



CALIFORNIA Health Policy Forum

Speaker Biographies

Speranza Avram, MPA

Consultant

Speranza Avram & Associates

Speranza Avram has been a leader in the field of rural health and technology for the past 17 years. She most recently served for twelve years as Executive Director of Northern Sierra Rural Health Network (NSRHN), one of the most successful rural telehealth networks in California. During her tenure at NSRHN, she raised over \$12 million to support rural health services, including the implementation of innovative technology, for community health centers, rural health clinics, and rural hospitals in nine rural counties. Ms. Avram currently provides consulting services to foundations and others in the area of telehealth, rural health, and safety-net provider issues. She is an expert in the field of broadband connectivity and has worked tirelessly to bring high-speed broadband to remote rural communities. She authored a publication on telecommunications discount programs published by the California Telemedicine and e-Health Center. She is a founding member of the California Telehealth Network and currently sits on its Advisory Committee. Her service to the field includes six years as a member of the board of the California State Rural Health Association (CSRHA); she served as their president in 2006-07. In 2008, she was awarded the Rural Champion Community Leadership Award by the CSRHA. Ms. Avram has a BA degree in Community Studies from UC Santa Cruz and a master's degree in public administration from the University of San Francisco.

Richard S. Baker, MD

RCMI Program Director

Assistant Dean, Office of Research

Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science

Richard S. Baker, MD is Associate Professor in the Department of Ophthalmology at Charles R. Drew University and at the Jules Stein Eye Institute at the UCLA Geffen School of Medicine. He serves as the Assistant Dean of research for Charles Drew University, Director of the Research Centers in Minority Institutions/National Institutes of Health Biomedical Research Center at Charles R. Drew University, Executive Director and co-founder of the Urban Telemedicine Centers of Excellence, the Associate Director of the Center for Eye Epidemiology at UCLA, and co-founder of the Los Angeles Eye Institute. Dr. Baker is a fellow of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and a member of Phi Kappa Phi Public Health Honor Society. His primary research interests and accomplishments are in the areas of ophthalmology, telemedicine, epidemiology, and the multicultural aspects of health services research and health disparities. He

has been the principal investigator for multiple scientific projects and is the author of over 100 scientific abstracts, articles, book chapters, and invited presentations. Dr. Baker has a strong commitment to community and serves as a board member of the California Black Health Network. He has received several service and leadership awards including: commendations from the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, the City of Lynwood, King Drew Medical Center, and the Los Angeles County Joint Council of Interns and Residents. Dr. Baker received his undergraduate degree in physics from Stanford University. He received a medical doctorate degree from Harvard Medical School and from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology with a thesis concentration in biostatistics and epidemiology. His postdoctoral training includes a fellowship at the Joslin Diabetes Center, Harvard Medical School, and a National Institutes of Health fellowship in chronic disease epidemiology at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health.

Christine L. Martin, MBA

Executive Director

California Telemedicine & eHealth Center

Christine Martin is the executive director of the California Telemedicine & eHealth Center (CTEC). As the statewide federally designated Telehealth Regional Resource Center organization, CTEC is dedicated to developing and expanding the use of telemedicine and telehealth programs throughout the state. Ms. Martin has been developing and managing telemedicine programs for over 12 years. In 1997, she founded the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's (CDCR) Telemedicine Services Program, the largest telemedicine program in California, and served as the program's managing director for 11 years, directing the provision of over 75,000 telemedicine patient services. She has significant experience in all aspects of planning, developing, operating, and evaluating telemedicine programs. In addition, Ms. Martin has more than 30 years of experience in health care management and administration, including broad experience in health care policy and program development. She served as the deputy director for strategic development for the CDCR Health Care Services Division, deputy director of program operations for the South Carolina Health and Human Services Finance Commission, and chief of policy planning for California Department of Health Services. Ms. Martin holds a master of business administration degree in health services management and a bachelor of science degree in clinical laboratory technology. She is also a certified project management professional.

Thomas S. Nesbitt, MD, MPH

Executive Associate Dean for Clinical and Administrative Affairs

UC Davis School of Medicine

Thomas S. Nesbitt, executive associate dean for Clinical and Administrative Affairs, is a professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine specializing in rural health and the use of advanced telecommunications technologies to improve access to medical education and care. He is the founding director of the Center for Health and Technology, which oversees UC Davis' telemedicine, distance learning, and medical informatics programs. In addition, Dr. Nesbitt is chief scientist for the UC Davis Center for Information Technology Research in the

Interest of Society (CITRIS). As co-director of the California Telehealth Network, which is funded by the Rural Healthcare Division of the Federal Communications Commission, Dr. Nesbitt oversees the deployment of a statewide telecommunications program that will link over 500 sites on a “digital health highway.” On January 1, 2009, he assumed the role of Executive Director for Telehealth Services for the California Center for Connected Health. A nationally recognized expert in the field of rural health and telecommunications technology, Dr. Nesbitt served two terms on the National Advisory Committee on Rural Health has co-authored more than 50 journal articles and book chapters. He received his medical degree from UC Davis, completed his residency training through the Spokane Family Medicine Residency Program, an affiliate of the University of Washington School of Medicine, and obtained his master of public health degree at the University of Washington's School of Public Health. His honors include Best Research Study Award from the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine in 1992, the California Family Physician of the Year award in 1993, and the Distinguished Public Service Award and Distinguished Alumnus Award from UC Davis in 1996 and 1997, respectively.