

The National Academies of SCIENCES • ENGINEERING • MEDICINE

COVID-19: Disaster Preparedness and Vulnerable Populations: A Workshop Series

Speaker Biosketches

Robin Cleveland is an advocate, caregiver, life coach, and mentor who helps families experiencing traumatic life-changing events identify and transition to their new normal. Robin's compassion, conscientiousness, non-judgmental, focused, and resourceful approach are frequently referred to as "a ray of sunshine." Her multitasking ability is remarkable as the mother of children with significant health issues and Chief Financial Officer for a national non-profit, Ms. Cleveland made the transition from caregiving mom and business executive to entrepreneur and back to a full-time caregiver of her severely injured veteran spouse. Unbeknownst to Robin, she officially started her advocacy, coaching, and mentoring in 2003 within hours of learning of her husband's status. She instinctively began providing comfort and support to families receiving similar news and overwhelmed at the prospect of caring for someone no longer able to care for themselves. While raising her family, Robin spent over 20 years as a teacher, corporate trainer and workshop leader, accountant, and CFO. Today Robin provides support to a range of caregivers, veterans, and civilians experiencing life-altering events working with the VA Caregiver Peer Support Mentoring Program, Christopher and Dana Reeve Peer Mentoring Program, and Red Cross Military and Veteran Caregiver Network among others. She has weathered many storms and positivity, strength, resiliency, and determination are remarkable, even during traumatic periods. She provides a wide range of support and selflessly makes herself accessible to others as they desire.

Robert Espinoza is the Vice President of Policy at PHI, where he oversees its national advocacy, research, and public education division on the direct care workforce. In 2020, he was selected for the first-ever CARE 100 list of the most innovative people working to re-imagine how we care in America today and as one of Next Avenue's 2020 Influencers in Aging. He also serves on the board of directors for the American Society on Aging and the National Academy of Social Insurance, and represents PHI on the Forum on Aging, Disability and Independence for the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

Zulma Torres has worked as a home health aide for cooperative home care associated (CHCA) for 23 years. In this role, she provides care for her clients on daily basis and assists with their activities of daily living. She became a home health aide as means to provide for her family, and soon learned that there is a great need for quality health care in a home setting and developed a love for her work during her time in this field. She has also worked in CHCA's home office and served as translator at a nursing home. Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with her husband, children, grandchildren and other family, and loves reading, music and good food.