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NEW ADMINISTRATOR SELECTED FOR MIAMI-DADE



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Tallahassee, FL - The Florida Department of Health is pleased to announce that Dr. Yesenia Diaz Villalta has been selected as administrator for the Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County (DOH-Miami-Dade). She was appointed by State Surgeon General and Secretary Dr. Celeste Philip and approved unanimously by the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners.

Dr. Villalta will succeed Dr. Lillian Rivera who is retiring from this position after 28 years of service. Dr. Rivera also served as Deputy State Health Officer with the Florida Department of Health in Tallahassee from 2007-2008. Under Rivera's leadership, DOH-Miami-Dade is the only organization to have won the Governor's Sterling Award for significant improvement and performance excellence three times and the Sustained Excellence Award twice. Upon her retirement, Dr. Rivera will reside in Miami-Dade County where she will continue her work on behalf of the West Kendall Community and serve on the board of Communities of Excellence 2026.

Effective Jan. 7, 2019, Dr. Villalta will be responsible for overseeing DOH-Miami-Dade's operations including planning, directing, developing and coordinating public health programs and activities. She will also address state and local public health priorities and foster population-based partnerships with community stakeholders.

Dr. Villalta was born in Miami, Florida. After graduating from Coral Gables High School, she attended Miami-Dade College, where she majored in chemistry. Dr. Villalta is a three-time graduate of the University of Miami School of Nursing, where she earned a Bachelors and Masters of Science in Nursing as well as a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree. Upon graduation, she worked in the private sector and then made a change to public health.

"We are very fortunate to have Dr. Villalta step into the administrator role to build on what was achieved under Dr. Rivera's leadership," said Deputy Secretary for County Health Systems Paul Myers. "As a seasoned public health professional and clinician, Dr. Villalta understands that successful outcomes in public health come from an active alliance between the department, local government, and community organizations."

"I feel tremendous pride that Dr. Villalta, a nurse and clinician has been chosen to lead the Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County," said Dr. Lillian Rivera. "Her unique experience, past community involvement and outstanding skills will move DOH-Miami-Dade

forward to meet the community's emerging challenges. I know she will provide the leadership needed to guide us through the public health challenges of the future.”

Dr. Villalta has nearly 13 years of experience in a variety of public health functions and 19 years in the field of nursing. She started her career with public health in 2005, at DOH-Miami-Dade as an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse. Dr. Villalta also served as Assistant Director of Nursing in 2007, until being appointed Executive Community Health Nursing Director in 2014.

Dr. Villalta stated “I feel truly honored and privileged to be given the opportunity to move DOH-Miami-Dade forward on its evolution of excellence in public service.”

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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