

National Forum for Heart Disease & Stroke Prevention Elects Officers and Board Members

Members of the National Forum for Heart Disease & Stroke Prevention (National Forum), the hub for public-private collaboration to prevent America's leading cause of death and improve health equity, elected six individuals to serve as Directors from November 2022 to October 2024. Additionally, the Board of Directors has elected new officers for 2022-23.

The new officers are Marcus Plescia, MD, MPH, Chair; Bernadette Mazurek Melnyk, PhD, APRN-CNP, Vice Chair; and Jay Bhatt, DO, MPH, MPA, Secretary-Treasurer. Warren A. Jones, MD, transitions from Chair to Immediate Past Chair. Re-elected directors include Dr. Bhatt; Juliana V. Crawford; Michael Cropp, MD; Mark McEwen.

Marcus Plescia, the new Chair, said, "By bringing together some of the most dynamic leaders from healthcare, science, public health, business, and civil society, this Board reflects the National Forum's members and our nation. Over the last 20 years, the National Forum has advanced cardiovascular health and health equity, and that accelerated and intensified during the COVID pandemic."

"The National Forum is fortunate to have volunteer leaders who have great stature in their fields, and who bring diverse expertise and insights to guide our work to eliminate cardiovascular health disparities and achieve health equity," said John M. Clymer, Executive Director of the National Forum. "Marcus Plescia is a recognized public health leader with experience at the local, state, and national levels. Bern Melnyk is one of the foremost leaders in nursing, mental health, and healthy academic communities. Jay Bhatt brings valuable insights from his experience as a practicing physician, public health practitioner, and health system strategist. And Warren Jones is a trail blazer in family medicine, research on health disparities, and public health. Their combination of expertise and passion will help the National Forum expand and strengthen cross-sector collaborations to improve cardiovascular health for all people, with a focus on the most vulnerable populations in our communities."

About the New Officers and Directors

Marcus Plescia is Chief Medical Officer of Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO). For the past fifteen years, Plescia has served in public health leadership roles at the state, local, and federal levels, including director of chronic disease for the North Carolina Division of Public Health, director of national cancer control programs at CDC, and county public health director in Charlotte, NC. Prior to this, Plescia spent ten years in academic family medicine, teaching medical students and family medicine residents and providing patient care. In addition, Plescia has remained active in public health research, publishing in medical and public health literature and serving as principal investigator of REACH 2010, a large, CDC-funded health disparities intervention project.

Bernadette Mazurek Melnyk is recognized nationally and globally for both her clinical knowledge and her innovative approaches to a wide range of health care challenges. She serves as Vice President for Health Promotion, University Chief Wellness Officer, and Professor and Dean of the College of Nursing at The Ohio State University. She also is a professor of pediatrics and psychiatry at Ohio State's College of Medicine. Dr. Melnyk's groundbreaking work spans evidence-based practice, intervention research, child and adolescent mental health, and health and wellness.

Jay Bhatt practices medicine at local community health centers in Chicago and Cook County. He is Executive Director of the Deloitte Center for Health Solutions and the Deloitte Health Equity Institute. He is a prominent thought leader around the issues of health equity, health care transformation, public health, and innovation. Prior to joining Deloitte, Dr. Bhatt was senior vice president and chief medical officer at the American Hospital Association and president of the Health Research and Educational Trust. Previously, he served as chief health officer of the Illinois Health and Hospital Association, and managing deputy commissioner and chief innovation officer for the Chicago Department of Public Health.

Warren A. Jones founded and established the Mississippi Institute for Improvement of Geographic Minority Health and Health Disparities (MIGMH) and was the first African American appointed as an associate vice chancellor at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. Mississippi's governor appointed Dr. Jones as director of the state's Division of Medicaid. Dr. Jones was named Outstanding Minority Educator in the State of Mississippi and was the first African American elected President of the American Academy of Family Physicians. He held the NIH Endowed Chair in Health Disparities Research at Dillard University, and retired from the U.S. Navy Medical Corps with the rank of captain.

Juliana Crawford is the Senior Vice President for Consumer & Patient Health at the American Heart Association's National Center. In this role she oversees portfolios of business for priority markets and issues tied to the association's strategic plan. This includes the patient, women and kids markets, health equity, as well as the total health and well-being issue area and the American Stroke Association. Her work involves the strategic integration of key functional areas across the enterprise including communications, marketing, advocacy, science, quality improvement, development and business technology to maximize impact to the organization's strategic plan.

Michael W. Cropp is the president and chief executive officer of Independent Health, a health plan serving almost 375,000 customers in Western New York. He serves on the board of AHIP (America's Health Insurance Plans) and is past chair of the Alliance of Community Health Plans (ACHP). He is the founding chair of the P2 Collaborative of Western New York, one of the original grantees in the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Aligning Forces for Quality grant. He is also the founding chair of the Western New York Clinical Information Exchange (HEALTHeLINK).

Mark McEwen is a popular television news personality, health advocate, and stroke survivor. He was a mainstay on CBS as co-anchor of "CBS This Morning," entertainment reporter for "The Early Show," correspondent on "48 Hours," and covered three Olympic Winter Games. In 1995, TV Guide named Mr. McEwen one of the country's "Ten Most Trusted News Personalities." From 1996-2002, he hosted the Emmy Award-winning show, 'Live By Request' on A & E. In 2005, while serving as morning and noon news anchor for WKMG in Orlando, Florida, he suffered a stroke. His book, "After The Stroke: My Journey Back To Life," was nominated for the prestigious "Books For a Better Life" Award. He hosted the Black News Channel show, "All Things Men," in 2021-22.

Also serving on the National Forum Board of Directors are

Darwin R. Labarthe, MD, MPH, PHD, *Professor, Preventive Medicine, Northwestern University, Feinberg School of Medicine*

Karol Watson, MD, PHD, FACC, *Professor of Medicine/Cardiology, David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA; Co-director, UCLA Program in Preventive Cardiology; Director, UCLA Barbra Streisand Women's Heart Health Program*

Ileana L. Piña, MD, MPH, FAHA, FACC, *Professor and Quality Officer, Heart & Vascular Service Line, Thomas Jefferson University*

Rosemary McGillan, *Chief Marketing Officer, American Red Cross*

The following individuals serve as non-voting Board Liaisons from federal agencies:

Walter Koroshetz, MD, *Director, National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke National Institute of Health.*

RADM Brandon L Taylor, PHARM D, *Director, Defense Health Agency Public Health, Department of Defense*

David C. Goff, Jr., MD, PHD, *Director, Division of Cardiovascular Sciences, National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute*

Emmeline Ochiai, MPH, *Health Advisor, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Department of Health and Human Services/Office of Public Health and Science*

Janet S. Wright, MD, FACC, *Director, Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention, Center for Disease Control and Prevention*

The National Forum for Heart Disease & Stroke Prevention brings together the most dynamic and diverse organizations in cardiovascular health, providing a forum and outlet for organizations to amplify their voices. Its members include more than 100 public, private, and non-profit organizations. The National Forum is an independent non-profit, 501(c)(3), voluntary health organization. To learn more, visit www.nationalforum.org.