

Webinar Date: July 19, 2022

Making Social Connections for Community Health PRESENTER BIOSKETCHES

Edward Garcia

Founder and Executive Director, Foundation for Social Connection

Partner, Healthsperien

Edward Garcia (Eddie) is Partner at Healthsperien, a nationally recognized health policy consulting firm in Washington, D.C. Eddie also is the Founder and Executive Director of the Foundation for Social Connection – a US-based non-profit organization dedicated to the translation of scientific research to real-world solutions to address social connection. He sits on the Board of Directors for its sister-organization, the Coalition to End Social Isolation and Loneliness – a non-profit advocacy organization fighting to raise national awareness and policy change to combat the negative impacts of social isolation and loneliness within the US. He is also the Co-Chair of the Global Initiative on Loneliness and Connection, a partnership with 11 countries across the globe focused on raising global awareness, supporting knowledge dissemination, and the development of systemic, nationally-based strategies to address social connection.



Eddie's 20 years working in US-government health care and social services programs has made him knowledgeable in a multitude of health and social policy issues. He has led and been actively involved in numerous multi-stakeholder coalitions aimed at improving our nation's health care delivery and financing systems and served within the US Department of Health and Human Services and US Congress between 2006-2016. Eddie holds degrees in political science and comparative health politics from Boston University and a Master of Health Science in Public Health from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

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Risa Wilkerson
Executive Director
Healthy Places by Design

Risa Wilkerson is Executive Director of Healthy Places by Design, a nonprofit consulting group serving philanthropy, nonprofit, and community-based organizations across the United States. Risa provides overarching guidance and strategic vision to fulfill the organization's mission of advancing community-led action and proven, place-based strategies to ensure health and well-being for all.

Risa's 20 years of proven leadership in the healthy communities' field places a focus on equity, integrity, and collaboration. She brings extensive experience coaching and providing technical assistance to multidisciplinary community-based partnerships across the country who are improving health and equity through policy, system and environmental change strategies. Risa combines her knowledge of nonprofit management, coalition building, community assessment, and systems approaches in order to address social determinants of health. Risa holds an M.A. from Michigan State University. Risa is an action-driven optimist, abundance thinker, and simplicity seeker.