

Valerie Romero-Leggott, M.D.

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Dr. Valerie Romero-Leggott received her Bachelor of Arts degree at Harvard University of Cambridge, MA in 1982. She went on to attend the University of New Mexico (UNM), School of Medicine, receiving her Medical Degree in 1992. She has been a primary care provider for many years on the forefront of treating populations burdened by socio-economic, racial and ethnic disparities.

Presently, Dr. Romero-Leggott serves as Vice Chancellor for Diversity at the UNM Health Sciences Center, Associate Dean for Diversity for the UNM School of Medicine, and Professor in the UNM Department of Family and Community Medicine. She also serves as the Executive Director of the UNM Combined BA/MD Degree Program, a unique program to promote the recruitment of a diverse group of New Mexico high school seniors interested in practicing medicine in areas of greatest need across New Mexico. Her office promotes inclusivity and diversity throughout the Health Sciences Center and communities and creates opportunities to address the health disparities that affect all New Mexicans. One of her major duties is to provide multiple fora for discussing issues concerning underrepresented and disadvantaged populations.

Dr. Romero-Leggott has extensive experience in teaching cultural competence, developing educational pipelines for disadvantaged youth, and working with minority women in medicine and the health sciences. She has been awarded grants totaling over \$3.7M to enhance diversity from middle school through the professional degree for underrepresented and disadvantaged youth into the health professions and remained a strong advocate for STEM-H work. Dr. Romero-Leggott led in the work to develop and teach cultural competence to students, residents, and faculty in the medical school and other health professions and disciplines in order to better address health disparities. She has provided statewide leadership in cultural competence working collaboratively with legislators and the NM Department of Higher Education. Dr. Romero-Leggott is Co-PI on the UU-Health Collaborative Grant Initiative, a national demonstration program aiming to expand and enhance a culturally sensitive, diverse, and prepared health workforce to improve health and health equity in urban communities.

Dr. Romero-Leggott is recognized nationally and across the southwest region for her leadership. She is a past member of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Advisory Committee on Minority Health, and the Western Regional Representative of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) Group on Diversity and Inclusion. She is Co-Founder and member of the Minority Women in Medicine and the Health Sciences and has served as Co-Chair of the UNMSOM Admissions Committee over the past 10 years. Dr. Romero-Leggott is immediate past President of the Hispanic Serving Health Professions Schools and is a member of the National Council for Diversity in the Health Professions. She serves in advisory roles to members of the New Mexico Congressional Delegation and the State of New Mexico Higher Education Secretary as well as being appointed as a Commissioner for the State of New Mexico Health Policy Commission. She was selected as a 2010 Scholar in the Hedwig van Ameringen Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine. In April 2012, Dr. Romero-Leggott received the *Hispanic Health Leadership Award* presented by the National Hispanic Medical Association to outstanding individuals who have played significant leadership roles in affecting the health of Hispanics and the underserved communities. Dr. Romero-Leggott has been recognized for the outstanding work she has done to promote Latino faculty within the UNM Health Sciences Center and other academic health institutions across the nation, and for the development of programs to encourage Hispanic youth to enter health professions. Dr. Romero-Leggott also serves in numerous advisory and leadership roles at UNM, state, medical, and educational organizations. Her professional interests are serving diverse populations, education, community based teaching, work in cultural competence, diversity and inclusion, and adolescent medicine. She has forged important bridges between health sciences and New Mexico community groups. She has served as a trailblazer in creating cross disciplinary programs with the law school and other academic units. She will continue working to increase diversity in the healthcare workforce and to reduce disparities in health and health care.

Dr. Romero-Leggott is a role model for young female students and other professional women in the health sciences. She works to link diversity with academic excellence using the skills and knowledge she has developed as an administrator, female ethnic minority, and native New Mexican. She believes that understanding diversity and cultural issues are integral parts of achieving better health outcomes for our communities and our nation.