

About Ysabel Duron

Founder | President | Executive Director



THE LATINO CANCER INSTITUTE
Connect. Convene. Advocate.

www.latinocancerinstitute.org

The Latino Cancer Institute (TLCI) is a nationwide community and research network dedicated to solving the issues and burden of Latino cancer.

Ysabel Duron is a pioneering, award-winning Latina journalist, a cancer survivor, and for the past 25 years, a leading patient activist around Latino community engagement. Her encore career as a cancer patient advocate and non-profit agency builder commenced when she was diagnosed with cancer in 1999. In February 2023, President Joe Biden appointed Duron to the National Cancer Advisory Board (NCAB), which advises the Director of the National Cancer Institute. She serves as one of the few patient advocates on the Board.

Duron describes her “work in and with community,” as a learning classroom and credits the experience with preparing her for her advocacy role. Among other things, her former agency developed programs for low income, Spanish-speaking and immigrant communities to address gaps along the cancer continuum including cancer awareness education, navigation into screening, psychosocial support groups and a lay community navigator program to support and guide low income, Spanish-speaking cancer patients in the public health care system in Santa Clara County (San Jose), California. Between 2008 and 2016, under her leadership at Latinas Contra Cancer (LCC), Duron convened 5 unique National Latino Cancer Summits, turning its lens on cancer issues in the Latino community, collaborating with advocacy groups, researchers and health care providers to investigate, and address cancer-related impacts.

LCC also created linguistically and culturally appropriate education tools using a bingo game model to dispel myth and misinformation, promote healthy eating and exercise as well as screening and early detection; training up to 200 promotores, aka community health workers, to use these tools to raise awareness and navigate eligible participants into screenings. This bingo concept was adapted for the African American and Pacific Islander communities, and cited by the NIEHS – IBCERCC Committee, on which Duron served, in the 2012 Breast Cancer and the Environment, Prioritizing Prevention Report.

In 2017, Ms. Duron launched her third and current agency, The Latino Cancer Institute (TLCI), to amplify Latino voices about the cancer burden – acting as a force multiplier through a nationwide network of stakeholders; dedicated to promote the work of Latino community service agencies; to provide collaboration with the global cancer research community; and to drive policy to improve health outcomes and diminish disproportionate Latino cancer mortality. The Institute has since convened 5 National TLCI Forums as Duron continues to bring together researchers, clinicians, advocates, government and industry officials across the cancer landscape. The 5th annual Forum, “The Turbulent Ecosystem: Climate Change’s Impact on the Latino Cancer Burden,” was held virtually on October 27, 2023.

TLCI’s collaborations include engagements with academic partners such as the Stanford Cancer Institute, Universities of California at San Francisco and Davis, Georgetown University Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center, George Washington Cancer Center, the California Primary Care Association (FQHCs), San Diego and San Jose State Universities. Duron is a published co-author in over 10 research papers, including a 2023 publication titled “Critical Reflections on This Historical Moment for Community-engaged and Participatory Research” in Progress in Community Health Partnerships: Research, Education, and Action.

TLCI’s robust engagement has resulted in two invitations to the White House, once for a re-launch (Feb 2022) of President Joe Biden’s Cancer Moonshot initiative to drive cancer screenings and decrease cancer mortality by 50% in 25 years. The 2nd White House event (Oct 2022) spotlighted the American Cancer Society launch of the newly formed National Breast Cancer Roundtable (NBCRT) on which Duron was invited to serve. NBCRT aims, among other policy initiatives, to address disparities in cancer screening and access, advanced diagnostics and quality treatment impacting racial and ethnic populations. Duron also serves on the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the All of Us Research Program at the National Institutes of Health; invited to join in 2016 by former NIH Director Francis Collins, as a patient advocate. Duron served as a member of the California Initiative to Advance Precision Medicine Advisory Council (CIAPM) until 2024, which advised the Governor on the direction of Precision Medicine issues in the state.

As a member of the Independent Citizen’s Oversight Committee (since 2019) of the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM), a tax-payer funded stem cell research program, Duron successfully drove a motion that requires research proposals to include a plan on recruiting a proportionate number of racial and ethnic minorities into newly funded COVID Clinical Trials. The expansion of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) has since been incorporated into the majority of Requests for Proposals funded by the Institute and drives frameworks for internal organizational operations. CIRM CEO, Maria Millan, said that the “culture,” has changed amongst CIRM scientific reviewers who now more vigorously question the quality of the DEI plan in the research proposals, which are also scored by patient advocates and can be returned to applicants for improvements.

As a member of the National Rapid Research Coalition, for the Johns Hopkins University Center for Health Security between 2020 and 2022, Duron advised on the community’s role in an equitable and effective Covid vaccination rollout (titled CommuniVax), supported the research site team in California (one of five sites around the country), consulted on and assisted in editing the three CommuniVax national reports. Duron was also elected in 2021 to the University of California Center for Data Drive Insights and Innovation (UCCDI2) which engages in a collaborative approach with UC Health to build a pre-eminent data-driven learning healthcare system that improves the human condition.

In recent years, Duron has been invited to speak at numerous high-profile events. In 2023, she was the keynote speaker at the Latino Community Health Equity Conference in Southern Arizona, providing insights on cancer disparities affecting the Latino community. She also participated in a virtual conversation with The Hill’s Editor in Chief on “Geographic and Equity Roadblocks to Cancer Care.” In 2024, Duron joined a panel at SXSW discussing “Cancer Innovations and Those Who Are Left Behind,” moderated a panel at the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute’s 2024 Issues Summit, and participated in a panel on AI, privacy, and safety in healthcare at the Health Data Leadership Institute conference.

A broadcast journalist for 43 years, Duron was inducted into the National Association of Hispanic Journalists Hall of Fame in 2009. A 1970 graduate of San Jose State University with a B.A. in Journalism, Duron distinguished herself in both the journalism and non-profit worlds winning a number of prestigious awards. These include two Emmys, a Radio-TV News Director Award, the Girl Scouts Juliette Gordon Award for her Trouble with Teacher Series, the Silicon Valley NAACP Chapter W.E.B. Dubois Award, as well as the Living Legacy Award from the Chicana- Latina Foundation, the 2005 Bay Area Most Influential Latino from the SF Business Times, a Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Women’s Media Association, and the 2011 Latino Spirit Award from the Latino Caucus of the California Legislature.

Duron’s non-profit work garnered her the 150-thousand dollar Purpose Prize (2013) from ENCORE, and won her the Distinguished Public Service Award from the American Psychosocial Oncology Society among others. More recently, she was named one of MM&M’s 2024 Healthcare Influencers and honored as an Individual Honoree at the 2024 Latinx Business Leadership Awards by the Silicon Valley Business Journal. Currently, Duron is focused on producing and hosting a 6-part all virtual Friday Forum Series titled “Talking about cancer won’t kill us, the silence will!” This series underscores her ongoing commitment to breaking the silence around cancer in the Latino community and fostering open dialogue about prevention, treatment, and support.

In addition to this series, Duron continues to be actively involved in high-profile cancer awareness and advocacy events. She is set to join as a panelist during the upcoming FDA Oncology Center of Excellence (OCE) Conversation on Cancer public panel discussion, which kicks off the National Hispanic Family Cancer Awareness Week. Notably, on September 20, 2024, Duron will participate in this important panel discussion before rushing to host the first forum of her series on the same day, showcasing her dedication and busy schedule in cancer advocacy. Furthermore, Duron is slated to be a speaker at the Advancing Precision Medicine (APM) conference in November 2024, exemplifying her tireless commitment and indomitable spirit in advancing cancer research and patient advocacy.

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