

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

Children's Environmental Health on the Border: Protecting Children Where They Live, Learn, and Play

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University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
Brownsville, Texas

U.S. Speaker Biographies

Leonel Vela, MD, MPH

OPENING REMARKS



Dr. Leonel Vela, a Pharr, Texas native, is the Senior Associate Dean for Education and Academic Affairs, Professor in the Department of Family and Preventive Medicine and Chair of the Department of Medical Education for the University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley, School of Medicine. Dr. Vela was the founding Dean of the Regional Academic Health Center (RAHC), a campus of the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio (UTHSCSA). For 15 years he directed the medical education and biomedical research components of the RAHC. As its first Regional Dean, he supervised the development and establishment of the RAHC campuses during their formative years. He has held an academic appointment of Professor with Tenure in the UTHSCSA Department of Family and Community Medicine.

Dr. Vela received his undergraduate degree in Medical Microbiology from Stanford University and his medical degree from Baylor College of Medicine. He completed post-graduate studies at Harvard University where he received a Masters of Public Health Degree. Dr. Vela completed post-graduate training in Preventive Medicine. While at the Harvard he was the recipient of a Kellogg Fellowship in Health Policy and Management. Dr. Vela received additional training in epidemiology at the CDC in Atlanta, and a fellowship in Community Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine. He is board-certified in Preventive Medicine and is a Diplomate of the American Board of Preventive Medicine.

Dr. Vela has been in academic medicine for the past 19 years, including serving as Vice President for Rural and Community Health at the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC). At TTUHSC, Dr. Vela was the first holder of the Marie Hall Endowed Chair in Rural and Community Health. Additionally, Dr. Vela was the Medical Director for Telemedicine and Editor of the Texas Journal of Rural Health.

Dr. Vela has served on several state, national and international committees addressing tuberculosis, diabetes, migrant health, border health and telemedicine. He has been involved in publications and professional presentations addressing these topics, including public health and emerging infections on the border. He has participated in several professional organizations and previously chaired the National Advisory Council on Migrant Health for the U.S. Secretary of Health. He also chaired the Group on Regional Medical Campuses for the Association of American Medical Colleges. Dr. Vela has received various awards and was honored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Migrant Head Start Branch, as recipient of the Plate of Bounty Award.

RON CURRY

OPENING REMARKS:

Ron Curry was appointed as US EPA Region 6 Regional Administrator in September 2012. He has more than 36 years of management experience in local, state and federal government, as well as the private sector. Most recently, Curry worked with the University of New Mexico on the development of their Energy/Water/Environment Nexus Studies program. Prior to that, he spent eight years serving in former New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson's administration as cabinet secretary of the Environment Department and Natural Resource Trustee. In the position as secretary, he oversaw the regulation of the Los Alamos and Sandia National Laboratories and the implementation of standards to protect the air, water and land of New Mexico. He also led the Governor's initiative to join the Western Climate Initiative and lead the climate change implementation state team in New Mexico. He developed the Environmental Justice Executive Order signed in November 2005 by Governor Richardson. As trustee, he successfully negotiated a \$13 million ground water consent decree in 2010. He has extensive experience working closely with the EPA, the U.S. Department of Energy and the U.S. Department of Defense, as well as industry. He also served as administrator for the Village of Los Ranchos and as a city manager in Santa Fe.



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Earlier in his career, Curry was a senior public affairs specialist for Gram Inc. and worked on a site-wide environmental impact statement for Los Alamos National Laboratory; and vice president of CEI Enterprises, a manufacturing firm. He has over 20 years of experience in private business including 10 years owning a small business franchise started with his father. His interest in the environment grew during his manufacturing career while marketing products into the South Coast Air Quality District in California. He brings to the EPA a keen understanding of federal environmental regulations impacts on business owners and entrepreneurs as well as state and local governments.

JOSÉ L. VELASCO, MSW

CLOSING REMARKS

José Luis Velasco, M.S.W., is the Executive Director of the U.S. Section of the U.S.-México Border Health Commission (BHC), Office of the Americas, Office of Global Affairs, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The BHC, established as a binational entity in 2000, provides leadership to optimize health and quality of life along the U.S.-México border. As Executive Director, Mr. Velasco provides day-to-day guidance to the U.S. Section, engages with the Government of México and external stakeholders, and develops policies and strategies to further the mission and objectives of the Commission.



Prior to this position, Mr. Velasco worked with HHS's Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services as the National Hispanic Outreach Specialist in the Office of Public Engagement. In this capacity, he oversaw partnership activities with stakeholders serving minority communities and the disadvantaged as well as coordinated a wide variety of policy and operational efforts, including efforts to implement the Affordable Care Act.

In addition, Mr. Velasco has worked for HHS's Administration on Aging and for the National Hispanic Council on Aging, where he provided leadership and technical assistance on outreach campaigns, coalition building, and policy and program development. Mr. Velasco also served with the Guadalupe Missionaries International Institute in México and Central and South America, collaborating with local, national, and international faith-based and other organizations to develop sustainable projects addressing poverty and hunger.

Mr. Velasco holds a bachelor's degree in Philosophy and a master's degree in Clinical Social Work with a concentration in Gerontology.

LAURA GOMEZ

OPENING REMARKS & PLENARY SESSION 4: Collaborative Partnerships "Call to Action" - "Strong Cities, Strong Communities" White House Initiative

Ms. Gómez Rodríguez currently serves as the SC 2 Team Lead for the White House Council on Strong Cities, Strong Communities for the SC2 City of Brownsville. Previously, she served as a Congressional Liaison for the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations.

With over ten years of public service, her areas have focused on tri-lateral and bi-lateral work in North America, Central America, Mexico, Oman, Singapore, and Colombia focusing on environmental and intergovernmental cooperation.

Her recent awards and recognitions include superior service awards for advancing congressional relations with the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate on behalf of EPA, and a gold medal for commendable service for her bilateral work with Mexico. Before joining federal service, Ms. Gómez Rodríguez has served as a Community Outreach Liaison both for the State of Arizona and for the State of Texas by working with local governments to facilitate their bilateral relationship with Mexico.

Ms. Gómez Rodríguez has completed studies and certificates from the Universidad de Alcalá de Henares in Spain, the Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores del Occidente (ITESO) in Mexico and Imperial College in England. She holds an M.A. degree in International Relations with a focus on International Development and a B.A. degree in International Relations from St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas. She is originally from Brownsville, Texas.

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STEPHEN BORRON, MD, MS, FAACT, FACMT

PLENARY SESSION 1: *“Pediatric environmental health: what is it and why does it matter?”*

TRACK C: *Fracking*

Dr. Stephen W. Borron is a native of the Permian Basin region of West Texas. He completed undergraduate studies at Texas A&M University, medical school at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, and a Master of Science degree in Environmental Health from the University of Cincinnati. He completed residency training and Emergency Medicine and a clinical research Fellowship in Occupational and Environmental Health, both at the University of Cincinnati, as well as a one-year preceptorship in Medical Toxicology. He is board-certified in Emergency Medicine, Occupational Medicine, and Medical Toxicology. He currently serves as Professor of Emergency Medicine and Medical Toxicology at the Paul L. Foster School of Medicine at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in El Paso. He also serves as Medical Director of the Southwest Center for Pediatric Environmental Health and for the West Texas Regional Poison Center. Dr. Borron has published over 100 peer-reviewed articles in the scientific literature and is editor of ToxEd, a toxicology database published by Elsevier.



GRECIA HUERTA, MD

PLENARY SESSION 2: *ZIKA*

Dr. Gredia Huerta-Montanez was born and raised in Puerto Rico. She graduated Magna Cum Laude from the University of Puerto Rico completing a major in Biology and later earning her medical doctor degree from the University of Puerto Rico School of Medicine. She completed her residency training in Pediatrics at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation in Cleveland, Ohio and moved to Atlanta where she helped establish a Children’s Health Care of Atlanta primary pediatrics clinic caring for an underserved Latino population. She returned to Puerto Rico after a few years and since then has worked as a staff pediatrician in a private hospital emergency room, as a hospitalist and at the PICU and NICU settings. From 2012-2014 she collaborated with the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) managing case-patients with pediatric lead intoxication linked to a battery recycling facility in Puerto Rico. She helped launch a pediatric environmental health center in Puerto Rico with EPA funding in partnership with the Mount Sinai PEHSU. In 2014 she completed a pediatric environmental health subspecialty at the University of Puerto Rico.

In 2014 she was selected to for the EPA Children’s Health Protection Advisory Committee (CHPAC) where she has been active in the Climate and Human Health, the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Lead, and the Farmworker Protection workgroups.

Pediatric environmental health, specifically in underserved pediatric populations as well as child and adolescent neurodevelopment have been her main areas of interest.

She has been a lecturer in pediatric environmental health, particularly on the prevention and management of elevated blood lead levels in children, pesticide exposure prevention and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) principles, and Zika infection prevention and management. She also has counseled parents and presented on parenting, adolescent behavior and childhood development. She has developed several information products on pediatric asthma, Zika prevention and pesticide exposure prevention. She has striven to = increase awareness on the relevance of the pediatric environmental health and the t need to coordinate academic and research activities to address all these serious issues. Dr. Huerta-Montanez is currently working as an investigator with Northeastern University and the University of Puerto Rico in the Center for Research on Early Childhood Exposure and Development (CRECE) in Puerto Rico. CRECE is a Children’s Environmental Health Center program funded by the EPA and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences that studies how an array of environmental exposures impact the health and development of infants and children living in Puerto Rico. She is also part of the team of investigators working in the Zika in Infants and Pregnancy (ZIP) study funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). ZIP is a prospective study aiming at enrolling as many as 10,000 pregnant women to better understand this virus and help guide medical care, prevention and public health interventions to control this epidemic.

LISA MITCHELL-BENNETT, MA, MPH

PLENARY SESSION 3: *Promotoras Panel*

Lisa Mitchell Bennett was born in Mexico City and lived and worked in Latin America, Europe and here on the US-Mexico border for the last 25 years. She has a BA from the University of California, where she spent her summers working with the Farm Labor Organizing Committee. She has a Master’s Degree in International Development (MIA) from the School for International Training

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and a Master's Degree in Public Health (MPH) from the UT School of Public Health. She has worked with unaccompanied minors and detained adults seeking political asylum; designed training for international exchange programs for rural Central American youth, co-founded a binational Community Health Worker (CHW) organization (Mano a Mano), which took her into garbage dump settlements, shantytowns and colonias on both sides of the border. She managed school based health clinics, job training programs in an inner-city Philadelphia and was an Associate Editor at Latin America Press based in Lima, Peru. More recently she has been involved in research and organizing around health equity, community-based participatory research and training of CHWs (promotoras). She currently manages a large staff and portfolio of outreach and research projects at UTHealth including an evidence based youth obesity intervention, a multi-county chronic care management effort for uninsured participants with uncontrolled diabetes, a mobile clinic navigation outreach program and Tu Salud ¡Si Cuenta! (Your Health Matters!) a community-wide campaign that promotes healthy, active living in partnership with 9 towns and cities in Cameron County through the media, policy and built environment initiatives which prevent and control obesity and related chronic conditions. She writes a weekly column in two local newspapers and is devoted to working for social justice alongside residents of the Rio Grande Valley to improve quality of life. She is committed to making the connections between health and art; health and the environment; and health and economic development. She was named a Building Communities Hero in 2016 for her work in the Rio Grande Valley.

SILVIA GARCIA

PLENARY SESSION 3: *Promotoras Panel*

Silvia Garcia has been working as a Promotora, certified as a Community Health Worker (CHW) by the State of Texas since 2010, and a certified CHW Instructor since 2014. She has worked in diverse projects including a program connecting with parents to encourage less screen-time and more physical activity, an outreach program bringing healthy lifestyle initiatives like Tu Salud ¡Si Cuenta! to neighborhoods where folks do have limited access to healthy food choices and exercise programs. She has conducted door-to-door home visits to motivate and connect families to local resources and inform on topics as diverse as voter registration, petitions for hike and bike trails, smoking bans, and simply invitations to initiatives like CycloBia, the Biggest Loser Challenge, the Farmers' Market and neighborhood clean-up. She has participated in several community-based research studies including a colorectal cancer screening and education program and most recently Salud y Vida, a program for uninsured individuals with uncontrolled diabetes which provides home visits and assigns Promotoras to connect people with much needed clinics, mental health services, transportation, social services, support groups, medication and most importantly ongoing support for behavior change. Ms. Garcia has taught diabetes self-management classes, exercise classes, life skills and nutrition classes in homes, churches, schools and community centers. She has been involved in advocating for policies and environmental change to improve the health of her neighborhood and other communities in Cameron County. She participates in Promotora networks in Cameron County and the Valley.



She is trained in Motivational Interviewing and studied education in Mexico, serving for years as a teacher of primary education in Tamaulipas.

TANIA CHAVEZ

PLENARY SESSION 3: *Promotoras Panel*

Tania is an immigrant from Veracruz, Mexico who discovered the world of organizing at the Latino Leadership Initiative through the Harvard Kennedy School-Center for Public Leadership. Chavez founded Minority Affairs Council—a student-led organization that harnesses the talents, abilities and determination of the RGV youth. Chavez continues to advocate for college access for students regardless of immigration status. Tania is currently an independent consultant helping LUPE implement new ideas in service to their membership.



JOSE BRAVO

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS IN ACTION: “Campaign for Healthier Solutions”

Jose Bravo is the Executive Director for the Just Transition Alliance (JTA). JTA is an organization that has existed since 1997. Jose works directly with Environmental Justice (EJ) Communities and organized and unorganized Labor. Bravo’s work in social justice issues is rooted from his upbringing in the Southern California avocado fields alongside both his parents. Jose has participated in the Environmental Justice (EJ) movement since 1990, over the years he has gained recognition as a national and international leader and expert on EJ issues. His current work involves coordinating a national campaign on Dollar Stores and the toxics in dollar store products. This campaign is called the Campaign for Healthier Solutions (CHS).



BRENDA REYES, MD, MPH

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS IN ACTION: “Education vs Lobbying”

A consummate environmental health professional with over 20 year of expertise in management and operations of City, State and Federal government programs. Unmatched versatility in the financial arena; provide technical support in budget lifecycle. Consistently rated “outstanding” in performance and regularly recognized by senior managers, agencies, and federal entities as capable to surpassing all goals and work plan benchmarks.

She acted as the chief strategist for public policy, program design, and development for the Healthy Homes, Childhood Lead Poisoning and Prevention, Lead Based Paint Hazard Control, Occupational Health, Indoor Air Quality, Medical Waste, Radiation Compliance, Non-Smoking and Cigarette Vending Ordinance compliance and Emergency Medical Services and Ambulance Permitting; and also, serves as an Assistant Professor for Baylor College of Medicine.

Dr. Reyes participate as Advisor to government agencies and non-for profit organizations. She is serving a second period as member of the Advisory Committee for Children Environmental Protection Advisory Committee (CHPAC) for the Environmental Protection Agency and is a past member of the Childhood Lead Poisoning and Prevention (ACLPPP) Advisory Committee for the Health and Human Services Secretary among others.

She is renowned for her abilities to mentor cities and state agencies on how to blend complimentary lead hazard reduction, healthy homes, unintentional injuries, and health programs to maximize outcomes. She concentrates her efforts on innovative programs to increase the stock of affordable, healthy and environmentally safe housing, and on building capacity to incorporate sound environmental health standards.

Dr. Reyes is the President of Brenda M. Reyes Consulting.

BEATRIZ TAPIA, MD, MPH

TRACK A - Vector-Borne Diseases

Beatriz Tapia, M.D., M.P.H., is Clinical Assistant Professor for the Department of Pediatrics and the Assistant Dean of Faculty Development at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley in Harlingen, Texas. Dr. Tapia is a native of Chicago, Illinois. She attended the Autonomous University of Puebla in Mexico, where she received her M.D., and the Bloomberg School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins University (JHSPH), in Baltimore, Maryland, where she received her Master’s in Public Health. In addition to her M.P.H., Dr. Tapia trained in environmental health, health disparities and health inequality at the JHSPH. Dr. Tapia is also currently pursuing a Doctorate of Education in Professional Leadership with an Emphasis in Health Science Education from the University of Houston.



Dr. Tapia is a strong advocate for the medically underserved; she continuously provides environmental and public health education to promotoras (lay healthcare workers), public health professionals and community centers. Her research interests are border health, environmental medicine, public health, minority health and medical education research.

GENNY CARRILLO, MD, MPH

TRACK B - Asthma and Air Pollution

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Dr. Genny Carrillo is the Director of the Asthma on Asthma Research and Education and an Associate Professor in the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health at the School of Rural Public Health – McAllen Campus within the Texas A&M Health Science Center where she teaches courses in environmental health. She also conducts applied research, most of which is focused on children's environmental health issues, especially asthma in the Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV). Other topics of research include home safety, injury prevention in children, and community based participatory research projects related to the development of materials on drinking water safety for residents from South Texas colonias. Dr. Carrillo has worked from the McAllen Campus since 2007 and over the years has developed strong academic collaborations with the South Texas College Respiratory Therapy Program, the University of Texas Pan American Nursing Program and the Rio Grande Regional Hospital.



Dr. Carrillo obtained her M.D., in 1982 from the University of Yucatan, School of Medicine and in 1989, obtained both, a M.S.P.H. in Environmental Health, and a M.P.H. in Health Systems Management from Tulane University, School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. In 1993, she obtained her Sc.D., also from Tulane University.

Dr. Carrillo is involved in multiple bi-national initiatives and was the recipient of the U.S.-Mexico Border 2012 Environmental Leadership Award. She is an Alumna of the CDC Environmental Public Health Leadership Institute (Fellow 2009-2010); Alumna of the National Library of Medicine (Fellowship program in Biomedical Informatics) at the Marine Biological Laboratory, Woods Hole, Massachusetts, Fall 2005, and a Member of the Delta Omega Alpha Tau Chapter, Honorary Society in Public Health, New Orleans, Louisiana, and May 1995. She is also a member of the: American Public Health Association, National Association of Medical Minority Educators and the Association of Teachers of Preventive Medicine.

Carla Campbell, MD, MS, FAAP

TRACK B - Asthma and Air Pollution

Dr. Carla Campbell is presently an Associate Professor and MPH (Master of Public Health) Program Director in the Department of Public Health Sciences, College of Health Sciences, University of Texas at El Paso. She teaches master of public health students about climate change and health effects, global health, and environmental and occupational health. She was recently an Associate Teaching Professor of Public Health at the Drexel School of Public Health in the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health. She has done work involving childhood lead poisoning management and prevention and children's environmental health for many years.



She was attending pediatrician at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP), where she was the Medical Director/Co-Director of the Lead Evaluation Clinic for 11 years, and was Clinical Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the University Of Pennsylvania School Of Medicine. She also served as pediatric consultant to the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program of the Philadelphia Department of Public Health for 12 years. She was Co-Investigator for the Philadelphia site of the Treatment of Lead-Exposed Children Study; Principal Investigator (PI) for the Lead Safe Homes Study; and PI for the Philadelphia Lead Court Study. She was Project Manager for the Proyecto Hogar Sano, in collaboration with Puentes de Salud, a non-profit support group for Mexican immigrants in Philadelphia. Dr. Campbell received a BS from Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ; a MD degree from the University Of Kentucky College Of Medicine, Lexington, KY; and a MS in Community Medicine from Mount Sinai School of Medicine, New York, NY. She received pediatric training at the University Of Kentucky College Of Medicine and training in environmental, occupational and preventive medicine at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine. She received a certificate in global health in 2013 from the University of Alabama. Dr. Campbell served 6 years as Chairperson and 8 years as member of the Advisory Committee on Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention (ACCLPP) for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services from 1998-2006. She was elected in 2011 as a member of the executive committee of the Council on Environmental Health of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) through 2017. Dr. Campbell is also a member of the American Public Health Association and Physicians for Social Responsibility.

SARAH WILLIAMS-BLANGERO, PHD, MA

Track A - Diabetes/Obesity

Dr. Sarah Williams-Blangero is the Founding Director of the South Texas Diabetes and Obesity Institute, which was formed in 2014 to build research efforts in the Rio Grande Valley focused on the most pressing public health issues facing the area. Dr. Williams-Blangero received a Ph.D. in Biological Anthropology from Case Western Reserve University in 1987 and completed her postdoctoral research in genetic epidemiology at the Southwest Foundation for Biomedical Research. She was Chair of the Department of Genetics at the Texas Biomedical Research Institute for the 15 years prior to joining the University of Texas Rio

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Grande Valley. Dr. Williams-Blangero's research is focused on assessing the genetic determinants of susceptibility to common complex diseases including diabetes, heart disease, and infectious diseases, particularly in minority populations.

Patricia Rosen, MD, MPH

TRACK B - Pesticides

Dr. Patricia Rosen, is a physician in Austin with specialization in Internal Medicine, Emergency Medicine and Toxicology. Her practice is primarily office based where she consults on patients encountered in an office or hospital setting. She has privileges at Seton and Seton Northwest hospital in Austin, and also works in the emergency department at Metroplex Hospital in Killeen.

Her principal interest is in clinical toxicology. She has training and interest in cross cultural medicine with a Bachelor's degree in Anthropology and an MPH in epidemiology and biostatistics.

STORMY MONKS, MPH, PHD, CHES

TRACK C - Tobacco and E-Cigarettes

Dr. Stormy Monks is an Assistant Professor with Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso. She currently serves as a Research Scientist for the Department of Emergency Medicine – Division of Simulation Education. In addition, Dr. Monks serves as a Core Consultant – Public Health Specialist for the Southwest Center for Pediatric Environmental Health. She is the Research Chairperson for SimGHOSTS, an international non-profit group dedicated to providing technology education and innovation to simulation centers worldwide. She currently sits on the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso Institutional Review Board and the TTUSHC Physician and Student Well Being Committee. Dr. Monks is a Certified Health Education Specialist, a Certified Worksite Wellness Specialist, and a Certified Worksite Wellness Program Manager.



Dr. Monks has presented her research at various local, regional, and national conferences.

She has also authored several publications focusing on alcohol and drug research, sexual victimization, self-esteem, and risky lifestyle behaviors. Moreover, she has been engaged in mentoring medical residents, medical students, and master level students in research activities. Dr. Monks an active participant in collaborative research groups both locally and nationally.

RAFAEL CASANOVA

TRACK A - Donna Canal PCB's

Rafael Casanova has 30 years of work experience related to the protection of human health and the environment. He received his Bachelor of Science Degree, in Geology, from Texas A&I University (Kingsville, Texas) in May 1982. He began his environmental career in 1984 as an engineering technician/geologist for the Railroad Commission of Texas. He continued his environmental career in 1990 with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency serving as a geologist in the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act program, which regulates the disposal of hazardous/nonhazardous wastes. He is currently an Environmental Scientist with the EPA's Superfund Division. His primary duties include the environmental investigation and remediation (or cleanup) of Superfund Sites in Texas and Oklahoma. He is also a registered Professional Geoscientist in the State of Texas.



MICHELLE ZEAGER, DO, MPH, HA

TRACK B - Prenatal Exposures

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Michelle Zeager DO, MPH is an Assistant Clinical Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, School of Medicine. Dr. Zeager completed a pediatric residency at Penn State Children's Hospital, is board certified in General Pediatrics, and is a fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics. She received a Masters Degree in Environmental Public Health at the University of South Florida College of Public Health and completed a Pediatric Environmental Health Fellowship at the Boston Children's Hospital and Harvard Medical School where she worked at the Region 1 Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit (PEHSU). Since 2008, Dr. Zeager has participated in the University of Texas Health Sciences Center San Antonio's South Texas Environmental Education and Research Program (STEER), teaching medical, public health and nursing students about environmental issues that affect children's health.

Emily Hall, MPH

Track C: Leukemia and the Environment

Emily Hall is an environmental epidemiologist with the Texas Department of State Health Services. She has over three years' experience designing, conducting, and interpreting the results of epidemiological studies; investigating disease outbreaks; and conducting public health surveillance. She also has extensive experience designing, implementing, and evaluating public health prevention programs.



PAULA FLORES-GREGG

PLENARY SESSION 4: Collaborative Partnerships "Call to Action" - "Environmental Justice"

Mrs. Flores-Gregg started her career by serving in the US Army, transitioned into the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and found her calling in environmental justice, outreach and communications in the Environmental Protection Agency - where she has served for 30 years. Ms. Flores-Gregg has made significant contributions to our communities while serving in multiple positions within the agency; including the Water Quality, External Affairs, Enforcement, Environmental Justice, Tribal Affairs, and Multimedia. Paula also served as the U.S.-Mexico Border Coordinator for the states of Texas, Nuevo Leon, Coahuila, and Tamaulipas - where she helped develop and implement environmental programs on both sides of the border. Paula's greatest strength is her creativity and innovative thinking - from the production of a Telly Award winning DVD called "E-Hazards...They're Out There," the theater production "El Moscas y Los Pesticidas", to major collaborations with Univision, NBC affiliates, and Walmart. She created the "Beyond Translation" initiative - an effort that challenged the agency to go beyond the mere translation of documents when engaging the Latino community. Paula currently serves as the State of Texas Environmental Justice Coordinator - and just received a bronze medal for being a true agent of change.

MARIA SISNEROS

PLENARY SESSION 4: Collaborative Partnerships "Call to Action" - "Border 2020 Program"

Maria Sisneros has 16 years of work experience related to the protection of human health and the environment. She received her Bachelor of Science Degree in 2000, in Environmental Engineering and Science, from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Cambridge, MA. She earned her Masters of Science Degree in Environmental Engineering in 2014 from the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) in El Paso, Texas. She began her environmental career in 2001 working in private industry as an environmental consultant for Raba-Kistner Consultants in El Paso, Texas. In 2003, she joined the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 4 in Atlanta, Georgia working in the Air Division, working in various Programs such as Air Enforcement, Emergency-Community-Right-to-Know-Action Section, and Indoor Air Quality Section. She also worked briefly in Washington D.C. with the American Indian and Environmental Office addressing environmental protection in Tribal Lands. She joined the El Paso Border Office, working under the US-MX Border Program in 2004 in El Paso, Texas. Her primary duties include working as the lead for the Border 2020 Program for the Texas-New Mexico-Chihuahua Regional Workgroup in the Task Forces of Emergency Response, Water, and Environmental Education. She is also the EPA lead for the Gulf Task Force in the Texas-Coahuila-Nuevo Leon-Tamaulipas Regional Workgroup. She currently also serves within the Border 2020 Program Communications and Indicators Task Force. Over the years she has worked on putting together several Border Program Publications, including the Good



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Neighbor Environmental Board Reports, an independent federal advisory group whose mission is to advise the President and Congress of the U.S. on good neighbor practices along the U.S.-MX border.