



Commonwealth Fund Names Joseph R. Betancourt, M.D., as Its Next President

Nationally Recognized Leader in Health Equity, Quality, and Community Health Will Succeed David Blumenthal, M.D., on January 17, 2023

Joseph R. Betancourt, M.D., M.P.H., one of the nation's preeminent leaders in health care, equity, quality, and community health, will become the Commonwealth Fund's eighth president on January 17, 2023, succeeding David Blumenthal, M.D., who has served in the role since 2013. Betancourt currently serves as the Senior Vice President for Equity and Community Health at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH), overseeing the organization's diversity, equity, inclusion, and community health portfolio, including its Center for Diversity and Inclusion, Disparities Solutions Center, Center for Community Health Improvement, and centers focused on gun violence prevention, community health innovation, immigrant health, and global health. He will be among the first Latino heads of a national health care foundation.

Previously, Betancourt led the Mass General Brigham (MGB) system's COVID Equity and Community Health response, served as Vice President and Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer at MGH, and directed its Disparities Solutions Center, which he founded. From 2001 to 2019, Betancourt headed the hospital's efforts in Multicultural Education within the Center for Diversity and Inclusion. He is an associate professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School and a board-certified internist, whose practice has focused on Spanish-speaking and minority populations.

"I cannot think of anyone better than Joe Betancourt to lead the Commonwealth Fund into the future," said Michael Drake, M.D., President of the University of California, and Chair of the Commonwealth Fund Board of Directors. "His breadth of experience, as a physician, health system leader, and pioneer in disparities research, gives him a keen insight and a diverse toolkit for addressing the challenges U.S. health care will face in the coming years. His will be a critically important new perspective and voice in health care philanthropy."

Betancourt earned his M.D. from the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey and completed an internal medicine residency at New York Hospital–Cornell Medical Center. Following his residency, he was a member of one of the first classes in the Commonwealth Fund–Harvard University Fellowship in Minority Health Policy, through which he earned an M.P.H., with a concentration in Health Policy and Management, from the Harvard School of Public Health.

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The Commonwealth Fund is a private, nonprofit foundation supporting independent research on health policy reform and a high-performance health system.

“It is an honor and privilege to lead an organization that has meant so much to me personally and to so many Americans over more than a century,” said Betancourt. “Twenty-five years ago, the Commonwealth Fund propelled me into what has become an unimaginable journey in health care, and I am humbled beyond words to be given the opportunity to lead this critically important organization into the future, always remembering that our goal is to ensure access to high-quality, affordable health care, for all.”

As Vice President and Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer at MGH, Betancourt helped develop and launch the organization’s Structural Equity Ten-Point Plan and MGB’s United Against Racism Initiative. The Disparities Solutions Center, which Betancourt founded in 2005, develops the capacity of health care organizations to improve quality, address disparities, and achieve equity. Its Disparities Leadership Program worked with more than 350 operating health care systems across the country, providing guidance on how they can improve quality and value in the care of diverse, minority, and vulnerable populations.

“I’m excited to welcome Joe Betancourt to the Commonwealth Fund,” said Fund President David Blumenthal, M.D. “Knowing Joe and his work, I also know he will bring to this role deep experience in disparities-reduction and equity, as well as a passion for improving the health of all Americans. His integrity, values, and exemplary leadership skills will serve the Commonwealth Fund well at a critical point in our history.”

Betancourt is an author of nearly 80 peer-reviewed articles, numerous book chapters, and many white papers, policy briefs, and guides. He has also served on several Institute of Medicine (IOM) Committees, including the one that produced the seminal report *Unequal Treatment: Confronting Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Health Care*. He is a sought-after speaker, and in 2015 was a member of the inaugural class of the Aspen Institute’s Health Innovators Fellowship. In 2022, he was named one of the nation’s “Top 25 Diversity Leaders” by *Modern Healthcare*.

Betancourt has played an active role in both national and local public service, serving on committees that have provided advice to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Health Resources and Services Administration. Locally, he has served on Boston’s Board of Health and the Public Health Commission’s Committee on Racial/Ethnic Disparities, as well as on the Massachusetts Disparities Council and the Massachusetts State Committee on Racial/Ethnic Disparities.

The Commonwealth Fund’s Board of Directors selected Betancourt as the next president this month after a national search, led by Egon Zehnder. Betancourt, who is of Puerto Rican descent, was born in New York City and raised in a bilingual, bicultural home. Throughout his career, he has worked closely with, and developed programs for, socially and culturally diverse populations, with an aim toward bridging the quality divide that leads to disparities — work he intends to continue at the Commonwealth Fund.

“The Commonwealth Fund’s work is characterized by equity, science and rigor, and nonpartisanship,” Betancourt said. “As we know, solutions can emerge from any and all directions, and we will seek to partner with all who share the commitment to improve the health, health care, and well-being of all communities. We will find the solutions to health care’s pressing challenges together.”