

UCSF Faculty and Presenter Bios

UCSF Champion Provider Fellowship Faculty

Alicia Fernandez, MD – Professor, UCSF School of Medicine



Dr. Fernandez is Professor of Medicine at UCSF and a primary care physician at Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital (ZSFG). Her research focuses on health care disparities and she is particularly interested in examining the impact of literacy, language and cultural barriers on diabetes and other chronic illnesses. In addition to her research and clinical practice at ZSFG, Dr. Fernandez is an active mentor of students, residents, fellows, and faculty. A member of the UCSF Academy of Medical Educators and a recipient of the Arnold P. Gold Professorship Award in Medical Humanism, in 2014 Dr. Fernandez was appointed to the Board of Governors of the Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI).

L. Elizabeth (Liz) Goldman, MD, MCR – Associate Professor, UCSF School of Medicine



Dr. Goldman is an Associate Professor of Medicine at UCSF, affiliate faculty at the Philip Lee Institute for Health Policy Studies, and a primary care physician at ZSFG. She is interested in innovative health systems solutions to improving the quality of care in the safety net, particularly for care transitions, care coordination, and health care value. Dr. Goldman is nationally and locally recognized for her expertise in quality measurement and evaluation. She is the medical lead for several case management programs in the San Francisco Health Network.

Wagahta Semere, MD- Assistant Professor, UCSF School of Medicine



Dr. Semere is an Assistant Clinical Professor at UCSF and primary care physician at Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital. She recently completed a fellowship in health services research with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Clinical Scholars at Yale. Her research focuses on understanding the health and health care needs of vulnerable populations, with a particular interest in language and communication barriers. She has extensive experience working with diverse immigrant and refugee communities. As a fellow, she was trained in and applied methods of Community-based Participatory Research (CBPR) in her work.

Vanessa. Thompson, MD – Associate Professor, UCSF School of Medicine (ZSFG)



Dr. Thompson is an Associate Professor at UCSF and a primary care physician at Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital (ZSFG). She serves as the Associate Medical Director for the Richard Fine People's Clinic at ZSFG. She also holds medical education positions with the UCSF Internal Medicine Residency and the School of Medicine. Her expertise is in medical education and care for underserved populations. Dr. Thompson is the Principal Investigator for the Champion Provider Fellowship Initiative.

UCSF Faculty and Presenter Bios

Presenter Bios

Ken Bird, MD, MPH - Health Officer, Fresno County Department of Public Health

Dr. Kenneth D. Bird is the Health Officer for the County of Fresno. He has 36 years' experience as a general practice physician with training in pediatrics and aerospace and preventive medicine and further experience in family and emergency room medicine. Dr. Bird has held both clinical and administrative roles in a variety of public health programs within the Fresno County Department of Public Health, including correctional medicine, county rural healthcare clinics, STD clinic, TB clinic, bioterrorism, emergency response and preparedness, avian and pandemic flu planning, and public health physician peer review. Dr. Bird has served in the US Navy as a commanding officer of a naval reserve hospital unit, as a local school board president, as a statewide local detention facility accreditation surveyor for the California Medical Association's Institute for Medical Quality, and has held various executive offices (including that of president) of the California Tuberculosis Controllers Association. He has also worked at the state level in policy development as a past member and former vice chairman of the Corrections and Detentions Health Care Committee of the Institute for Medical Quality; service as chairman of a California Board of Corrections' Medical/Mental Health Sections of Title, 15 2001 Review and Revision Workgroup; and as an executive committee member of the California TB Controller's Association.

Sarah Reyes- Director of Communications, Healthy Communities, The California Endowment

Sarah Reyes is the Director of Communications for Healthy Communities at The California Endowment one of California's largest health focused foundations. In that role, she is responsible for helping to tell the story of the Endowment's 10-year place based initiative "Building Healthy Communities." She is also responsible for making investments in work that highlights the leadership of Young men of color in the Central Valley while helping decision makers to understand the many social and health disparities faced by this population. She also oversees the Endowments grant making in the Central San Joaquin Valley. In her many roles at the foundation, Sarah continues her extraordinary work of building strong communities in her hometown of Fresno and the Central Valley.

Prior to joining the Endowment, Sarah served in the State Legislator for six years as the Assembly member representing the 31st District in Fresno and Tulare Counties. Upon her election in 1998, Sarah became the first Latina and only the second women to be elected to State office from the Central Valley. She has also worked as Chief of Staff to a legislative member.

Sarah's background also includes serving as Executive Director of the Community Food Bank, where during her leadership the non-profit flourished and today continues to assist thousands of hungry families with food assistance. Sarah has also served as Assistant to the Chancellor at State Center Community College District. She was a news reporter/anchor for KSEE Channel 24 and a news reporter for KCRA TV in Sacramento.

Samantha Pellón, MPH- Associate Director, Center for Health Policy, California Medical Association

Samantha Pellón is an Associate Director with the California Medical Association in their Center for Health Policy. Samantha covers public health policy issues and staffs CMA's Council on Science and Public Health, a committee comprised of physicians and medical students charged to study and make recommendations concerning public health and clinical issues.

UCSF Faculty and Presenter Bios

Samantha previously worked for the American Lung Association in California as a policy analyst, supporting their statewide and local advocacy efforts around tobacco control and lung health. Samantha also worked for the Public Health Institute and California Department of Health Care Services, and was a previous CMA employee for several years. Samantha received her MPH from the University of California at Berkeley and her BA from Claremont McKenna College.

Alecia Sanchez - Associate Director, Government Relations, California Medical Association

With over a decade working in policy, Ms. Sanchez has built expertise and achieved successes in public health, access to health care, and child welfare policy. As a legislative advocate for the California Medical Association, Ms. Sanchez's current advocacy portfolio includes public health and the physician licensure and discipline process. Prior to CMA, she had stints as an advocate for the California Center for Public Health Advocacy, the American Cancer Society, California Division, and the Children's Advocacy Institute. She started her career as legislative staff for former Assemblymembers Virginia Strom-Martin and the late Marco Firebaugh. She is a proud alumna of Claremont McKenna College.

Shannon Udovic-Constant, MD - General Pediatrician, Kaiser Permanente

Shannon Udovic-Constant, M.D. is a board certified pediatrician and has practiced with Kaiser Permanente in San Francisco California since 2001. She is an active staff at the Kaiser Foundation Hospital in San Francisco (2001-Present). Dr. Udovic-Constant serves on the Permanente Medical Group Board of Directors. She is a Past-President of the San Francisco Medical Society. She is a Trustee on the CMA Board of Trustees, a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the National Physician Alliance. Dr. Udovic-Constant completed medical school and residency training at UCSF School of Medicine.

Paula Hamilton, BS, MS - Director, Brown Miller Communications

Paula Hamilton is Director of Brown-Miller Communications, an award-winning, full-service public relations and communications company with a wide range of public and non-profit sector clients, including public health, health care, education and advocacy organizations. She brings over 20 years of experience as a journalist to Brown-Miller Communications, along with a wealth of knowledge about the media and an extensive network of local, statewide and national media contacts. Her background as a journalist provides her with an understanding of the needs of the press and how to best deliver stories that meet these needs in today's changing media environment. She is skilled at crafting compelling stories that educate the public about her client's critical public health issues. In addition to her work with the media, Paula's expertise includes providing comprehensive, hands-on training on messaging, working with the media and becoming a successful spokesperson.

Melissa Peters, MPH - Policy Analyst, ChangeLab Solutions

As a policy analyst at ChangeLab Solutions, Melissa works to support agencies and communities working on policy issues related to tobacco control, childhood obesity and community planning. Before joining ChangeLab Solutions, she worked as a health education specialist for the San Luis Obispo Tobacco Control Program where she focused on community advocacy, developed tools and resources, and assisted jurisdictions interested on tobacco policy adoption. She also served as a research coordinator for the University of California, San Francisco where she supported qualitative research project seeking to understand patient and physician use and knowledge of lung cancer screening. Melissa received her BS in Psychology from California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo and her MPH in Community Health Education from San Francisco State University.