



IPHCA Virtual Conference to Feature NBA Legend Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Former Surgeon General, National Latina Journalist

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SPRINGFIELD -- Our new world of connecting virtually will bring a sports legend, a former U.S. Surgeon General and an award-winning national journalist into living rooms across Illinois for key discussions on health care and social justice.

The Illinois Primary Health Care Association, representing the state's 51 community health centers, today announced its 2020 Annual Leadership Conference will be held online Oct. 28-30 during the coronavirus pandemic. IPHCA is using the virtual conference to connect its attendees with an outstanding roster of speakers:

- Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, pro basketball's all-time leading scorer and Presidential Medal of Freedom Winner for his work to improve education in underserved communities
- Regina Benjamin, the 18th U.S. Surgeon General
- Maria Hinojosa, an Emmy-winning anchor and executive producer of NPR's "Latino USA"

Abdul-Jabbar will serve as Conference keynote, with Hinojosa and Benjamin as daily plenary speakers. The Conference will convene health care leaders and personnel from Illinois and across the country for critical discussions about the challenges and opportunities in today's health care landscape and how those will change in the future.

Anyone interested is welcome to attend the virtual conference. To register or learn more about the conference, visit IPHCA's website: <https://iphcaconference.vfairs.com/>.

Hinojosa will kick off the Conference from 4 to 5 p.m. CDT on Wednesday, Oct. 28. She will talk about her experiences as a Latina journalist raised on the south side of Chicago on the importance of diversity in the workforce, eliminating health disparities, health literacy and cultural competency.

Benjamin will speak from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. CDT on Thursday, Oct. 29. A long-time leader in preventive medicine and fighting health disparities, including in her time as U. S. Surgeon General from 2009-2013, Benjamin will talk about helping achieve true health equity by understanding and addressing health disparities and social factors that contribute to them.

Abdul-Jabbar will use his decades of experience as a civil rights leader and advocate in the final keynote session from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. CDT on Friday, Oct. 30, to call for community change through racial equality and social justice, especially in health care access and social obstacles in its way.

Jordan Powell, President and CEO of the Illinois Primary Health Care Association, said while organizers were initially challenged when it became clear the conference could not be held in person, the new virtual conference creates special opportunities for the health care industry to connect and learn.

“IPHCA’s Annual Leadership Conference has become the gold standard for community health center education and networking. Our new format will provide even more attendees the opportunity to hear from a tremendous group of keynote speakers on critical topics facing health centers today and in the future. Our new virtual platform will afford attendees meaningful opportunities to network with each other to share best practices to ensure our members provide the highest quality health care for all we serve in communities around Illinois,” Powell said.