

WHLNet broadcast - *Leading in adversity and complex times*

23 October 2025

Speaker biographies

Breakout: Leading with integrity

Dr Lorena Cifuentes is a Paediatrician and Associate Professor in the Department of Pediatrics at Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. She served as Postgraduate Director (2019–2025), leading academic programmes through the pandemic and national accreditation processes. Actively involved in residency training since 1998, she has advanced research and assessment frameworks for postgraduate education. An expert in evidence-based medicine and leadership development, she teaches on UC Chile's Medical Leadership Diploma and collaborates with Royal College Canada International and LEADS Global. A national postgraduate representative and international speaker, she became Continuous Quality Improvement Coordinator for the Faculty of Medicine in 2025.

Neil E. Grunberg, Ph.D., is Professor of Military and Emergency Medicine, Neuroscience, and Nursing at the Uniformed Services University (USU), where he also serves as Director of Research and Development for the Leadership Education and Development (LEAD) program. A medical and social psychologist and behavioral neuroscientist, he has taught and mentored health professionals and scientists since 1979. Author of over 230 publications and several books on leadership and health, he co-founded the World Health Leadership Network and the ILA Healthcare Leadership Community. A U.S. Presidential Leadership Scholar, he has received numerous national awards for his research and educational leadership.

Breakout: Leading with compassion

Dr Vijay Agarwal is a pediatrician and distinguished healthcare leader from India, widely recognized for his contributions to advancing patient safety and quality. Early in his career, he played a pivotal role in shaping national public health initiatives, including the adoption of the Pulse Polio strategy and establishing sustainable healthcare practices. As President of the Consortium of Accredited Healthcare Organizations (CAHO), he has transformed the organization into a movement that inspires hospitals to strive toward becoming high-reliability organizations. A strategist and visionary, Dr. Agarwal has been honoured with multiple lifetime achievement awards, reflecting his enduring commitment to safer, more compassionate, and more effective healthcare worldwide.

Bill Tholl O.C., M.A., ICD.D is a senior policy advisor, executive consultant, teacher, author, and thought leader in health policy and leadership. Formerly Founding President and CEO of HealthCareCAN, he also led the Canadian Health Leadership Network, the Canadian Medical Association, and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, following a distinguished federal public service career. Recognised as “Medicare’s Mr. Fix-it,” Bill has co-authored influential books on health leadership with Dr. Graham Dickson and numerous policy articles. An Officer of the Order of Canada, he serves on multiple boards and teaches at McMaster University and the University of Alberta.

Breakout: Leading to support staff wellbeing

Andrea Basualdo Allende is a Dentist, Public Health and Endodontics specialist, with over 13 years of clinical experience, and a background in healthcare quality, accreditation, and health management. Certified healthcare surveyor for the National Health Accreditation System, holder of an MBA in Health Management, and currently completing a Fellowship with the International Society for Quality in Health Care (ISQua). Active member of the Chilean Society for Healthcare Quality (SOCCAS) and the Interdisciplinary Chilean Society for Humanization in Health (SOCHIIS), promoting patient-centered and humanized approaches to care. Also engaged in research on the application of artificial intelligence in dentistry.

Anne Matlow is Professor Emerita in the Department of Medicine at the Temerty Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto, where she currently oversees leadership activities in postgraduate medicine. She has held numerous leadership positions locally, nationally and internationally related to healthcare leadership, quality improvement and medical education. Anne is a LEADS Global facilitator and certified Executive Coach accredited through the International Coaching Federation, focusing on supporting physicians along their leadership trajectory through transformational coaching and vertical development.