

# 2025 *Heroes in Health* Celebration

An Evening to Celebrate Trust,  
Empowerment, and Healthy Aging

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2025  
Waldorf Astoria Washington, D.C.

## ***Conversations with the FDA and CMS***

3:00 - 3:30 PM: Registration

3:30 - 4:30 PM: Conversation with CMS

4:30 - 5:00 PM: Reception

5:00 - 6:00 PM: Conversation with the FDA

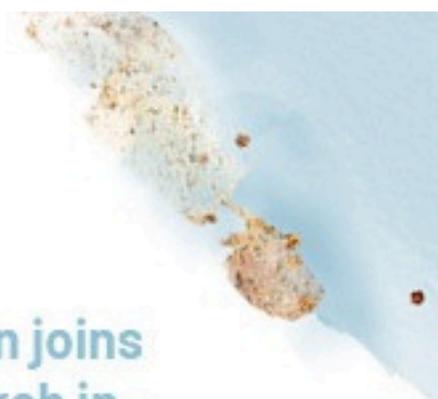
## ***Annual Awards Dinner***

6:00 - 7:00 PM: Registration and Reception

7:00 - 9:00 PM: Awards Dinner Program

9:00 - 10:00 PM: Dessert Reception

[#HeroesInHealth](#)



The Claude Pepper Foundation joins  
the Alliance for Aging Research in  
celebrating advances in aging research  
by honoring the following *Heroes in Health*  
for their valuable contributions:



**Claude Pepper Award for  
Advancing Healthy Aging**  
Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN)  
U.S. Senate



**Distinguished Public  
Service Award**  
Congressman Neal Dunn, M.D. (R-FL)  
U.S. House of Representatives



**Silver Innovator Award**  
Foluso A. Fakorede, M.D.  
Cardiovascular Solutions  
of Central Mississippi



**Daniel Perry Founder's Award**  
Georges C. Benjamin, M.D.  
American Public Health Association



The Claude Pepper Foundation, Inc.  
636 West Call Street, Tallahassee, FL 32306-1122  
[www.claudepepperfoundation.org](http://www.claudepepperfoundation.org)

# Celebrating the Heroes in Health

Thank you for Improving Lives!



## Reshaping expectations of care

We develop therapies that provide new options for patients and their families. Patients inspire us to pioneer healthcare solutions that can deliver meaningful advances for the people who need them the most.

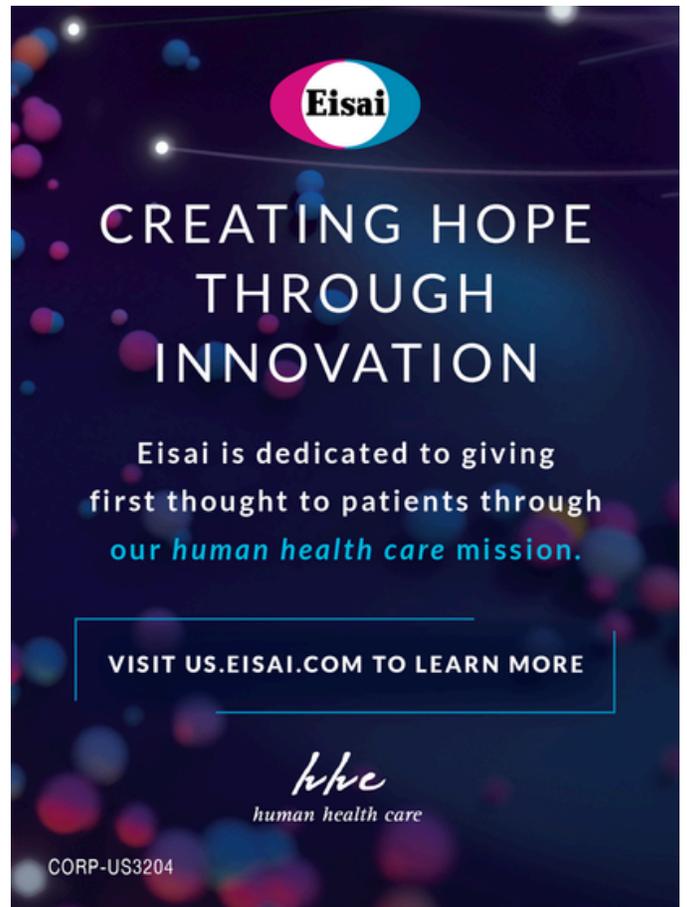
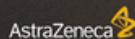
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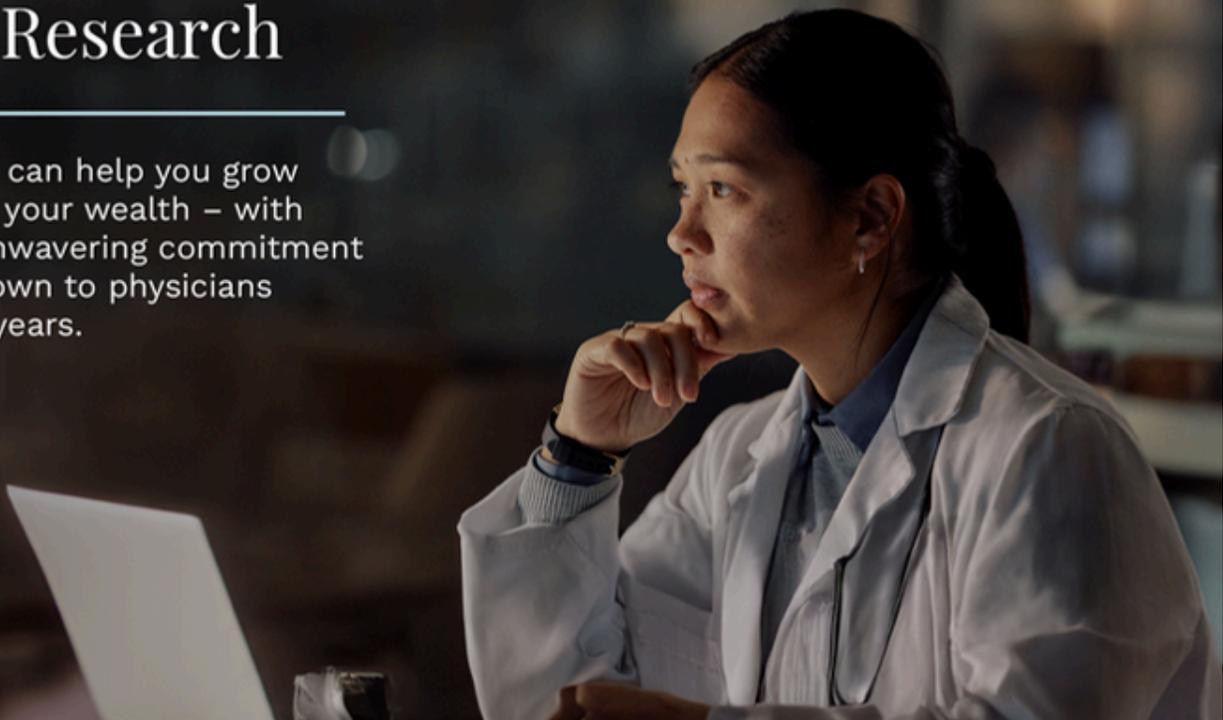


# Proud to support the Alliance for Aging Research



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## ABOUT THE ALLIANCE FOR AGING RESEARCH

The Alliance for Aging Research is the leading nonprofit organization dedicated to changing the narrative to achieve healthy aging and equitable access to care. The Alliance strives for a culture that embraces healthy aging as a greater good and values science and investments to advance dignity, independence, and equity. For 39 years, the Alliance has guided efforts to substantially increase funding and focus for aging at the National Institutes of Health and the Food and Drug Administration; built influential coalitions to guide groundbreaking regulatory improvements for age-related diseases; and created award-winning, high-impact educational materials to improve the health and well-being of older adults and their family caregivers. For more information, visit [www.agingresearch.org](http://www.agingresearch.org).

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U.S. Food & Drug Administration

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President and CEO



**Lauren Belsky**  
Development  
Coordinator



**Lindsay Clarke, J.D.**  
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Senior V.P. of  
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Werner-Perez**  
Director of Health  
Programs

## CORPORATE PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL

The Alliance's Corporate Partnership Council provides a useful forum for companies to collaborate and advance activities related to the Alliance's mission and vision.

Goals include:

- Participating in discussions with Alliance leaders and expert advisors on current health policy, advocacy, and education trends.
- Providing learning opportunities on how to create a corporate culture that respects aging as a greater good.
- Sharing current issues in scientific and regulatory development that advance independence, dignity, and equity for older adults.

## CORPORATE PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL MEMBERS

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## ABOUT HEROES IN HEALTH

Each year, the Alliance for Aging Research hosts *Heroes in Health*, an event to celebrate individuals and organizations making great strides to further research and innovation in aging. The event is comprised of the Conversations with the FDA and CMS, and the Annual Awards Dinner.

## ABOUT THE CONVERSATIONS WITH THE FDA AND CMS

Since 2013, the Conversations with the FDA and CMS, convened and moderated by the Alliance, has provided leaders from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) with the opportunity to reflect on progress their agencies have made in implementing major policy changes to improve the health of older adults. Formerly called “the Roundtables,” the event is also an opportunity for these leaders to offer their insights on future changes that may positively impact healthcare innovation.

## ABOUT THE ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER

Since 1992, the Annual Awards Dinner has become widely recognized as Washington, D.C.’s signature social event following Congress’ return from its traditional August recess. As one Capitol Hill regular put it, “This is like Back-to-School Night for Washington’s health policy community – you see everyone here.”

The Annual Awards Dinner also has a deeper purpose: to honor individuals for their contributions to advance the science of human aging.

The 2025 Awards Dinner features the following awards:

- Claude Pepper Award for Advancing Healthy Aging: Presented each year to a Democratic member of Congress who is leading the way for policies encouraging medical research, innovation, and care to benefit Americans as they grow older.
  - Distinguished Public Service Award: Presented each year to a Republican member of Congress who is leading the way for policies encouraging medical research, innovation, and care to benefit Americans as they grow older.
  - Silver Innovator Award: Presented to an individual or organization that anticipates and embraces the evolution of high quality research aligned with the needs of older patients.
  - Daniel Perry Founder’s Award: Presented to an individual or organization that is helping to change the paradigm of how we view aging and well-being as we age.
- 

## THANK YOU TO OUR 2025 CONVERSATION SPONSORS

The Alliance for Aging Research is grateful to the sponsors of the 2025 Conversations with the FDA and CMS:

### CONVERSATION SPONSORS



### CONVERSATION SUPPORTERS



### CONVERSATION INNOVATORS



# THANK YOU TO OUR 2025 AWARDS DINNER SPONSORS

The Alliance for Aging Research is grateful to the sponsors of the 2025 Awards Dinner:

## AWARD UNDERWRITERS



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## 2025 CONVERSATION WITH CMS

### How is the Shift to Transparency, Health Outcomes, and Chronic Disease Prevention Going for Older Adults in the Medicare Program?

3:30 - 4:30 PM

In 2022, more than 57 million Americans were age 65 or older. This number will rise to an estimated 85.7 million in 2050, representing a demographic shift that will have profound social, economic, and health impacts on our nation for many decades to come. As the number of older adults continues to grow, there is an increasing need for care delivery that can provide high quality, accessible, and lower-cost health care to America's older adults. As the Administration shifts to population health, barriers such as transportation, food, and housing insecurity are entering the equation of what it means to be and remain healthy, independent, and mobile. What steps has CMS taken to date? Is there more transparency on cost? Are healthcare professionals equipped with better information about the patients they serve, and is the program holding them accountable for health outcomes and lifting barriers to utilization management? Has the paradigm shifted from a system that focuses on sick care to one that fosters prevention, wellness, and chronic disease management? This year's Conversation with CMS will bring together policymakers, patient advocates, and industry stakeholders to explore the status of these goals and the future of Medicare's initiatives aimed at lowering prescription drug costs.

## 2025 CONVERSATION WITH CMS PANELISTS AND MODERATOR



**Alec Aramanda**  
*Principal Deputy Director,  
Center for Medicare  
Centers for Medicare and  
Medicaid Services*



**Christie Bloomquist, J.D., MHA**  
*V.P. of U.S. Strategy and  
Government Affairs  
Astellas Pharma*



**Sally Greenberg**  
*Executive Director  
National Consumers  
League*



**Katie Jones**  
*Head of Federal Affairs  
AstraZeneca*



**MODERATOR**  
**Jim Scott, J.D.**  
*President & CEO  
Applied Policy LLC*

### Alec Aramanda

Alec Aramanda serves as the Principal Deputy Director of the Center for Medicare, overseeing policy and operations related to Medicare fee-for-service, Medicare Advantage, and the Medicare Prescription Drug Program. Prior to joining the Center for Medicare, Mr. Aramanda worked at the U.S. House Energy and Commerce Committee where he led the Medicare and Health Information Technology portfolio. He previously served at CMS from 2018 through 2021 as the Director of the Office of Legislation and the Director of Stakeholder Engagement. Before joining CMS in 2018 he served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health Policy in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Legislation at the Department of Health and Human Services from 2017 through 2018. He began his public policy career at the Heritage Foundation in 2006 before serving in the U.S. Senate from 2010 through 2017 in the offices of Senators Jim DeMint and Ted Cruz. Before re-joining CMS in February of 2025, he most recently worked at the law firm of Williams & Jensen. He received a B.A. in Political Science from Haverford College.

### Christie Bloomquist, J.D., MHA

Christie Bloomquist, J.D., MHA is Vice President of U.S. Strategy and Government Affairs at Astellas Pharma. She leads the company's U.S. government and public affairs strategy and supports the development and pull-through of U.S. Commercial priorities. Ms. Bloomquist also oversees U.S. employee engagement efforts and partners with senior leaders to strengthen culture and organizational effectiveness. With more than 25 years of experience in the biopharmaceutical industry, she is recognized for navigating complex policy environments and advancing strategies that deliver meaningful impact for patients and business alike.

### Sally Greenberg

Sally Greenberg is a champion of consumer and worker rights and joined the National Consumers League (NCL) as Executive Director on October 1, 2007. An expert on a broad spectrum of issues, Ms. Greenberg has testified before Congress and federal agencies on privacy matters, food labeling, geopolitical tracking, teen financial literacy and NCL's teen LifeSmarts program, child labor, fraud, product safety, data privacy, auto safety, and prescription drug access, safety and affordability. In 2022, Ms. Greenberg assumed the role of CEO, continuing to advance NCL's mission of advocating for fairness and transparency in the marketplace.

Before joining NCL, Ms. Greenberg honed her expertise as Senior Product Safety Counsel at Consumers Union from 1997 to 2007, where she focused on product liability, food safety, and auto safety. Earlier in her career, she worked at the U.S. Department of Justice's Foreign Claims Settlement Commission and served over a decade as Eastern States Civil Rights Counsel for the Anti-Defamation League in Boston, combating discrimination and promoting justice.

Ms. Greenberg's public service journey began as a legislative correspondent for Senator Gaylord Nelson (D-WI) and later as a legislative assistant for Congressman Toby Moffett (D-CT). Throughout her career, Ms. Greenberg has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to empowering women and advancing equity. She served as president of the Women's Bar Association of Massachusetts and the Women's Bar Foundation, contributing to several gubernatorial commissions under Massachusetts Governor William Weld.

Ms. Greenberg brings extensive experience in nonprofit leadership, serving on prominent boards and advisory councils. She is currently a member of the Board of Directors for the Fair Labor Association and the Alliance for a Stronger FDA. Additionally, she serves on the Advisory Council of Tzedek DC and participates in the ANSI Consumer Information Forum. Committed to her community, Ms. Greenberg volunteers as Co-President of Temple Sinai Women of Reform Judaism.

Her prior leadership roles include serving on the boards of the Alliance for Justice and HALT, an organization dedicated to legal system reform. She was also appointed to the Board of the Reagan-Udall Foundation, established to support the FDA. Ms. Greenberg's previous board memberships further include the Keystone Center, Trillium Asset Management, Responsive Law, and Impact100 DC.

## **Katie Jones**

Katie Jones serves as Head of Federal Affairs for AstraZeneca. In this role, Ms. Jones leads execution of AstraZeneca's federal legislative and political strategy. She previously led federal affairs for Alexion, AstraZeneca's rare disease business unit.

Prior to joining AstraZeneca, Ms. Jones served as Executive Director, Government Affairs for Biodesix, a company specializing in blood-based diagnostics for lung cancer. She was responsible for elevating the company's profile amongst policymakers and congressional staff, developing and executing legislative and regulatory strategy and overseeing coalition activities. Prior to Biodesix, Ms. Jones was a Director, Federal Government Relations with McKesson and The US Oncology Network where she advocated on issues impacting community oncologists and cancer patients, directed congressional outreach and managed political affairs. Ms. Jones also has a strong background in management of Political Action Committees (PAC). Ms. Jones is a graduate of the University of Missouri-Columbia.

## **Jim Scott, J.D.**

James G. Scott is President and CEO of Applied Policy, the Alexandria, Virginia-based health policy consulting firm he founded in 2009 to help healthcare providers and companies navigate federal policy and payment programs. With more than 20 years of experience in Washington, D.C., he has developed deep policy expertise and long-standing relationships across government and industry.

Before founding Applied Policy, Mr. Scott directed federal government affairs for Roche, where he secured Medicare coding, coverage, and payment for the company's pharmaceutical portfolio and served as Roche's primary liaison with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

He previously served as Senior Legislative Advisor at CMS, counseling the Administrator on congressional intent during implementation of the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003. His work earned agency-wide recognition for contributing to the launch of the Medicare prescription drug benefit and for supporting congressional appropriations for the FY 2006 President's Budget.

Earlier in his career, Mr. Scott was Assistant Counsel in the Office of the Legislative Counsel of the U.S. Senate, where he was a principal drafter of the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 and other Medicare legislation. The Senate unanimously passed a resolution honoring his contributions, and numerous Senators and Members of Congress entered statements in the Congressional Record recognizing his work.

Mr. Scott earned his Bachelor of Science in Political Science from James Madison University and his Juris Doctor, magna cum laude, from the Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law. In addition to serving on the Board of Directors of the Alliance for Aging Research, Mr. Scott founded the Northern Virginia Health Policy Forum, and serves on the Steering Committee of the Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria.

## 2025 CONVERSATION WITH THE FDA

### Aligning Policy with an Aging Population

5:00 - 6:00 PM

This year's Conversation with the FDA will examine how traditional hallmarks of scientific rigor like randomized controlled trials and peer-reviewed research can support better health outcomes for older adults, while also exploring where these standards may fall short in addressing the urgent and evolving needs of a rapidly aging population. Panelists will explore how emerging science can embrace innovation and patient-centeredness in aging-related research and care. How do we ensure that there is an appropriate response to public health emergencies and improve access to life-saving treatments while sustaining the public's trust in science and maintaining scientific independence and integrity?

## 2025 CONVERSATION WITH THE FDA PANELISTS AND MODERATOR



**Grace Graham, MPP**  
*Deputy Commissioner for  
Policy, Legislation, and  
International Affairs*  
U.S. Food and Drug  
Administration



**John Dwyer**  
*President*  
Global Alzheimer's Platform  
Foundation



**Steve Hersch, M.D., Ph.D.**  
*V.P. of Clinical Research*  
Eisai Inc.



**Alexis Reisin Miller, J.D.**  
*Executive Director of Global  
Regulatory Policy*  
Merck



**MODERATOR**  
**Michele Markus**  
*Head of Global Health  
Accounts; Worldwide  
Enterprise Lead*  
Omnicom Health Group

## 2025 CONVERSATION WITH THE FDA PANELIST AND MODERATOR BIOGRAPHIES

### Grace Graham, MPP

Grace Graham is the Deputy Commissioner for Policy, Legislation, and International Affairs. In this role, she leads the Office of Policy, Legislation, and International Affairs (OPLIA), which serves as the FDA's focal point for engagement with the U.S. Congress, the Administration, global counterparts and partners, and state, local, territorial, and tribal policymakers.

Immediately before coming to the FDA, Mrs. Graham served as Chief Health Counsel for the Energy and Commerce Committee (E&C) in the U.S. House of Representatives, where she worked on the 2022 User Fee Reauthorization and other health care matters under the scope of the committee. Prior to that, Mrs. Graham served as Health Policy Director for the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP), working on User Fee Legislation, 21st Century Cures laws, the Substance Use-Disorder Prevention that Promotes Opioid Recovery and Treatment for Patients and Communities (SUPPORT) Act, and other health care legislation.

Mrs. Graham has a Master of Public Policy and Health Policy, as well as a Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Engineering from the University of Virginia.

### John Dwyer

John Dwyer is the President of the Global Alzheimer's Platform Foundation (GAP) and is a serial healthcare entrepreneur. He held his first CEO position at the age of thirty and has held leadership positions in numerous emerging growth companies in the healthcare industry. Mr. Dwyer is a co-founder of several Alzheimer's-related groups including UsAgainstAlzheimer's and the Alzheimer's Action PAC, the first political action committee focused on a specific disease. Mr. Dwyer is an outspoken leader in the neurodegenerative space and is currently focusing on expanding GAP's reach through diverse partnerships to reach the populations most likely to develop Alzheimer's or Parkinson's disease. He is a graduate of Marquette University and the Cornell Law School.

### Steve Hersch, M.D., Ph.D.

Steven M. Hersch, M.D., Ph.D., serves as Vice President of Clinical Research within Clinical Evidence Generation, Deep Human Biology Learning (CEG, DHBL) at Eisai Inc. In this role, he helps support early and late-stage clinical development of Eisai's neurology portfolio. He also serves as the International Program Team Lead (IPTL) for a monoclonal antibody for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease (AD), overseeing its global clinical development.

Dr. Hersch joined Eisai in 2021 as Vice President, Clinical Research – NBG New Modalities, in which he led the emerging discovery and early clinical programs for the company's new treatment modalities, including anti-sense oligonucleotides and gene therapies for neurodegeneration and epilepsy. Since assuming the IPTL role in December of 2022, he has assisted the team in securing the approval of the first US FDA-approved treatment that has been shown to reduce the rate of disease progression and slow cognitive and function decline in adults with Mild Cognitive Impairment due to AD or mild AD.



Until recently, Dr. Hersch, a practicing neurologist at Massachusetts General Hospital, has conducted extensive research on neurodegenerative diseases, including Huntington's disease, Alzheimer's disease, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), and ataxia. He has served as Director of the Emory and New England Centers for Excellence in HD, Director of the Laboratory of Neurodegeneration and Neurotherapeutics in the MassGeneral Institute for Neurodegeneration, and Vice President of the Huntington Study Group. He is currently also a professor of Neurology at Harvard Medical School, where he has been a faculty member since 2003. Earlier in his career he was a member of the Neurology Department at the Emory University School of Medicine.

Dr. Hersch also has extensive industry expertise, providing advisory and consulting services for preclinical and clinical trial development for many companies. Prior to joining Eisai, Dr. Hersch was Vice President for Clinical Research and Development at Voyager Therapeutics, where he was responsible for clinical development and translational medicine leadership for gene therapy programs in neurodegeneration and pain.

An author of more than 135 peer-reviewed publications, Dr. Hersch has served as a reviewer or editorial board member for numerous scientific journals, in addition to serving on many institutional, foundation, FDA and NIH grant review and scientific advisory board committees. He earned both his Ph.D. in Anatomy and his M.D. in Medicine from the Boston University School of Medicine. He also holds a Master of Arts degree in Medicine from Harvard Medical School. He earned his Bachelor of Science degree from American University.

### **Alexis Reisin Miller**

Alexis Reisin Miller serves as Executive Director of Global Regulatory Policy at Merck, where she leads strategic initiatives to shape regulatory frameworks that support timely access to innovative therapies. With over 20 years of experience advising biopharmaceutical companies, Ms. Reisin Miller has championed regulatory and policy solutions that accelerate the development and approval of innovative treatments, including those addressing unmet needs in special populations. She previously led U.S. policy efforts at Sanofi and Eisai, and served as Regulatory Counsel in the Office of Regulatory Policy at FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research. Earlier in her career, Ms. Miller was a partner at an international law firm, guiding clients through complex regulatory, policy, and commercial matters before FDA, FTC, CPSC, and other agencies.

### **Michele Markus**

Michele Markus is a healthcare communications professional with over 20 years of experience and currently oversees the largest health clients across the private, public, policy, genomics and technology sectors for Omnicom, a leading worldwide marketing and communications company.

Ms. Markus is a "failed Virologist" shifting her passion in college from researching hemorrhagic diseases to marketing and business solutions. She realized her passion for communications as a force for health intervention through amazing undergraduate internships at Mount Sinai, Children's Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania (her alma mater) and Ketchum Public Relations.

Since then, she has spent her career in health and immersed herself in the perspective of the ultimate recipient - the patient. Combining a deep customer understanding with her background in global commercial strategy and organizational performance management consulting, she has commercialized products and implemented programs in more than 80 markets worldwide.

Her understanding of diseases and their impacts was derived from time spent in R&D, communications, strategic planning and lifecycle management across a range of categories, including specialty, infectious diseases, rare conditions, CV/metabolic, nutrition, consumer/OTC, surgical and devices.

Moreover, her focus in oncology – both solid tumor and hematologic malignancies – over the past 15 years has sharpened her vision and beliefs around accelerating Innovation and Access.

Ms. Markus serves as Chair of the Board of Advisors for the Alliance for Aging Research in Washington, D.C. and the Communications Chair for the Board of Advisors for Quantum Leap Healthcare Collaborative in San Francisco, CA. She is also the founder and creator of SHIFT:Health, the private invitation-based healthcare exchange event that focuses on the wider political, socioeconomic and policy shifts affecting the health industries and how to invoke actionable change.

Most recently, Ms. Markus moderated the invitation-only panel on behalf of the Alliance for Aging Research with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), Equity and Advocacy Organizations and Pharma industry partners, “What’s Next for Medicare’s Prescription Drug Costs and Affordability Efforts” focusing on the Inflation Reduction Act and other key initiatives impacting transparency around affordability and access.

She is the creator and leading expert on Strategic Cartography<sup>SM</sup>, which helps biotech, diagnostic and pharma companies commercialize in these shifting markets – breaking down traditional global, regional and local mindsets.

In addition, she has been a sought-after speaker for several industry events including, The Aspen Institute, The Professional Society for Health Economics and Outcomes Research (ISPOR), Annual Emerging Markets Commercial Excellence Forum, Brilliant Minds, WIN/WIN Podcast Series and the Cannes Lions Health Festival.

Ms. Markus has served as a Guest Lecturer at NYU Stern School of Business, Columbia University Business School, UNC Chapel Hill Hussman School of Journalism and Media and been a Mentor with The Marketing Academy for the last 6 years.

As a full-time working mother of an energetic and inquisitive tween, free time is spent learning Lego Technic, rushing between basketball games, and watching YouTube videos of Mark Rober and Minecraft with her family.

## 2025 AWARDS DINNER

The Alliance for Aging Research congratulates the following *Heroes in Health*:



### CLAUDE PEPPER AWARD FOR ADVANCING HEALTHY AGING

**Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN)**

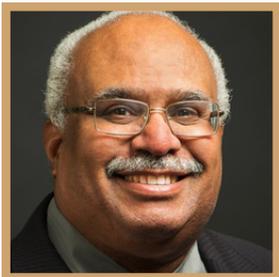
U.S. Senate



### DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

**Congressman Neal Dunn, M.D. (R-FL)**

U.S. House of Representatives



### DANIEL PERRY FOUNDER'S AWARD

**Georges C. Benjamin, M.D.**

*Executive Director*

American Public Health Association



### SILVER INNOVATOR AWARD

**Foluso A. Fakorede, M.D.**

*Chief Executive Officer*

Cardiovascular Solutions of Central Mississippi

## MASTER OF CEREMONIES



**Kevin Rigby**  
*Principal*  
Rigby Consulting, LLC

Kevin Rigby has a long and distinguished career in the public and private sectors. Mr. Rigby is the former U.S. Country Head of Public Affairs for Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation, former Chief of Staff and State Director for U.S. Senator Bill Bradley and now leads Rigby Consulting, LLC., providing strategic solutions to corporations, trade associations, non-profit and patient advocacy groups.

At Novartis, Mr. Rigby was a member of the U.S. Pharma Executive Committee with a focus on government interactions and participation in the public policy arena at the federal and state levels. Mr. Rigby was also President of the Novartis U.S. Foundation where he was responsible for philanthropic contributions.

Mr. Rigby served and held leadership roles at numerous Trade Associations and Non-Profit Boards, including the Alliance for Aging Research, the National Pharmaceutical Council, the National Health Council and the Health Care Institute of New Jersey.

Mr. Rigby was also Vice President of Sales & Marketing at Hoffman-La Roche, Mayor of River Edge, New Jersey; as well as a partner in a private law practice. He continues to be actively involved in many civic and philanthropic causes in New Jersey and across the U.S., as well as a speaker on health care, philanthropy and leadership at state and national conferences, and patient advocacy and non-profit forums.

## CLAUDE PEPPER AWARD FOR ADVANCING HEALTHY AGING

Presented each year to a Democratic member of Congress who is leading the way on policies encouraging medical research, innovation, and care to benefit Americans as they grow older.



**Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN)**

U.S. Senate

U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar is the first woman elected to represent the State of Minnesota in the United States Senate. Throughout her public service, Senator Klobuchar has always embraced the values she learned growing up in Minnesota.

Senator Klobuchar has built a reputation of putting partisanship aside to help strengthen the economy and support families, workers, and businesses. In the 117th Congress, she was number one in the Senate for introducing bipartisan bills and number three for passing bills into law.

Senator Klobuchar's work has gained national recognition. *Vogue* magazine described her as "personable, popular, and pragmatic," *The New York Times* described her as a "former prosecutor with made-for-state-fair charms," and *Working Mother* named her as "Best in Congress" for her efforts on behalf of working families. "Want to reform antitrust? Amy Klobuchar knows where to start," *The Washington Post* headlined its opinion piece on her sweeping antitrust legislation, the Competition and Antitrust Law Enforcement Reform Act. She has received numerous awards from the National Farm Bureau and National Farmers Union for championing farmers and rural communities. She has been recognized for her work on behalf of children and consumers, and Refugee International gave her the Congressional Leadership Award for her work to support refugee communities. She received an award from the Service Women's Action Network (SWAN) for her work to fight sexual assault in the military, and the Disabled American Veterans honored her work to improve the lives of America's veterans. She also received the "Outstanding Member of the Senate Award" from the National Narcotic Officers' Associations' Coalition and the Distinguished Public Service Award from the American Legion. In 2022, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy presented her with the Order of Merit, First Class.

Senator Klobuchar was the valedictorian of her Wayzata High School class. She graduated magna cum laude from Yale University and the University of Chicago Law School.

Senator Klobuchar is married to John Bessler, a native of Mankato, who attended Loyola High School and the University of Minnesota. Senator Klobuchar and John have a daughter, Abigail, who they are very proud of!

## CLAUDE PEPPER AWARD FOR ADVANCING HEALTHY AGING PRESENTED BY:



**Thomas J. Spulak**

*Chairman and President*

The Claude Pepper Foundation, Inc.

Thomas J. Spulak is a partner in the law firm King & Spalding LLP and co-chairs its Government and Public Policy Practice Group in Washington, D.C. Before joining King & Spalding, he was a partner at Shaw Pittman LLP, also in Washington, D.C. Prior to entering private practice he served as Democratic Staff Director and general counsel of the House Committee on Rules, serving most of that time under the chairmanship of Senator Claude Pepper; he later served as general counsel to the U.S. House of Representatives. Early in his career, he served as district representative for Congressman Pepper in his Miami office.

Mr. Spulak attended the School of Politics and Public Affairs at the University of Miami and later received his Juris Doctor from Florida State University College of Law, where he is an adjunct professor and teaches political law. He devotes a considerable amount of time in the service of non-profit entities. In addition to the Claude Pepper Center, he serves as Chairman of the Hospice Foundation of America and is a board member of the Close Up Foundation.

## DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

Presented each year to a Republican member of Congress who is leading the way on policies encouraging medical research, innovation, and care to benefit Americans as they grow older.



**Congressman Neal Dunn, M.D. (R-FL)**

U.S. House of Representatives

Dr. Neal Dunn grew up in a multi-generational Army family and lived overseas on more than 20 military installations worldwide, including for two years in Vietnam. He was an Eagle Scout and National Merit Scholar in his youth before attending Washington and Lee University, earning his M.D. at George Washington University, and finishing his Urological residency at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

Dr. Dunn joined the US Army as a surgeon. He spent the next 11 years as an Army surgeon before settling in Bay County, Florida. During his residency in Washington, he met and married his wife, Leah.

Dr. Dunn practiced medicine in Panama City for 25 years, with a subspecialty interest in advanced prostate cancer. He was the founding president of the Advanced Urology Institute, a 50-physician practice with over 400 employees and offices throughout Florida.

Before being elected to Congress, Dr. Dunn served on the Board of Governors of the Florida Medical Association for 18 years and was the Chairman of the Florida Medical Association's Council on Legislation. He served as Chief of Staff of Gulf Coast Hospital and Director of the Bay Medical Center Sacred Heart Joint Venture. He went on to become the founding Chairman of Summit Bank, a large regional bank headquartered in Panama City with branches throughout Northwest Florida.

Dr. Dunn was first elected to Congress in 2016 and has been subsequently reelected four times by his constituents. His district is the largest east of the Mississippi River, which includes all or part of 16 counties in North Florida. He currently serves on the House Energy and Commerce Committee, the oldest standing legislative committee in the House of Representatives, where he serves as the Vice Chair of the Subcommittee on Health.

Additionally, Dr. Dunn serves on the Select Committee on Communist China, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, the House Democracy Partnership, and the House Task Force on Artificial Intelligence.

Dr. Dunn lives in Panama City, Florida, with his wife, Leah. They are the proud parents of three sons and have five grandchildren.

## DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

*Accepting on behalf of Dr. Neal Dunn*



**Sarah Gilbert**

*Chief of Staff*

U.S. Representative Neal Dunn (R-FL)

Sarah Gilbert serves as Chief of Staff to U.S. Representative Neal Dunn (R-FL). She assumed this role in May 2024, following her tenure as Deputy Chief of Staff and Legislative Director. In her capacity as Chief of Staff, Ms. Gilbert oversees the Congressman's office operations and legislative agenda and continues to advise the Congressman on health policy items under the jurisdiction of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

## DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD PRESENTED BY:



### **Shannon Stehouwer**

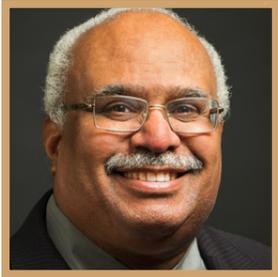
*Vice President of Federal Government Affairs*  
Eli Lilly and Company

Shannon Stehouwer serves as Vice President of Federal Government Affairs for Eli Lilly and Company. In her role, she works with lawmakers to advance policies that support biopharmaceutical innovation.

Prior to Lilly, she worked for the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA), the trade association that represents the leading biopharmaceutical research companies in the U.S. She also spent several years on Capitol Hill working for Senator John Hoeven (R-ND) and Congressman Mike Rogers (R-MI).

## DANIEL PERRY FOUNDER'S AWARD

Presented to an individual or organization that is helping to change the paradigm of how we view aging and well-being as we age.



**Georges C. Benjamin, M.D.**

*Executive Director*

American Public Health Association

Georges C. Benjamin, M.D. is known as one of the nation's most influential physician leaders because he speaks passionately and eloquently about the health issues having the most impact on our nation today. From his firsthand experience as a physician, he knows what happens when preventive care is not available and when the healthy choice is not the easy choice. As executive director of APHA since 2002, he is leading the Association's push to make America the healthiest nation.

He came to APHA from his position as secretary of the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Dr. Benjamin became secretary of health in Maryland in April 1999, following four years as its deputy secretary for public health services. As secretary, Dr. Benjamin oversaw the expansion and improvement of the state's Medicaid program.

Dr. Benjamin, of Gaithersburg, Maryland, is a graduate of the Illinois Institute of Technology and the University of Illinois College of Medicine. He is board-certified in internal medicine and a master of the American College of Physicians, a fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration, a fellow emeritus of the American College of Emergency Physicians, an honorary fellow of the Faculty of Public Health and an honorary fellow of the Royal Society of Public Health.

Dr. Benjamin is an active member of the National Academy of Public Administration and the National Academy of Medicine (formerly the Institute of Medicine) of the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine. He serves on the boards of many nonprofit organizations including Research!America, the Truth Initiative, the Reagan-Udall Foundation for the FDA, the Environmental Defense Fund and Ceres. Dr. Benjamin is also a former member of the National Infrastructure Advisory Council, which advises the president on how best to assure the security of the nation's critical infrastructure.

## DANIEL PERRY FOUNDER'S AWARD

Accepting on behalf of Dr. Georges Benjamin



**Susan Polan, Ph.D.**

*Associate Executive Director for Public Affairs and Advocacy*  
American Public Health Association

Susan L. Polan, Ph.D., is associate executive director for public affairs and advocacy with the American Public Health Association. She oversees the Association's departments of government relations and affiliate affairs, communications and membership. She is responsible for planning and directing APHA's legislative, regulatory and legal activities, communicating those initiatives and Association news to members and the public, and overseeing membership recruitment and retention and Affiliate, Caucus and Section relations.

Prior to joining APHA, Ms. Polan worked as the director of government relations at the Trust for America's Health, a public health advocacy organization. There, she served as lead staff lobbyist to Congress, federal agencies and the administration on priority issues, including public health infrastructure development, chronic disease prevention and where she advocated for new funding for a nationwide health tracking network.

Ms. Polan has almost three decades of experience in public health, government relations and associations. She has drafted legislation for Senate consideration on tobacco control and Safe and Drug Free Schools as an American Association for Advancement of Science Congressional science and technology fellow for the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee. She served as director of federal government relations at the American Cancer Society and as president and senior advisor of Partnership for Prevention, where she represented the nonprofit to government officials, congressional offices, the Congressional Prevention Coalition and other partners. She has also worked as a health policy consultant whose projects included encouraging an increase in funding for environmental health concerns and grant writing for several health clients.

Ms. Polan earned her bachelor of science degree in psychology from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. She later earned a master's of science degree in health psychology from San Diego State University and a doctorate in social ecology from the University of California, Irvine.

## DANIEL PERRY FOUNDER'S AWARD PRESENTED BY:



**Dan Perry**

*Founder*

Alliance for Aging Research

Dan Perry is the founder of the not-for-profit Alliance for Aging Research in Washington, D.C. Begun in 1986, the Alliance is a leading U.S. citizen advocacy organization promoting a broad agenda of medical and scientific research to improve the health and independence of older people.

Retired from the Alliance in 2015, he continues to serve on the Alliance Board of Directors. Mr. Perry's background spans a wide range of health policy, governmental, political and journalistic experience. He held staff positions for more than a dozen years on Capitol Hill in Washington. He has been a key advisor on aging and medical research policies to Democratic and Republican legislators and U.S. presidents. He has led a number of large and politically potent coalitions advancing research in aging, Alzheimer's disease, physical frailty, and for embryonic stem cell research.

Mr. Perry has been an advisor to the Institute on Aging of the University of Pennsylvania Medical School and to the Buck Institute for Research on Aging and the Royal Center for Health Policy Simulation at the University of Southern California. He was appointed in 2010 by Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius to the National Advisory Council on Aging and was a 2012 speaker at the first TEDMED gathering in Washington, D.C.

As a journalist, Mr. Perry was the recipient of many awards and citations, including a nomination for the Pulitzer Prize.

## SILVER INNOVATOR AWARD

Presented to an individual or organization that anticipates and embraces the evolution of high quality research aligned with the needs of older patients.



### **Foluso A. Fakorede, M.D.**

*Chief Executive Officer*

Cardiovascular Solutions of Central Mississippi

Dr. Foluso A. Fakorede is the Chief Executive Officer at Cardiovascular Solutions of Central Mississippi. Originally from Nigeria, he immigrated to the United States during his teenage years. Dr. Fakorede earned his medical degree from Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and completed his internal medicine residency at New York-Presbyterian Weill Cornell Hospital. He went on to complete fellowship training in cardiology, interventional cardiology, and endovascular intervention at Cooper University Hospital in Camden, New Jersey. Since relocating to the Mississippi Delta in 2015, Dr. Fakorede has been unwavering in his mission to provide timely, high-quality cardiovascular care and educate communities to reduce preventable amputations. He is a nationally recognized leader in raising awareness about Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD) and the amputation epidemic, particularly in underserved and rural communities. In 2024, Dr. Fakorede was the subject of the award-winning documentary *Bloodlines, Mississippi*, produced by Grain Media in collaboration with Nobel Outreach, and later selected by the Nobel Prize Foundation. The documentary highlights Dr. Fakorede's groundbreaking work to combat diabetes-related amputations in the Mississippi Delta's underserved African-American communities through prevention, education, and access to care.

Dr. Fakorede's leadership has helped shape national policy, including his instrumental role in introducing the bipartisan Amputation Reduction and Compassion (ARC) Act, which led to the first Congressional PAD Caucus. In May 2024, Illinois became the first state to pass legislation modeled after the ARC Act, mandating PAD screening coverage for at-risk individuals. Dr. Fakorede serves on the Board of Directors for the Amputee Coalition and holds leadership roles in several national medical societies. He is the PAD Initiative Chair for the Association of Black Cardiologists and has contributed to influential bodies such as the Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions (SCAI), the American Heart Association PAD National Action Plan, the Society of Interventional Radiology, and the ACC/AHA PAD guideline peer review committee. His groundbreaking work has been recognized with the American Heart Association's 2023 Louis B. Russell Award, the Association of Black Cardiologists' 2024 Public Policy Award, and inclusion in the 2024 *STAT News* STATUS List, which honors the most impactful leaders in health, medicine, and science. At the state level, Dr. Fakorede has served as Vice Chairman of the Mississippi State Medical Association's Minority Affairs Section and as District 1 Representative on the MSMA Council on Legislation. He advises the Mississippi Alliance for Cardiovascular Health and the Mississippi Department of Health's Diabetes Advisory Council, working tirelessly to transform public health policy and outcomes across Mississippi and beyond.

## SILVER INNOVATOR AWARD PRESENTED BY:



**Bobby Patrick, VI**

*Senior Vice President of Government Affairs*  
AdvaMed

Bobby Patrick, VI is the Senior Vice President of Government Affairs at AdvaMed, the MedTech Association. He oversees AdvaMed's state affairs work and partnerships with external stakeholders, including patient advocacy organizations and physician groups.

Previously, Mr. Patrick served as the vice president of strategic growth and policy at the Medical Alley Association where he led the state and federal advocacy efforts. He also oversaw the membership work at the Association, where they experienced growth in membership revenue, engagement, and retention under his leadership.

He holds a Juris Doctorate from William Mitchell College of Law and an undergraduate degree from Syracuse University.

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**2026 Heroes in Health Celebration**

Wednesday, September 23, 2026

Waldorf Astoria Washington, D.C.

*Celebrating 40 years of the  
Alliance for Aging Research*

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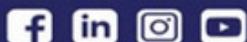
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