



Colorado Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute (CCTSI)

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **DENVER** | **ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS**

Biography

Lilia Cervantes, MD, is a bilingual Latina physician who grew up facing poverty in Denver, Colorado and with English as her second language. Her background directly informed her deep commitment to becoming a physician as well as her community service, programs, health policy activism, and research focused on promoting social justice in medical education and health equity. Dr. Cervantes has worked as a hospitalist physician at Denver Health, the safety-net hospital for the city of Denver for over 10 years, and has been inspired by the richly diverse patients to use her unique lens as a Latina physician to build a culture of health. In 2009, Dr. Cervantes launched the Healthcare Interest Program (HIP), bringing together Universities (University of Colorado Denver Auraria campus, Regis, and Metro State University) and Denver-based community organizations to increase the number of underrepresented minority undergraduate students maintaining an interest in a healthcare career. Dr. Cervantes also founded the Health Equity Lecture Series at Denver Health, bringing academic and community leaders together to increase understanding of the social determinants of health in Denver. Funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Doris Duke Foundation, and the NIH, Dr. Cervantes' research is focused on improving patient-centered and clinical outcomes among documented and undocumented Latinos with end-stage renal disease on dialysis. In 2019, her research (focused on demonstrating the worse outcomes faced by undocumented Latinos with kidney failure) led to a health policy change that expanded access to quality care and thus a better quality of life for undocumented immigrants with kidney failure.