

Keynote Speaker Bio: Dr. Antonia Novello



On March 9, 1990 Dr. Antonia Novello was sworn in by Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor to serve as the 14th Surgeon General of the U.S. Public Health Service. Her appointment marked two firsts: Dr. Novello became the first woman and the first Hispanic ever to hold this position. As Surgeon General, Dr. Novello advised the public on health matters such as smoking, AIDS, diet and nutrition, environmental health hazards, and the importance of immunization and disease prevention.

After her Surgeon General tenureship, she served as United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Special Representative for Health and Nutrition where she advised the Executive Director on issues pertaining to women, children and youth. In particular, Dr. Novello provided leadership toward the global efforts to eliminate iodine and vitamin A deficiency disorders, immunizing the world's children, and preventing smoking and substance abuse in youth.

On June 3, 1999, Governor George E. Pataki nominated Dr. Novello to be the 13th New York State Health Commissioner. In this capacity, she headed one of the leading health agencies in the nation with a \$49 Billion budget – one-third of the whole NY state budget. Some of her responsibilities included: improving Medicaid and Medicare, regulation of hospitals and nursing homes, bio-terrorism preparedness, and September 11th disaster management.

Most recently, Dr. Novello served as the Executive Director of Public Health Policy at Florida Hospital, where she was in charge of advocating, translating and implementing public health issues across the board, as well as directing and organizing a lecture series involving the top medical professionals in the nation, known as The Distinguished Lecture Series at Florida Hospital. Currently, she serves as a liaison between the U.S. Embassy and the government of Dominican Republic on raising the awareness of domestic violence and spearheading efforts for national legislation