

8th Global Patients Congress

24 - 26 May, 2018



International Alliance of
Patients' Organizations

A global voice for patients

Miami Marriott Dadeland Hotel , Florida, USA • www.globalpatientscongress.org • #GPC2018

Patient Empowerment through Policy and Advocacy

Amber Huett-Garcia

National Board, Obesity Action Coalition

Director of Development, Teach For America - Memphis

Discussant overview

- About Amber
- Patient Advocate + Obesity Action Coalition
- Health care + Politics + Trump
- My Tennessee House of Representatives race

The background of an advocate

- Better off than my parents
- Obesity from a young age
- Pre-existing condition: health care as a moral issue in the United States
- Long road as advocate
- Deciding to run

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Bias is killing us

- Politicians vs. public servants who don't have proximity to core issues
- We're self-segregating and spending less time with people who might oppose our world-view
- Maps of inequity overlay one another
- In obesity care, we started collecting stories at the OAC and received hundreds of stories

How do you address it?

- People first language. You are not your disease.
- Use appropriate imagery when you talk about patients, such as the free OAC Image Gallery
- Find a doctor who understands your needs
- Call it out + educate others
- Push elected officials to change and create new laws to increase access and affordability



NEWS AND POLITICS

Amber Huett-Garcia Is Running for the Tennessee House of Representatives

"We need to start electing people who are interested in changing the odds. "



Amber Huett-Garcia

MAY 15, 2018 8:00AM EDT



teenVOGUE

"In working with organizations from around the world, I expected lack of health insurance coverage to be our unifying issue. It's not. The real threat in worldwide obesity is weight bias — and it is undermining our well-being. Bias is keeping us from promotions in the workplace ([especially women](#)), keeping us from accessing evidenced-based treatment, and it is determining the interactions we have with medical professionals."

The reality of U.S. healthcare

- We spend more per capita than almost every country in the world and we do not guarantee access or affordability
 - This is particularly true with chronic disease
- Health care and medical debt are the number one costs cited in U.S bankruptcies
- The U.S. has the greatest number of individuals living with obesity in the world

Zooming in: State of Tennessee

- TN opted out Medicaid expansion, which means over 120,000 people have no reasonable access to health insurance
- Over 10 years, we're rejecting over \$22 billion dollars of *federal taxes we already paid*
- 8 rural hospitals closed in the last two years (more per capita than any state in the country)
- We're ranked 5th in adults with Type II Diabetes and 9th in obesity; approximately 43% of African Americans are affected by obesity in TN

Conclusion

- We've manufactured and moralized our health care system; profit is valued over people
- Reframe the challenge. In the U.S., our system is not broken. It is working the way it was designed. Change the design.
- Our political system makes incumbency powerful, money critical, and change hard
- Patient advocates are well-positioned to lead
- If elected officials aren't serving the public: vote them out or take their jobs (or support someone who is willing)

Contact Amber

Please visit our websites to find out more:

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Social Media

www.facebook.com/amberhuettgarcia

www.twitter.com/amberhuett

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Thank you!