



Speaker Bios (Listed in alphabetical order)

2025 Onboarding and Mini College

June 11-12, 2025, Sacramento, CA

Muriel Bañares, Account Manager, Brown Miller Communications*:



A veteran communications expert specializing in consumer health education and multicultural communications, Muriel develops and manages integrated communications campaigns aimed at educating consumers and changing and improving behaviors. She directs audience research, discerns areas of opportunity and crafts unique strategies to influence and educate specific audience segments. In many cases, this means addressing varying language and cultural issues among key populations and subpopulations. Her execution of the award-winning comprehensive social marketing campaign, Steps to a Healthier Salinas, resulted in groundbreaking and lasting health improvements.

Maxmillian Chambers, DDS, Champion Provider Fellow Cohort 5, Imperial County



Dr. Maxmillian Chambers is the founder of ImpowerDent SurgiCenters Inc. A 501(c)(3) ambulatory dental surgical center and serves as a Clinical Staff Dentist at Innercare, a Federally Qualified Health Center. As a CalFresh Champion Fellow, he advocates for integrating oral health into broader healthcare initiatives, focusing on nutrition and the needs of underserved communities. His work aims to expand access to dental care through sustainable, patient-centered approaches.

Sharon DiPierro, MD, Champion Provider Fellow Alumni, San Mateo County



Dr. Sharon DiPierro is a pediatrician and mother of three who is devoted to improving child and community health. She has teamed up with the local health department and county parks to prescribe nature to improve physical, mental, and social wellness. In order to increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables for all families, she has partnered with community organizations on produce prescription programs and advocated for sustainable funding at the payer and government levels. She also teaches pediatric residents as an Adjunct Clinical Associate Professor at Stanford University.

Dr. DiPierro is the Lead on Food Programs at Ravenswood Family Health Center, a federally qualified health center that serves mostly immigrant families in East Palo Alto. She completed her undergraduate and medical degrees at Brown University, and her pediatric training at UC Davis.



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Beth Griffiths, MD, MPH, Associate Professor, Medicine, University of California, San Francisco



Dr. Beth Griffiths is an internal medicine physician who provides primary care to adults and teaches medical students and residents in primary care clinic. She also teaches health policy, advocacy, and community engagement and collaborates with researchers to translate their work into policy change. Prior to attending medical school, Dr. Griffiths worked on health and human services legislation in both the California state legislature and the U.S. House of Representatives. She has held leadership roles in the California Medical Association and American Medical Association.

Trang Hoa, MD, Champion Provider Fellow, Cohort 5, Riverside County



Dr. Trang Hoa currently works as a Medical Consultant for The Children California Services at Riverside County. She was born in Vietnam and immigrated to Canada when she was 5 years of age. After completing her Medical School at St. George's University, she completed her General Pediatric Residency at SUNY Downstate in Brooklyn, New York. During her training, she had a great fondness for pulmonary medicine, particularly asthmatics. She completed her Pediatric Pulmonary Fellowship at The University of California, Irvine/Long Beach Memorial. Prior to joining Riverside Public Health Department, she practiced as a General Pediatrics for a Federally Qualified Health Care Center in Garden Grove for a predominately Vietnamese community.

Paul Hsiao, DDS, MPH, JD, FACD, FICD, Champion Provider Fellow Alumni, Fresno County



Dr. Paul Hsiao is a private practice dentist with a distinguished background in both clinical dentistry and health policy. He is a graduate of the University of California, Berkeley, and holds a Master of Public Health with a dental emphasis, a Juris Doctorate with a focus on healthcare, and a Doctor of Dental Surgery degree from the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF). He completed a two-year General Practice Residency at Community Medical Centers and the VA Hospital in Fresno, where he served as chief dental resident.

Dr. Hsiao is a Fellow of both the American College of Dentists and the International College of Dentists. He has previously served as volunteer faculty at UCSF's School of Dentistry, completed the Champion Provider Fellowship through UCSF and the California Department of Public Health, and is a graduate of the American Dental Association's Institute for Diversity in Leadership.

He has held numerous leadership positions within organized dentistry, including multiple terms as president of his local dental society. He has also served as a council member at the California Dental Association (CDA), as a delegate to both the CDA and American Dental Association (ADA) Houses of Delegates, and currently serves as the Board Component Representative for Fresno at CDA.



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Andy Krackov, Founder, Hillcrest Advisory



Andy Krackov's career in communications has focused on the intersection of data and community-level action. His consultancy, Hillcrest Advisory, works with social sector organizations on the front lines of local change, including government agencies, foundations, and local collaboratives, to help them communicate numbers effectively and tell stories with data, in order to transform facts into impact. The bulk of Andy's data storytelling experience is in California, where he managed statewide data projects for two foundations – the kidsdata.org program at the Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health and the Free the Data initiative for the California Health Care Foundation.

Mike Miller, President, Brown Miller Communications*



As president and founder of Brown-Miller Communications, Michael has worked to address public health and agricultural issues for over three decades. Through ongoing involvement and relationships with nonprofit foundations, government agencies and private industry, he is uniquely versed in the issues affecting a wide range of public health fields. Michael draws on his 40 years of public relations experience to translate the needs and news of his clients into messages, campaigns and materials that reach and stimulate the media, public and policymakers. His skills as a strategic communicator have helped to address a broad spectrum of critical issues, from educating the public about COVID-19 to reshaping community behaviors, policies and expectations around emerging health realities. Through his communication leadership and management, Michael has won a host of awards for his clients, including the nation's highest public relations honor, the Silver Anvil, on four separate occasions. He serves on several client, community and industry boards. His writings on public relations in public health are widely published, and he regularly speaks and trains on a variety of communications topics.

Lanelle (Lani) Nakamura, MD, FAAP, Champion Provider Fellow, Cohort 5, Riverside County



Dr. Lanelle (Lani) Nakamura was born and raised in Honolulu, Hawaii. She completed her medical school at the University of Hawai'i John A. Burns School of Medicine and pediatric residency program at University of Hawai'i based at Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women and Children. She pursued her passion in oncology by completing a pediatric hematology/oncology fellowship with Baylor College of Medicine at Texas Children's Hospital in Houston, Texas. Upon completing her fellowship, she joined the faculty Loma Linda University Children's Hospital as Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Attending, subsequently transitioning to Pediatric Pulmonary Hospitalist. She continues to serve as the Continuing Medical Education Director for Pediatrics. Her clinical experience inspired her to expand her patient advocacy in her current position at Riverside County Public Health with California Children's Services (CCS).



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Rita Nguyen, MD, California Department of Public Health



Rita Nguyen, MD was appointed Assistant State Public Health Officer by Governor Gavin Newsom in February 2022. In this role she oversees the Population Health Pillar of the California Department of Public Health, accounting for about a third of the Department's programs including programs covering chronic disease, behavioral health, injury and violence prevention; maternal, child, and adolescent health; WIC; environmental health; occupational health; and health statistics and informatics. Previously she was Assistant Health Officer and Chronic Disease Physician Specialist at the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) from 2017-2022. Prior to her time at SFDPH, Dr. Nguyen was an Assistant Clinical Professor at UCSF serving patients at the Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital (ZSFG). As Medical Director of Healthy Food Initiatives at ZSFG's Wellness Center, Dr. Nguyen worked to champion the importance of addressing social drivers of health and community health in healthcare settings.

Brianna Pittman-Spencer, California Dental Association



Brianna Pittman-Spencer is Sr. Director of Government Affairs at the California Dental Association, where she has led the legislative and regulatory advocacy team since 2015. Pittman-Spencer works on behalf of CDA's 27,000 members in their mission to serve patients and the public's oral health. For nearly two decades, she has worked in state level governmental advocacy on a wide range of high-profile health care policy issues, including expanding access to women's reproductive care, implementation of health care reform, reforming dental insurance, and increasing Medicaid funding and access.

Alecia Sanchez, Chief Strategy Officer, California Medical Association



Alecia Sanchez is Chief Strategy Officer, working with the CEO and Vice Presidents to facilitate interdepartmental cooperation and coordination in implementing CMA's strategic priorities.

She previously served as one of CMA's lobbyists, where she led successful advocacy efforts to remove non-medical exemptions for school vaccination and to pass a historic package of anti-tobacco legislation. Ms. Sanchez has over 15 years' experience in the legislative arena, including serving as a legislative aide to two state assemblymembers.



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Rakhi Singh, MD, Champion Provider Fellow Alumni, San Mateo County



Dr. Rakhi Singh serves as the Medical Director for the Fair Oaks Health Center Adult Clinic, (part of the San Mateo Medical Center/ County Health System) in Redwood City. Her focus, especially during this last year with the pandemic, has been on team-based telemedicine and quality improvement using LEAN methodology. She also has a passion for tackling food insecurity and has collaborated with several community partners to find solutions and empower families to better understand that food is medicine. Rakhi received her B.S. at UCLA, MD from Saba University School of Medicine, and completed her Residency and Chief Residency at UMDNJ. She also completed a fellowship in the Department of Family Medicine in Community Health Center Director Development at Georgetown University and was part of the eighth cohort of the UCSF Institute for Physician Leadership.

Wagahta Semere, Director, MD, MHS, Champion Provider Fellowship, University of California San Francisco*



Wagahta is an Associate Professor of Medicine at UCSF in the Division of General Internal Medicine and a primary care provider in the Richard H. Fine People's Clinic at Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital. She is trained in health services research, with a background in quantitative, qualitative, and community-based participatory research (CBPR) methods. Her work is focused on developing strategies, informatics-based tools, and using CBPR and computer science to better engage racially/ethnically diverse patients and their caregivers with providers in chronic disease management. Her current work focuses on examining communication between culturally and linguistically diverse patients, their caregivers, and providers. She has applied machine learning, natural language processing, and novel computational linguistics techniques to characterize secure message communication. She is particularly interested in leveraging technology-based platforms and clinical informatics methods to develop communication tools that promote safe and effective family-centered care.

David Thai, DDS, Champion Provider Fellow, Cohort 5, Sonoma County



Dr. David Thai received his Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS) at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) and received his Bachelor of Science in Microbial Biology from the University of California, Berkeley (UC Berkeley). Dr. Thai had been a guest lecturer at UCSF School of Dentistry (2012-2018), co-founder of Bay Area Sleep Apnea Solutions (2014-2016), and practiced in private dental clinics prior to venturing into dentistry at Federally Qualified Health Centers in 2017.

As West County Health Centers' Dental Director, Dr. Thai is passionate about improving access to quality dental care for the West County community and excited to work multidisciplinary with West County Health Centers' Medical team to enhance overall patient health and wellness through the practice of relationship-based care.



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Lauren Whetstone, PhD, California Department of Public Health, Nutrition and Physical Activity Branch



Lauren Whetstone is acting manager of the Nutrition and Physical Activity Branch at the California Department of Public Health, and is the manager of the Research, Evaluation, and Special Projects Section. For 12 years she has led efforts to evaluate obesity prevention policy, system, and environmental change strategies implemented by local health departments as part of their CalFresh Health Living/SNAP-Ed grants. She is currently the program manager for the branch's State Physical Activity and Nutrition grant from the CDC. Lauren has a PhD in applied cognitive psychology from the Claremont Graduate University. She previously held a faculty position in the Department of Family Medicine at East Carolina University in Greenville, NC with 18 years' experience evaluating community and clinic-based obesity and chronic disease prevention interventions in underserved rural communities.

Fadra Whyte, DMD, MPH, Champion Provider Fellow Alumni, San Diego County



Dr. Whyte is the Chief Dental Officer for County of San Diego Health and Human Services. Having a full time Chief Dental Officer is a newer role for the County and it demonstrates the County's commitment to improving oral health throughout the lifespan for all San Diegans. Dr. Whyte is a diplomate of the American Board of Pediatric Dentistry and a fellow of the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry. She is also on faculty with the NYU Langone Health Pediatric Dental Residency Program affiliated with San Ysidro Health and on medical staff with Rady Children's Hospital San Diego. Her work interests include medical-dental integration, research, and increasing access to care to our most vulnerable populations.

*Champion Provider Fellowship Team