

2011 National Healthy Homes Conference Plenary Speaker Bios

Georges C. Benjamin, MD, is well known in the world of public health as a leader, practitioner and administrator. Benjamin has been the Executive Director of the American Public Health Association (APHA), the nation's oldest and largest organization of public health professionals, since December 2002. He came to that post from his position as Secretary of the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Benjamin became Secretary of Health in Maryland in April 1999, following four years as its Deputy Secretary for Public Health Services. At APHA, Benjamin also serves as the publisher of the nonprofit's monthly publication, *The Nation's Health*, the association's official newspaper and *The American Journal of Public Health*, the profession's premier scientific publication. He is the author of over 100 scientific articles and book chapters. Benjamin is a graduate of the Illinois Institute of Technology and the University Of Illinois College Of Medicine



Mimi Corcoran is the Director of the Special Fund for Poverty Alleviation at the Open Society Foundations. Working with government, foundations, and community-based organizations, Corcoran leads a team to identify strategies to alleviate poverty through the support of scalable and sustainable programs in education, workforce development, and benefits access for our most disadvantaged populations. Prior to joining OSI, she was an independent management consultant advising clients on strategy, policy, compliance and operational structures domestically and internationally. Corcoran began her career in the private sector and worked as an executive in International Trading and Treasury Operations and Systems for the Chase Manhattan Bank. She received her B.A. in English from Yale University, where she captained the gymnastics team, and she holds a Master's in Public Administration from New York University.

Clotilde Perez-Bode Dedecker is the president and CEO of the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, Buffalo, New York. Dedecker has dedicated her career to improving lives through civic service. Her leadership experience has centered on leading collaborative efforts to solve the most critical problems facing communities. She is a nationally recognized spokeswoman on a range of issues including strategic philanthropy, community service and cultural diversity. Other service highlights include a White House appointment to the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation, U.S. Committee Co-Chair of the United Nations International Year of the Volunteer and president of the Association of Junior Leagues International. Dedecker received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Canisius College and a Master's degree in Education from the State University of New York at Buffalo

Dr. Carlos Dora is a medical epidemiologist and policy expert in various sectors at the World Health Organization (WHO) headquarters in Geneva where he leads the unit on Interventions for Healthy Environments. The unit covers three areas: health impacts of sector policies, especially transport and energy policies; strengthening governance mechanisms and national systems to manage environmental health risks; and occupational workers' health. Dora's own work focuses on the environmental health impacts of non-health sector policies including health impact assessments and EH risk governance. Dora was previously at the WHO European Centre for Environment and Health in Rome, working on international policy frameworks for environmental health (Protocol on Strategic Environment Assessment; Environmental Health Performance Reviews; Inter-ministerial programme on transport health and environment). He also served as a senior policy adviser to the Director-

General of WHO. He is a medical doctor and practiced general medicine in Brazil and the UK. He has a Masters degree and a PhD in epidemiology from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

Jon Gant has been the director of the HUD Office for Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control since 2004. The office is composed of scientists, environmental policy analysts and public health professionals working together with Federal, State and local agencies and other stakeholders to ensure that America's children grow up in healthy and safe homes free from hazardous substances that cause preventable diseases. His office administers about \$700 million in grants for research, training and capacity building in addition to producing over 14,000 lead-safe homes annually and has been instrumental in reducing lead poisoning in children by over 75 percent over the past ten years. Under his leadership, HUD issued its Healthy Homes Strategy in conjunction with the Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Healthy Homes in order to transition the lead hazard control program into a broader healthy homes approach and help ensure that new policies and programs benefit vulnerable families. Gant is a graduate of Stetson University Law School, Georgetown University and Berry College.

Mike Holmes is known as America's Most Trusted Contractor and the man whose mission is to **Make it Right**®. In 2006 Mike Holmes was recognized in Canada's House of Commons for his promotion of skilled trades and for his advocacy for improved building standards. He was acknowledged as an "extraordinary craftsman" and "an accomplished master builder with a social conscience." He is the host and creator of **Holmes on Homes**®, which has been the #1 show on HGTV Canada since the summer of 2004. The show also airs in the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Germany. Holmes and his crew built a remarkable sustainable and hurricane resistant house in New Orleans as part of the Make it Right NOLA project. The project was initiated after a series of community meetings with residents of the Lower 9th Ward, an area of New Orleans completely devastated after Hurricane Katrina.

Philippa Howden-Chapman is a professor of public health at the University of Otago, Wellington, New Zealand. She is director of *He Kiang Oranga*/ Housing and Health Research Programme and the New Zealand Centre for Sustainable Cities. Chapman has conducted a number of randomised community housing trials in partnership with local communities, which have had a major influence on housing, health and energy policy. She also has a strong interest in reducing inequalities in the determinants of health and has published widely in this area, receiving a number of awards for her work. Chapman is currently the chair of the WHO Housing and Health Guideline Development Group and is a member of the International Council of Science Unions, Regional Committee for Asia and Pacific Science Planning Group for Health and Wellbeing in the Changing Urban Environment.

Nate Kredich is the vice president of Residential Market Development at the U.S. Green Building Council which he joined in March 2008. He spent the prior five years working in the production homebuilding environment as the chief operating officer and general manager of Creative Touch Interiors, a national turnkey provider of design center and installation services that he helped to sell to The Home Depot in 2004. Following the sale, Nate oversaw the growth of the company's California and Nevada operations, and he held various leadership positions within his own local homebuilding association. Kredich was recently named to the Nominating Committee for the Michael J. Hanley Award for Vision and Leadership in Sustainable Building. He received a bachelor's degree from Emory University and a master's in business administration from the University of Virginia's Darden School of Business.

Gary Officer is the president and chief executive officer of Rebuilding Together, Inc. the nation's leading nonprofit home rebuilding organization for low and moderate income homeowners. Prior to joining Rebuilding Together, he served as the President and CEO of Associated Black Charities of America (ABC). From 2000 to 2005, Officer served as President of the National Credit Union Foundation (NCUF), the national foundation supporting credit union development in the United States. During his tenure at NCUF, Mr. Officer successfully established a \$370 million community investment fund that provided secondary capital, grants and loans to credit unions and related organizations throughout the United States. Officer earned a Bachelor of Arts (Hon) Political Science from the University of Manchester, England in 1985, and Master of Science Msc (Econ) in Economics and International Relations from the London School of Economics in 1990.

Christopher Portier is the Director of the National Center for Environmental Health and Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Portier joined CDC in 2010 and came to the agency from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS), where he was the Senior Advisor to the Director and a principal investigator in environmental systems biology. Formerly, he was Associate Director of NIEHS, Director of the Environmental Toxicology Program at the NIEHS, and Associate Director of the National Toxicology Program. Portier is an internationally recognized expert in the design, analysis, and interpretation of environmental health data. His research efforts and interests include such diverse topics as cancer biology, risk assessment, climate change, bioinformatics, immunology, neurodevelopment, genetically modified foods, and genomics. From 2000 to 2006, he managed the NTP and developed a strategic initiative that is internationally recognized for its innovation. Portier received his BSc degree (1977) in mathematics (summa cum laude), his MS (1979), and PhD (1981) degrees in biostatistics.

Jonathan Reckford is chief executive officer of Habitat for Humanity International, an ecumenical Christian housing ministry that has helped shelter almost two million people in nearly 90 countries. Reckford graduated from the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill and the Stanford University Graduate School of Business before spending much of his career in the for-profit sector, including executive and managerial positions at Goldman Sachs, Marriott, the Walt Disney Co., and Best Buy. Following his tenure as executive pastor at Christ Presbyterian Church near Minneapolis, Minn., he was appointed CEO of HFHI in 2005. Reckford lives in Atlanta with his wife, Ashley, and their three children and has written a book titled *Creating a Habitat for Humanity: No Hands but Yours*. He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and serves on the boards of Interaction and the Urban Land Institute Terwilliger Center on Workforce Housing. He also chairs the Housing for All initiative for the World Economic Forum.

Kathleen Sebelius was sworn in as the 21st Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) on April 28, 2009. As Secretary, she leads the principal agency charged with keeping Americans healthy, ensuring they get the health care they need, and providing children, families, and seniors with the essential human services they depend on. She also oversees one of the largest civilian departments in the federal government, with nearly 80,000 employees. Since taking office, Sebelius has been a leader on some of the Obama administration's top priorities. As the country's highest-ranking health official, she is guiding the implementation of the historic Affordable Care Act. She has also been at the forefront of efforts to build a 21st century health care system, from putting a new focus on prevention and wellness to promoting electronic medical records to expanding the primary care workforce. Sebelius holds a Master of Public Administration degree from the University of Kansas and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Trinity Washington University.

Ron Sims was unanimously confirmed by the U.S. Senate on May 6, 2009, and sworn in as the Deputy Secretary for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on May 8, 2009. As the second most senior official at HUD, Sims is responsible for managing the Department's day-to-day operations, a nearly \$40 billion annual operating budget, and the agency's 8,500 employees. Sims previously served as the Executive for King County, Washington, the 13th largest county in the nation in a metropolitan area of 1.8 million residents and 39 cities including the cities of Seattle, Bellevue and Redmond. While serving three terms, Sims was nationally recognized for his work on transportation, homelessness, climate change, health care reform, urban development and affordable housing. His leadership in affordable housing and multiple community and housing partnerships funded 5,632 units of housing over the course of 12 years. Born in Spokane, Washington in 1948, Sims is a graduate of Central Washington University.

Ralph R. Smith is executive vice president of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, a private philanthropy dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children in the United States. Before coming to Casey, Smith was a member of the law faculty at the University of Pennsylvania where he taught Corporations, Securities Regulations and Education Law and Policy. He also serves in senior leadership positions for the School District of Philadelphia (including chief of staff and chief operating officer), as a key advisor to the Mayor of Philadelphia on children and family policy, and as the founding director of both the National Center on Fathers and Families and the Philadelphia Children's Network. Smith is former chair of the Council on Foundations board and serves on the boards of the Foundation Center, Wachovia Regional Foundation, Venture Philanthropy Partners, the Clinton Center on Community Philanthropy and the Annenberg Institute for School Reform.

Steve Thomas is the Emmy Award winning host of **Renovation Nation** on Planet Green, which premiered on June 4, 2008. He celebrated his final year as host of television's most popular home improvement series, **This Old House**, during the 2002/2003 television series. Over the course of his 14 years as host, Steve became known as the "ultimate home enthusiast" and helped catapult **This Old House** to the top of PBS's list of most-watched ongoing series of all time. He also contributed to the successful debut of **Ask This Old House**, the all-new series in which viewer questions are addressed on-air. A much in demand speaker as well as a serial renovator, Thomas also consults on residential building and renovation for clients all over the United States and has been described as an "expert in demand" on television shows such as Oprah, Today, CNN, Entertainment Tonight, and the CBS Early Show. Thomas received his bachelor's degree in philosophy from Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington.

Guillermo Vidal became the Mayor of Denver in January 2011. Prior to his successful mayoral bid, Vidal served as Deputy Mayor for seven years. He graduated from the University of Colorado with a civil engineering degree and joined the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), where he worked for 23 years. Vidal was promoted to the post of executive director as an appointee of Colorado Governor Roy Romer in 1994. During his tenure with CDOT Vidal was responsible for many construction projects including the I 25/I 70 Interchange (the Mousetrap), C 470 and the North I 25 HOV lanes. After his tenure with CDOT, a board of elected officials from fifty local governments that make up the Denver metropolitan region selected Vidal to head the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG). A native of Camagüey, Cuba, Vidal is Denver's first foreign-born Mayor.

Fred Wacker is the director and chief operating officer at The Home Depot Foundation. The Home Depot Foundation was created in 2002 and focuses its resources on supporting nonprofit organizations dedicated to improving the homes and facilities that serve disadvantaged families and individuals, with a special emphasis on veterans. Prior professional positions include Southeast Regional Director of the Fannie Mae Foundation, Community Investment Officer and Deputy Director of Community Investment Services for the Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta, and

National Director of Neighborhood Program Development for NeighborWorks® America, formerly called the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation. Wacker has a Master's in Education from Ohio University and is a certified Urban Lender.

Dr. Leonard Weather is the president of the National Medical Association and has written extensively about health disparities and the link between environmental toxins and health. A resident of Shreveport, Louisiana, he is also a member of numerous Louisiana Commissions to which he was appointed by the Governor; is a past chair of region V, NMA, Inc.; and a member of the National Medical Association's Board of Trustees and Executive Committee. Weather was the principal investigator for the National Medical Association's *Katrina* Disaster Practice Restoration Grant. Weather is also the president of the Northern Louisiana Medical Association and the New Orleans Health Alliance (NOHA). He is a graduate of Howard University's College of Pharmacy and received his Doctor of Medicine degree from Rush Medical College. Weather trained in gynecology and obstetrics at the Johns Hopkins University Hospital.

Roxane White is chief of staff to Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper. She has a long history of public service and commitment to the state of Colorado and served as the Director of Human Services for the city of Denver from 2003-2008. Following that, White took on the role of Executive Director for the Tim and Bernie Marquez foundation, before returning to the Hickenlooper administration. Her background as a social worker and her goal-oriented and results-driven approach to leadership make her uniquely suited for the role of chief of staff to the Governor. Prior to coming to the City of Denver, Roxane spent 16 years developing programs to serve the needs of people who are homeless in Colorado and San Francisco. White holds a bachelor's degree from Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon, and master's degrees in social work and divinity from San Francisco State University and San Francisco Theological Seminary.