



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Gilbert Burgos, MD, MPH

CHAIRMAN
Director of Medical Affairs
Elderplan/Homefirst
Bronx, NY

Elena Rios, MD, MSPH, MACP

PRESIDENT & CEO
National Hispanic Medical Association
Washington, DC

Bert Johansson, MD, PhD

CHAIRMAN-ELECT
Pediatrician
Pediatric Critical Care
El Paso, TX

Elizabeth Lee-Rey, MD, MPH

TREASURER
Partner
Eastchester Medical Associates, PC
Bronx, NY

Nereida Correa, MD

PAST CHAIRWOMAN
Partner
Eastchester Medical Associates, PC
Bronx, NY

David Hayes Bautista, PhD

Director, Center on Latino Culture and Health
Professor, David Geffen School of Medicine, UCLA
Los Angeles, CA

Maria Carrasco, MD, MPH

Regional Physician Lead on Cultural Competence
Kaiser Permanente
Montebello, CA

Ricardo Correa, MD

Director, Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism
University of Arizona College of Medicine
Phoenix, AZ

Armando De Alba Rosales, MD, MPH

Assistant Dean for DEI
Associate Professor, Dept of Family Medicine
Ohama, NE

Larissa De Sousa

President, LMSA
MD Candidate
Case Western Reserve
University School of Medicine, OH

Alvaro Galvis, MD, PhD

Chair, Council of Young Physicians
Attending Physician
Loma Linda University
San Bernardino, CA

Linda M. Mirdamadi, MD

Adjunct Clinical Assistant Professor, Keck School of
Medicine
USC Board of Governors
Southern CA

Steven Morrin, MD

Chair, Council of Residents/Fellows
Emergency Medicine Resident
Northwell Health, NY

Sylvia P. Preciado, MD

Internist
Huntington Hospital
Pasadena, CA

David E. Saucedo

Vice President, The Saucedo Company
El Paso, TX

Leonardo Seoane, MD

Senior Vice President and CAO, Ochsner Health
New Orleans, LA

Brian TERNAN

President and CEO, California Health and
Wellness/Health Net, Centene Corporation
Sacramento, CA

Claudia H. Zamora, MPA

Founder & CEO, Zamora Consulting Group
Washington, DC

ADVISORY COUNCIL

Richard H. Carmona, MD, MPH, FACS

17th U.S. Surgeon General (2002-2006)
Chief of Health Innovation, Canyon Ranch
Distinguished Professor
Mel & Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health
MEZCOPH, University of Arizona
Tucson, AZ

Henry Cisneros

Chairman
CityView
San Antonio, TX

Linda Griego

President & CEO
Griego Enterprises, Inc.
Los Angeles, CA

Paloma Hernandez, MPH, MS

President & CEO
Urban Health Plan, Inc.
Bronx, NY

May 2, 2024

The Honorable Xavier Becerra Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Becerra,

We are heartened by the recent news that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has granted Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) to Pempgarda, a new Monoclonal antibody (mAb) treatment. This marks a significant advancement in our ongoing battle against COVID-19. We extend our gratitude for the administration’s dedication to advancing this vital prevention and treatment option and urge its swift introduction and integration into the marketplace.

While Pempgarda’s approval represents a crucial milestone, it is just one facet of our broader challenge. The availability of safe and effective medicine on the market can only truly benefit those in need if it is accessible and affordable. As a coalition encompassing minority health organizations, labor unions, and consumer advocates, we emphasize ensuring the accessibility and affordability of all safe and effective COVID-19 prevention and treatment options for every American.

We commend your past efforts in advocating for increased access to affordable life-saving medications, notably demonstrated by your September 2023 letter to healthcare payers urging coverage of the updated COVID-19 vaccines without cost-sharing. We strongly encourage you to extend similar guidance for Pempgarda and all approved COVID-19 therapies.

Despite the efficacy of existing COVID-19 therapies, relying solely on antivirals and vaccines falls short of safeguarding the estimated seven million immunocompromised individuals in the U.S. As you are aware, these vulnerable patients—especially those facing barriers to accessing or affording newly approved medications and therapies—do not reap the same benefits from antivirals and vaccines as individuals with healthy immune systems.

Your September letter underscored the paramount importance of reducing barriers to coverage and urged consideration of all avenues to achieve this goal. We urge you to apply this same urgency to all COVID-19 therapies. Building upon your call to ensure equitable access to all safe and effective treatments, including mABs, is imperative.

In closing, we appeal to your continued leadership and advocacy to prioritize the accessibility and affordability of safe and effective COVID-19 therapies for all Americans. By working together, we can ensure that no individual is left behind in our collective efforts to overcome this pandemic.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Elena Rios, MD, MSPH, MACP
President & CEO

A. Phillip Randolph Institute

Asian & Pacific Islander American Forum

Alliance for Retired Americans

Black Women's Health Imperative

Consumer Action

Equality Science

Hispanic Federation

Latin Council for Latin American Advancement

Latino Caucus for Public Health

Latinx Medical and Health Society

Long Covid Alliance

Long Covid Families

Long Covid Justice

National Association of Latino Healthcare Executives

National Consumers League

National Hispanic Council on Aging

National Association of Hispanic Nurses

National Latino Behavioral Health Association (new)

Rare Disease Diversity Coalition

The Dick Gregory Society

The Latino Coalition

APIAHF
ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER
AMERICAN HEALTH FORUM

APRI
A. Philip Randolph Institute

 **Alliance
for Retired
American**


BLACK WOMEN'S
HEALTH IMPERATIVE

consumeraction



**The Dick Gregory
Society, Inc.**


EGALITY
SCIENCES


hispanicfederation

 **LATINO CAUCUS
FOR PUBLIC HEALTH**


**THE LATINO
COALITION**

 **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
LATINO HEALTHCARE EXECUTIVES**

LCLAA
LEADER COUNCIL FOR LATIN AMERICAN ADVANCEMENT

LHMS

 **LONG COVID
ALLIANCE**

 **LONG
COVID
FAMILIES**
POST VIRAL ILLNESS SUPPORT

**LONG COVID
JUSTICE**



NAHN
National Association
of Hispanic Nurses

NCL
NATIONAL CONSUMERS LEAGUE

NHCOA
NATIONAL HISPANIC COUNCIL ON AGING

National Latino
Behavioral Health Association

 **DDC**
RARE DISEASE DIVERSITY COALITION