



News Release



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STATE HEALTH OFFICIALS PRESENT PRESTIGIOUS WOMEN'S HEALTH AWARD

SACRAMENTO – California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) Director David Maxwell-Jolly and California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Director Dr. Mark Horton today presented the annual Helen Rodriguez-Trias Award for Excellence in Community-Based Women's Health Leadership to Dr. Amparo Villablanca, a recognized expert and national leader in heart disease among women.

Awarded each May as part of California's celebration of Women's Health Month, this prestigious award is presented to a woman who exemplifies excellence in the field of women's health.

"Dr. Villablanca has served in leadership capacities with several heart health programs and works tirelessly to raise awareness of heart disease among women," said Maxwell-Jolly.

Dr. Villablanca served with Dr. Helen Rodriguez-Trias as a founding member of the State Advisory Council to the California Office of Women's Health (OWH) for 12 years. She founded and became the director of the Women's Cardiovascular Medicine Program at U.C. Davis Medical Center in 1994. In 2005, this program was recognized by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office on Women's Health as one of only six model women's heart programs in the country to deliver comprehensive heart care to high-risk women.

"We are pleased to honor Dr. Villablanca, as she truly embodies the spirit of the award's namesake – Dr. Helen Rodriguez-Trias," said Dr. Horton. "Along with her groundbreaking work to establish women's health programs in California, we recognize Dr. Villablanca for her ongoing contributions to women's health on both the state and national levels."

During the last few years, Dr. Villablanca has represented California on the Governor's Task Force on Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention and received a research award from the federal Office on Women's Health to deliver preventive heart care intervention and education to African-American women in community settings nationwide.

Dr. Villablanca is one of four spokeswomen for the National Institute of Health's National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute's "Heart Truth" Campaign, a national campaign aimed at raising awareness that heart disease is the leading killer of women. In this capacity, she develops numerous public health announcements to raise awareness of heart disease among women. Additionally, Dr. Villablanca helped to establish the Women's Center for Health at U.C. Davis and now serves as its associate director.

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“I am honored to receive this prestigious award named after a dear friend and colleague,” said Dr. Villablanca. “We will continue our efforts to educate women about heart disease and what they can do to prevent its onset.”

Established by the former California Department of Health Services in January 2002, the Helen Rodriguez-Trias award honors the memory of this nationally recognized health care leader who was a strong, effective force in the fight for women’s and children’s health care, health care rights and reproductive freedom. She challenged racial and gender inequities in health care and was actively involved with the growing problem of HIV/AIDS infection among women and children. The goal of the award is to help raise awareness of health issues facing women today.

OWH encourages organizations and providers throughout the state to become involved in raising awareness about women’s health in California. Additional information about Women’s Health Month is available by e-mailing owhmail@dhcs.ca.gov or owhmail@cdph.ca.gov or by phoning (916) 440-7626.

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