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Con Alma Health Foundation hires Denise Herrera as new executive director Statewide foundation's current director retires after 15 years

(Santa Fe) – Con Alma Health Foundation's Board of Trustees announced today that Denise Herrera, PhD, MCHES, will take over as its new executive director on June 1. Dolores E. Roybal is retiring after 15 years of service to Con Alma. In that time, she cultivated partnerships to work toward health equity and leveraged millions of dollars to improve health in New Mexico.

Con Alma is committed to continuing this path by recruiting an executive director who shares the Foundation's vision of achieving a more equitable and healthier future for all. "It is our great pleasure to welcome Denise as our new leader," said Deborah Walker, Chair of Con Alma's Executive Search Committee and President Emeritus of the Board of Trustees. "We conducted a nationwide search to find the right person who is community-centered with a commitment to deep engagement in diversity, equity and inclusion."

The core value that has motivated Herrera – a researcher, evaluator and strategic planner -- is the belief that everyone should have a fair chance to live a healthy life. Growing up in the South Valley of Albuquerque, she saw how hard it was for families to maintain their health when they didn't have health insurance or transportation to get to a health clinic.

"I believe we should be tackling root causes. Our goal shouldn't be to fill food pantries. Our goal should be to solve hunger," she said.

Herrera is wrapping up her role as Senior Capacity Building Officer at St. David's Foundation, the largest health funder in Texas. Previously she developed initiatives related to leadership, research and evaluation at Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. In the U.S. and abroad, she has provided expertise to national advisory committees focusing on community development, health and civic engagement efforts. Herrera has a PhD in Health Education, an MS in Family Studies and Human Development, and a BS in Health Education.

One of Herrera's significant accomplishments is a personal one: She created the Herrera Internship Endowment at the National Hispanic Cultural Center Foundation in Albuquerque to honor her parents and grandparents who didn't have the opportunity to go to college. The fund provides scholarships to female Hispanic students who intern with the Hispanic Cultural Center.

"As a native of New Mexico, it's a privilege to join Con Alma as we seek to promote systemic change and respond to the values and experiences of all people and communities in New Mexico," said Herrera. "I'm deeply humbled and honored to work at the intersection of health, philanthropy, and social justice. I look forward to learning from staff and collaborating with communities, while building upon Con Alma's successes and evolving into the next era."

At Con Alma, she will guide the foundation's annual grant cycles focused on improving health, explore multi-sector solutions to New Mexico's health challenges and manage an endowment fund of more than \$28 million. With its investments and initiatives, Con Alma brings people together to work toward health equity in New Mexico.

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