

## Antonia C. Novello

**Antonia C. Novello, M.D., M.P.H., Dr.P.H**



Antonia Coello Novello, M.D., M.P.H., Dr.P.H. was nominated by Governor George E. Pataki to be the thirteenth New York State Health Commissioner on June 3, 1999.

The nomination was confirmed by the New York State Senate on June 15, 1999. With the appointment, Dr. Novello heads one of the leading public health agencies in the nation. She is responsible for a \$30 billion budget, the largest of any New York State agency and over one-third the total of the entire New York State budget. Dr. Novello also heads an agency which includes four health care facilities (with a fifth in the construction phase), two regional offices and field offices, nine district offices as well as the central office, located in Albany.

Some of the major program responsibilities Dr. Novello takes on include: Medicaid; Child Health Plus; Youth Tobacco Enforcement and Prevention; regulation of nursing homes and home health agencies; Managed Care, and implementation of the Spinal Cord Injury Trust Fund. As the State Health Commissioner, Dr. Novello also serves as the President of Health Research, Inc.

Some of the more general goals and objectives of the Department include promoting and "sustaining the health status of all New Yorkers; providing access to affordable health care to all New Yorkers; improving the quality of health care through collaboration, oversight and surveillance of health care providers; enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department through re-engineering of its programs, policies, and internal operations; and working with the diverse customers the agency serves.

Prior to being appointed as the New York State Health Commissioner, Dr. Novello previously served as the 14th Surgeon General of the U.S. Public Health Service and was sworn in by Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor on March 9, 1990. Her appointment marked two firsts: Dr. Novello became the first woman and the first Hispanic ever to hold this position. As surgeon general, Dr. Novello advised the public on health matters, such as smoking, AIDS, diet and nutrition, environmental health hazards, and the importance of immunization and disease prevention. She also directed the activities of the 6,100 members of the U. S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps.

After her surgeon general tenureship, she served as United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Special Representative for Health and Nutrition (1993-1996), where she advised the Executive Director on issues pertaining to women, children and youth. In particular, Dr. Novello provided leadership toward the global efforts to eliminate iodine and vitamin A deficiency disorders, immunizing the world's children, and preventing smoking and substance abuse in youth.

Before becoming New York State Health Commissioner, Dr. Novello was Visiting Professor of Health Policy and Management at the Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health and Special Director for Community Health Policy. In this capacity, Dr. Novello provided advice and guidance in the development of appropriate research, service and educational programs relevant to improving the health of poor communities, particularly inner city and urban

disenfranchised populations. Dr. Novello was born in Fajardo, Puerto Rico. She graduated from the University of Puerto Rico with a B.S. degree in 1965 and an M.D. degree in 1970. Dr. Novello served her pediatric internship and residency at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (1970- 1973), where she was selected intern of the year (1970). She completed her subspecialty training in pediatric nephrology at the University of Michigan (1974) and at Georgetown University (1975).

Dr. Novello was awarded a Masters in Public Health with a concentration in health services administration from the Johns Hopkins University in 1982. In the summer of 1987, she was selected to attend the Program for Senior Managers in Government at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. She is a member of Alpha Omega Alpha, the national honorary medical society; has published extensively, has received numerous awards and holds over thirty honorary doctoral degrees. In May 2000 Dr. Novello was awarded a Doctor of Public Health from Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health.

Dr. Novello entered the U.S. Public Health Service in 1978 after working in the private practice of pediatrics and nephrology. Until her appointment as surgeon general, her entire PHS career was spent at the National Institutes of Health where she served in various capacities, rising to deputy director of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development with responsibility for the direction and administration of the extramural programs and for the coordination of pediatric AIDS research. In addition, she chaired the USPHS Work Group during the reorganization and re-vitalization of the USPHS Commissioned Corps, chaired the HHS Task Force on Pediatric HIV/AIDS, and co-chaired the NIH Advisory Committee on Women's Health Issues.

While at NIH, Dr. Novello also gained experience on Capitol Hill as she was detailed to the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources. In her position as legislative fellow she made major contributions to the drafting and enactment of the Organ Procurement Transplantation Act of 1984 (P.L.98-507) and was successful in drafting warning labels concerning the health risks of cigarette smoking.

Dr. Novello, a board-certified pediatrician, is clinical professor of pediatrics at the Georgetown University School of Medicine and the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences. She is also adjunct professor of pediatrics and communicable diseases at the University of Michigan and adjunct professor of International Health at the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health. Dr. Novello is a fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics and a member of the American Society of Nephrology, the American Society of Pediatric Nephrology, the American Pediatrics Society and the Society for Pediatric Research.

Dr. Novello is the recipient of numerous awards and honors including Surgeon General's Exemplary Service Medallion and Medal; USPHS Distinguished Service Medal; the U.S. Army Legion of Merit; the US Coast Guard Meritorious Medal; the US Department of the Navy Distinguished Public Service Award; the American Medical Association Nathan B. Davis Award; the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Medal; the Johns Hopkins Society of Scholars Award and the University Alumni Association's Woodrow Wilson Award for Distinguished Government Service; the Elizabeth Blackwell Award; the University of Michigan Medical Center Alumni Award & Alumna Council Athena Award; the Public Health Service Commissioned Officer's Association Health Leader of the Year Award; the Ellis Island Medal of Honor; the Elizabeth Ann Seton Award; the Charles C. Shepard Science Award for Scientific Excellence; the American Medical Women's Association Leadership Award; the National Council of La Raza President's Award; the National Council of Alcohol and Drug Dependency Golden Key Award; American Academy of Pediatrics Excellence in Public Service Award; Healthy American Fitness Leaders Award; the National Women's Hall of Fame; Ronald McDonald Children's Charities Award of Excellence; Hispanic Hero Award; Miami Children's Hospital International Hall of Fame; Women at Work Science Award.

Administrator, researcher, lecturer, and author, Dr. Antonia Coello Novello is first and foremost a physician whose motto is "good science and good sense." June 2000

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