liberty Hill's Founders Award at the 2015 Upton Sinclair Award Dinner.

Wendy Ramallo

Wendy Ramallo is the Executive Director of the Council for Watershed Health. Wendy brings to the Council over a decade of experience working in Los Angeles County for both non-profits and government. She has built a solid reputation for engaging diverse communities and building strategic partnerships through her work for such organizations as the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial, LA Neighborhood Land Trust and Para Los Niños, among others. She has a deep understanding of local government systems serving as a Senior Deputy for LA County Supervisor Gloria Molina and has been a strong advocate for green space equity throughout Los Angeles County and community-driven research, as well as strengthening health and economic outcomes for our most underserved neighborhoods.

Darryl Molina Sarmiento

Darryl Molina Sarmiento is the Executive Director of Communities for a Better Environment (CBE), a 39-year-old environmental justice organization with a Triad Model of community organizing, research, and legal support in its campaigns for environmental justice. CBE builds local power in Wilmington, South East Los Angeles, East Oakland, and Richmond and amplifies the priorities and voices of communities within local, regional, statewide, and national EJ efforts. CBE works with its members to not only prevent increased pollution in already over-burdened communities, but to envision and enact a Just Transition towards clean energy and healthy, empowered communities. In 2005, she joined CBE as the Youth Program Coordinator where she organized youth to defeat the Vernon Power Plant. In 2011, Darryl transitioned into the role of CBE's Southern California Program Director where she has been at the helm of successful community-based campaigns against the fossil fuel industry and toxic polluters and was instrumental in leading the passage of a City of Los Angeles ordinance—Clean Up Green Up— one of the first Environmental Justice Green Zone Policies in the nation. She has worked on the passage of statewide energy and climate policy, and has worked to advance local clean energy and transportation goals. Darryl also co-chaired the Stand Together Against

Neighborhood Drilling-Los Angeles Coalition (STAND LA) to advance a buffer zone policy on neighborhood oil drilling in the City of Los Angeles. Darryl graduated from UCLA and has a background in student organizing, labor organizing and community organizing.

Suely Saro, Ed.D.

Dr. Suely Ngouy Saro is a public affairs and non-profit professional with a passion for social justice and public service. Dr. Saro is currently a field representative in the Office of Senator Ricardo Lara. She serves as a Commissioner for the City of Long Beach's Citizen Police Complaint Commission. Meanwhile, she is the co-founder and board chair of Women for Women Foundation in Cambodia, which increases the economic security of women with disability through a social enterprise and social services programs. She began her career as a labor organizer working with Cambodian janitors at Service Employee International Union (SEIU) Local 6 and then health care and mental health workers at SEIU 1199NW in Seattle. She went on to become the first Cambodian American Executive Director of Khmer Girls in Action (KGA), which develops the leadership among Southeast Asian young women in Long Beach to organize and advocate for social change in their community. Subsequently, she joined the Health Access Project at Asians Americans Advancing Justice Los Angeles as a health policy advocate. Dr. Saro has a Doctorate in Education in Organizational Leadership from the University of La Verne. She received her Master's degree in Public Administration from California State University, Long Beach and bachelor's degree in Molecular Cellular Developmental Biology from the University of California, Santa Cruz. She is the recipient of the 2008 Career Development grant from American Association of University Women and the 2010 Entrepreneurial Spirit Award from the Pacific Asian Consortium in Employment.

Bhavna Shamasunder, Ph.D., MES

Dr. Shamasunder is Assistant Professor in the Urban and Environmental Policy Department at Occidental College. She teaches and conducts research on environmental health and justice with a focus on the disparate and cumulative burdens faced by communities of color and the poor. She received her doctorate at the University of California, Berkeley in the Department of Environmental Science, Policy, and Management in December 2011. Prior to joining Berkeley, Bhavna developed and ran the Environmental Health Program at Urban Habitat, a Bay Area environmental justice organization and conducted tobacco research at the Institute for Health Policy Studies at UC San Francisco. She has a Masters in Environmental Studies from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies and Bachelor's degrees in Biology and Development Studies from the University of California, San Diego. Her current projects examine the health impacts from urban oil drilling in environmental justice neighborhoods in Los Angeles and "The Environmental Injustice of Beauty", a project better identify and understand health impacts from beauty products marketed to women of color.

Monika Shankar, MA

Monika Shankar joined PSR-LA in March 2013, bringing with her over 10 years of professional programmatic and research experiences cultivated in both the nonprofit, academic and private sector. As the Director of Health & Environment Programs at PSR-LA, Monika Shankar oversees the organization's Climate, Air and Toxics programs, and coordinates its Land Use work. Monika is responsible for projects and initiatives focused on reducing health disparities caused by mismanagement of land and increasing healthy land use options in low-income

communities of color. This is accomplished by mobilizing and engaging health professionals, community groups and advocates in community development and education, and policy advocacy. Monika sits on the steering committee for the Jordan Downs Environmental Justice Coalition and ClimatePlan. She holds a MA in international urban development from the Milano School of International Affairs, Management, and Urban Policy (The New School).

Rita Singhal, M.D., MPH

Rita Singhal, M.D., MPH, is Medical Director of the LA County Department of Public Health, Office of Women's Health, a position she has held for over 10 years. She is board-certified in Internal Medicine and an Associate Professor in the Department of Medicine at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. Dr. Singhal has completed fellowship training in Women's Health and Health Services Research and received her master's in Public Health at UCLA Fielding School of Public Health. She serves as a medical expert on chronic disease and cancer prevention and addressing social determinants of health among women. Dr. Singhal has dedicated her career to improving the health of underserved women in LA County. As an attending physician in the Department of Medicine at Olive View-UCLA Medical Center, she provides clinical care to women with complicated medical issues and provides instruction to residents in training. At the Office of Women's Health, she produces women's health disparities reports and implements public health programs with a goal of increasing women's health equity in the County.