



# The National Center

for Complex Health and Social Needs

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, November 17, 2017

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## DAY THREE OF PUTTING CARE AT THE CENTER 2017: EXPERTS AND PARTICIPANTS HIGHLIGHT COMMUNITY HEALTH AND COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

*Keynote speaker America Bracho emphasizes the role of community outreach*

The third day of the Putting Care at the Center conference kicked off in downtown Los Angeles this morning with a keynote address from America Bracho, executive director of Latino Health Access, who propelled a theme of community empowerment. Latino Health Access' "Promotore" model entails employees and volunteers who create relationships together with neighbors to promote healing throughout their communities. Intrinsic to the field of complex care are authentic healing relationships that empower people and encourage them to be active participants in their own health care.

"If you want to improve public health, you have to reach out into the community; listen to people, hear their stories, and learn about all of their strengths and aspirations so together we can address needs," said Ms. Bracho, author of *Recruiting the Heart, Training the Brain: The Work of Latino Health Access*. "Health care is a human right, and opportunities for good health start at school, at work, and at home with healthy food, healthy habits, and a stable, safe place to live. We can't tackle diabetes without addressing obesity. We can't address obesity without ensuring access to open space and fresh vegetables. The people at this conference are looking at the big picture of health care, not just the whole person, but the whole community."

The theme of community health was picked up in the Beehive stations and workshops by speakers, panelists, participants and presenters. Cyrus Batheja of UnitedHealthcare spoke of stories as a vehicle for relationship-building in the Conversations with Experts section of the Beehive. In the Technology Exchange section, Julia Resnick of the American Hospital Association highlighted tools to help the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) process engage communities and further population health strategies. In a workshop focused on the relationship between social determinants of health and local direct organizing, Nancy Pope-White of the Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers' Community Advisory Council emphasized the importance of reaching into communities to develop strong relationships and systems of support.

"Community health care doesn't work effectively when it's top-down," said Ms. Pope-White. "We can offer people resources; we can educate them about healthy choices, but unless we



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develop the relationships that empower them to take control of their health and their lives, it will always be an uphill struggle. We know how important support networks are to healing and recovery. We know how much social factors like access to food and shelter affect health outcomes. In order to treat the whole person, we really need to engage and empower the community to make them whole.”

Putting Care at the Center 2017 is the second annual conference of the National Center for Complex Health and Social Needs and is co-hosted by Kaiser Permanente. The conference’s goal is to further the field of complex care, integrating social services with medical and behavioral health care in a whole-person approach that puts care at the center. Next year’s conference will take place in Chicago during the fall of 2018.

### **About the National Center for Complex Health and Social Needs**

*The National Center for Complex Health and Social Needs, launched in 2016, aims to improve outcomes for patients with complex medical, behavioral, and social needs. The National Center works to coalesce a new field of healthcare by bringing together a broad range of clinicians, researchers, policymakers, and consumers who are developing, testing, and scaling new models of team-based, integrated care. The National Center and its staff collaborate with other experts across the nation to develop best practices, inform policy, and foster an engaged and accessible community to develop this work and teach it to others.*

*The National Center’s founding sponsors are the Atlantic Philanthropies, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and AARP, and it is hosted by the [Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers](#).*

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