

Looming Challenges of COVID-19 Immunization: Preparing the Immunization Infrastructure

Hosted by NEHI with support from Johnson & Johnson, Pfizer and STC Health.

Keynote Speaker Bio



Rep. Donna Shalala

Congresswoman

Florida's 27th Congressional District

Congresswoman Donna E. Shalala is proud to serve Florida's 27th District as an advocate for women's rights, civil rights, increased access to healthcare, better education and public schools, and a clean and sustainable environment. The longest-serving Secretary of Health and Human Services in U.S. history, she returns to Washington as the Representative for Florida's 27th District, which includes the city of Miami and surrounding municipalities in Miami-Dade County.

The granddaughter of immigrants from Lebanon, Congresswoman Shalala was born in Cleveland, Ohio. She received her A.B. from Western College for Women and her Ph.D. from Syracuse University. A distinguished educator, she served as President of Hunter College of the City University of New York, Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin—Madison, and President of the University of Miami.

She is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and has been elected to seven national academies, including the National Academy of Medicine, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the National Academy of Education.

Congresswoman Shalala began her career in public service as one of the country's first Peace Corps volunteers in Iran. In 1977, President Jimmy Carter tapped her to serve as the Assistant Secretary for Policy Development and Research at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

In 1993, Congresswoman Shalala was nominated by President Bill Clinton to serve as Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS), where she created, implemented, and oversaw the Children's Health Insurance Program, currently covering over 7.6 million children. She also succeeded in doubling the budget of the National Institute of Health and secured the highest immunization rates in American history. At the end of her eight-year tenure at HHS, a Washington Post article described her as "one of the most successful government managers of modern times."

In 2007, President George W. Bush hand-picked her to co-chair with Senator Bob Dole the Commission on Care for Returning Wounded Warriors, tasked with evaluating how wounded service members transition from active duty to civilian life. In 2008, President Bush selected her as the recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian award. Congresswoman Shalala has been named one of "America's Best Leaders" by U.S. News & World Report (2005), received the Nelson Mandela Award for Health and Human Rights (2010), was inducted into the National Woman's Hall of Fame (2011), and has more than five dozen honorary degrees.