

Julissa Molina Soto

BIO

Julissa is considered one of the visionary and trailblazing leaders in public health in the State of Colorado and has served in significant leadership capacities in numerous capacities across the state. A trailblazer in programming serving Spanish-speaking new immigrants, Julissa has more than two decades of nonprofit experience and innovative insight. Her background includes over 19 years of success in leading and managing evidence-based prevention programs serving new immigrants. She immigrated to the United States nearly 21 years ago from the state of Michoacán in central Mexico, so she understands the health needs of Colorado Latinos and the importance of reaching out to them. Her outreach efforts include hosting a radio show, leading exercise groups and teaching the National Diabetes Prevention Program (NDPP) and evidence-based yearlong lifestyle change program. She is also a certified master trainer for the NDPP program and Stanford University's evidence-based Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP). In 2017 her NDPP program was selected for a systematic screening and assessment study. The program was deemed most promising in its potential to positively impact diabetes-related health outcomes among the Latino population by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). She has defied the expectations of a woman from Mexico, becoming one of the few immigrants in Colorado to be recognized for her significant contributions to the Latino community in an exceptional way. The ramifications of the marginalization and the discrimination that she has faced has only increased her desire to empowering new immigrants through a "family" and community perspective. She creates and produces everything related to the radio show. Julissa is also known not only for her Spanish Voice Over skills, but also for her English-to-Spanish translation and proofreading services,

creative copywriting and audio imaging productions. She is considered one of the unsung heroes, “hidden figures” who has endured with superlative strength, beauty and love. She is a shining example of the potential of new immigrants. Her accomplishments are a strong legacy as she has shaped history and transformed thousands of lives.

She also served as the voiceover for the 9Health Fair promos in Spanish. The topics on the show include most everything that is health related and that affects the Latino family: mental health, diabetes, depression, immigration issues, cancer, access to care, women's health and overall lively discussion and interviews that will encourage, empower, strengthen and enlighten Latino families across the Denver metro area. There was also a documentary called "Mexicanos Exitosos" that aired in Spain and Mexico documenting her journey to the United States. Through the years, Julissa has built an enviable list of clients with whom she maintains a fluid, long-term, even personal relationship.

Through partnerships and cooperative arrangements with clinics, churches, and community partnerships, she has demonstrated an exceptional capacity to mobilize public and private organizations and community representatives to address diabetes in the Hispanic community. Under her dynamic leadership, over 90,000 Latinos received culturally competent, linguistically appropriate health

promotion and disease prevention services in 2017. Furthermore, as Regional Director of Community Health Strategies for ADA Western Region, she has been responsible for increasing the budget of the program from \$10,000 to over \$750,000 in the past twelve years.

Her high degree of motivation and dedication to the Latino community has been recognized by the Latino community. She is the former Vice President of the Board of Directors of Families Forward Resource Center and a former Board member at Learning

Source, and an Emerging Leaders in Health Institute mentor. She also was a member of the Denver Foundation's Health Advisory Committee and a Board member of Inner City Health Clinic. She is also the recipient of numerous awards including the following:

- 2017 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) *Best Practices Award* National Diabetes Prevention Program (NDPP)
- 2016 Wells Fargo's *People Who Make a Difference Award*
- 2015 Colorado Nonprofit Association's *William Funk Award for Building Stronger Communities*
- 2014 Latinas First Foundation *Unsung Heroine Award*
- 2012 Kathy Hill-Young *Community Spirit Award*
- 2012 Denver Business Journal's *40 Under 40 Award*
- 2007 Martin Luther King Jr. *Humanitarian Award*
- 2006 Denver Hispanic Chamber of Commerce's *Excellence in Education Award*
- 2007 and 2006 Colorado Rockies Leadership Award finalist
- 2006 Colorado Coalition for the Medically Underserved *Layperson of the Year*
- 2005 Latino/a Research & Policy Center's *Dia de la Mujer Latina "Courage and Valor" Award*

Julissa believes that leadership in the Latino community is critical to creating change in Denver. It provides people with experiences that lead to dramatic individual transformation in terms of new skills, more fully-explored personal values, and a sense of personal power. Through the Latino Initiatives (formerly called Por Tu Familia) program at the American Diabetes Association (ADA), she has been able to build a sense of community in underserved communities across the State of Colorado, constructing civil society in a region of the country undergoing dramatic change, and it has also allowed her to build relationships with groups across the barriers of race, class, sexuality, and gender.

Through the Latino Initiatives at the ADA, she was responsible for creating an atmosphere for the promotoras, contract workers, and staff to succeed in meeting the objectives of ADA Latino Initiatives mission. She accomplished this through leadership, management and growth of the program including annual budget development, planning, implementation and evaluation of all operations and events in conjunction with the Latino Advisory Committee. She leads relationship building with local C-suite corporate executives, foundation executives and major donors, and provided inspired leadership and oversight to the Latino Initiatives program. She has also worked with the Health Resource and Service Administration (HRSA) to support an increase in the number of health care access points to expand the availability of services to underserved, disadvantaged, geographically isolated, and Spanish-speaking Latinos.