

100 LEADERSHIP when it matters most

The James Irvine Foundation Leadership Awards have recognized 100 innovative leaders making a difference in California. Facing the COVID-19 pandemic and other challenges, many of these leaders have adapted their work and continued to innovate.

Leadership Awards alumni pivot to address timely challenges in health

The four Leadership Award recipients featured in this brief worked in their community to help individuals and families navigate health-related challenges. Their efforts included:

- Providing a platform for young people of color to call for change in the social, economic, and environmental conditions that contribute to health inequities
- Utilizing telehealth to provide vital health care to those who are medically or socially vulnerable or who lack access to providers or health insurance
- Providing basic needs such as food and diapers to low-income individuals and families
- Delivering prescription medicine and healthy food to patients' homes
- Providing virtual educational programming and advising to underserved students who aspire to be health care professionals

By highlighting the work and ideas of these leaders, the Irvine Foundation hopes to help policymakers and our peers in philanthropy advance effective solutions in health.



DR. DEAN SCHILLINGER

2016 AWARD RECIPIENT

UC SAN FRANCISCO CENTER FOR VULNERABLE POPULATIONS AT
SAN FRANCISCO GENERAL HOSPITAL | SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

The Center for Vulnerable Populations is home to a Health Communications Program that engages young people of color to change the conversation about health and disease. Many medical conditions disproportionately impact communities of color, and the Center's solutions create spaces for youth artists in these communities to share their own narratives on policy changes. The Center's Bigger Picture Campaign has nurtured and disseminated

the work of youth spoken word artists, enabling them to expose the unhealthy environmental and social conditions that lead to diabetes. With the onset of the pandemic, the Center shifted its work with 2,400



San Francisco public school students online, and the work broadened to include communicating about COVID-19, a disease whose distribution parallels that of diabetes. Other programs in The Center for Vulnerable Populations also pivoted to focus on COVID-19. These efforts included healthy food distribution programs; screening and vaccination programs for Latino communities; programs to ensure that vulnerable populations can access telehealth services; and COVID-19 protection and housing programs for people who are marginally housed or homeless.

Lessons Learned

Long-standing systemic inequities have put many communities of color at increased risk of getting sick and dying from COVID-19. Facilitating creative expression through art, spoken word, and other creative outlets, engages youth to recognize and shed new light on these systemic issues and help shape a new culture of health.

Policy Consideration: Public health measures to address health disparities and reach communities of color should include creative, youth-focused engagement strategies to expand the reach of public health approaches.



DR. KATHRYN ICENHOWER

2009 AWARD RECIPIENT

SHIELDS FOR FAMILIES | LOS ANGELES COUNTY

SHIELDS for Families keeps families in Los Angeles together and helps children grow up in healthier environments by addressing the community's mental health and substance abuse recovery needs. When COVID-19 surfaced, the organization developed a donation center, distributed fresh foods, and published a guidebook with health facts and resources. It also transitioned clinical service models to telehealth, effectively continuing vital care for behavioral health, substance abuse counseling, parenting, and various group services

through video conferencing tools. In response to the tragic police-involved deaths in 2020, the organization established a diversity, equity, and inclusion committee focused on improvements in the workplace, community-police relations, and social services. Since March 2020, Shields for Families has provided 9,910 donation bags, 301,682 packs of diapers, and 3,640 food boxes to a total of 14,192 household members.

Lessons Learned

Quickly establishing virtual and telehealth delivery of behavioral health and recovery therapies was critical to ensuring continuity of care. In the pandemic, community-based organizations, regardless of their core mission, have been called to provide more holistic "wrap-around" services to support their clients.

Policy Consideration: Policies and investments in telehealth services should support community-based organizations' efforts to adapt service delivery models and increase technological capacity to provide services to their patients.



DR. ELLEN BECK

2010 AWARD RECIPIENT

UC SAN DIEGO STUDENT-RUN FREE
CLINIC PROJECT | SAN DIEGO



The UC San Diego's Student-Run Free Clinic Project provides free, cost-effective, high-quality, and comprehensive health care services to the uninsured while inspiring and training a new generation of medical professionals to work with underserved communities. During the pandemic, the clinic switched to telehealth to ensure individuals and families had access to health care services regardless of their location or health insurance status. Additionally,

students and volunteers delivered prescription medicine and healthy food to patients' homes. The clinic also increased its anti-racism teaching to grow students' capacity to provide culturally competent and in-language care for their patients. As a direct result of the clinic's efforts, more than 500 chronically ill patients experiencing food insecurity, who otherwise would have nowhere to turn, received free ongoing physical and mental health care, medications, and regular deliveries of healthy food.

Lessons Learned

Providing culturally competent health care through telehealth helps build trust between the medical professional and patient and minimizes barriers to access. Utilizing medical school students and practitioners in community-based health care settings expands the scope of medical school training and exposes future practitioners to real-time health delivery challenges.

Policy Consideration: Policies and investments in telehealth services should support a community health worker, or promotora, model. These culturally competent community health workers are instrumental in building trust with patients and helping them overcome any barriers to telehealth.



DR. KATHERINE FLORES

2010 AWARD RECIPIENT

UC SAN FRANCISCO FRESNO LATINO CENTER FOR MEDICAL
EDUCATION AND RESEARCH | CENTRAL VALLEY

UC San Francisco's Fresno Latino Center for Medical Education and Research increases the diversity of the health care workforce by providing pathways for middle school, high school, and college students to enter health professional schools. During the pandemic, the Center seamlessly transitioned its health education programming to a virtual environment, providing 430 underserved students with a variety of resources, including group and one-on-one academic advising, virtual college tours and college guidance,



and presentations by diverse program alumni and other health professionals locally and from afar. For many rural students in the Central Valley, the transition to virtual learning offered a chance to engage in new opportunities to hear from different voices in the health care field that they wouldn't have otherwise due to their location. The Center provided its first Summer Virtual Experience (SVE) for students entering their senior year of high school..During the six-week SVE, 70 students received in-depth experiences such as suturing and clinical case study lectures in place of the on-

site clinical shadowing and mentoring experience that was not possible due to the pandemic and hospital restrictions. The Center also provided its first virtual conference for students and parents in March 2021. During the conference, community and health professionals delivered workshops in two languages focused on cyber safety, mental and physical health in a virtual world, college financial aid, and the COVID-19 vaccine. Additionally, alumni of the Center hosted discussions with students about their journeys from high school to health professional school. As a result of the Center's efforts, students are envisioning themselves as health care professionals and, despite the disruption caused by the pandemic, are continuing to develop the relationships and skills they need to accomplish their goals.

Lessons Learned

Achieving a more diverse and culturally competent health care workforce requires intentional, long-range development of quality education and training pathways starting in middle and high schools. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many California high schools have shifted resources away from their career and technical education (CTE) programs to address immediate needs related to the transition to virtual learning. Pausing or discontinuing CTE programs, like health careers education, could impact students' college and career readiness upon graduation.

Policy Consideration: State policy and investments in the health care workforce should support school-based middle and high school programs that generate interest, exposure, and capacity for students interested in pursuing secondary education in health professions

About the Leadership Awards

The James Irvine Foundation Leadership Awards recognize leaders whose innovative solutions to critical state challenges improve people's lives, create opportunity, and contribute to a better California.

To learn more about the program or the 100 Leadership Award recipients, please visit **www.IrvineAwards.org**.