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# HEROINES of HEALTH

*celebrating women  
in global health*

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**MAY 20, 2018  
INTERCONTINENTAL  
HOTEL  
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND**

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**#WomeninGH  
#HeroinesofHealth  
#WHA71**

# Welcome!

Thank you for joining us as we celebrate women in global health everywhere and the 2018 *Heroines of Health* honors.

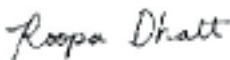
Women are the future. Today, women make up 75 percent of the global healthcare workforce and contribute nearly \$3 trillion to the industry. But too often their contributions go unpaid and unrecognized – and their stories of impact go untold. We want to change that.

As a community, we know that women can have a tremendous impact on shaping the future of global health, but what's often missing is the opportunity to do so. To change the face of global health for the future, we are committed to help recognize, develop and grow women in leadership – and to start by sharing the stories of women leading the charge.

The women being recognized today are changing healthcare for the better in their local communities, countries and continents. Through their dedication and passion, they are working tirelessly to improve global health by advocating for better access to and awareness around several different areas, including children's health, healthcare innovation, workforce and more.

These women have different backgrounds, focus areas, accomplishments and challenges they have faced in the field. But what they all have in common is the inspirational passion they have for the work they do, the people they help and their determination to champion better healthcare for all. They are inspiring the next generation of women leadership and finding opportunities for us to work together to improve the global health landscape collectively. They are *Heroines of Health*.

We want to thank you sincerely for joining us today as we bring the global health community together to celebrate these nine incredible women. We hope you will join us in pledging to continue to recognize and celebrate women who are changing global health for the better. There are so many more stories out there to tell. Please help us tell them!



**Dr. Roopa Dhatt**

Executive Director & Co-Founder  
Women in Global Health



**Terri Bresenham**

Chief Innovation Officer  
GE Healthcare

# **HEROINES of HEALTH**

*celebrating women in global health*

6:00-7:00PM COCKTAIL RECEPTION

7:00PM WELCOME REMARKS

*ROOPA DHATT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & CO-FOUNDER,  
WOMEN IN GLOBAL HEALTH*

*THE GOVERNMENT OF SWEDEN*

7:15PM KEYNOTE ADDRESS

*ELIZABETH IRO, CHIEF NURSING OFFICER,  
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION*

7:40PM PRESENTATION OF THE  
2018 HEROINES OF HEALTH

8:30-9:15PM PANEL DISCUSSION WITH THE  
2018 HEROINES OF HEALTH

*MODERATED BY KATJA IVERSEN, PRESIDENT & CEO,  
WOMEN DELIVER*

9:15PM CLOSING REMARKS

*TERRI BRESENHAM, CHIEF INNOVATION OFFICER,  
GE HEALTHCARE*

# HEROINES of HEALTH

## *Continued Support Needed*

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Tonight, as we celebrate these extraordinary *Heroines of Health*, our aim is to recognize the contributions of women leaders in global health whose work is championing better health for their communities. We're proud to honor this year's Heroines along with our co-sponsors Frontline Health Workers Coalition, the Global Health Centre at the Graduate Institute, Global Health Council, IntraHealth International, Research in Gender and Ethics (RinGs), Government Offices of Sweden, the United Nations Foundation, and Women Deliver.

We know there are many more women out there doing a great deal of work in global health at all ends of the spectrum. The focus of this honor is to tell the stories of those women who are making an impact at the local, grassroots level and in traditionally under-represented communities.

It is important that we don't stop here. There are many more women who have shown leadership in global health at all levels and their stories are also important. We encourage global health organizations to pledge to recognize and share the stories of other *Heroines of Health* and help give women in global health everywhere a better platform to vocalize and showcase the work they are doing to make global health better for all.

Please join us in sharing the stories of these Heroines who inspire us every day using #WomeninGH and #HeroinesofHealth.

**Let's vow to keep the conversation going as we support women on every level who are changing the face of global health.**

# Dr. Najla Al-Sonboli

## *HEROINE of HEALTH in Yemen*



### **ISSUE SHE'S FOCUSED ON**

Children's Health

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### **ABOUT HER WORK**

Dr. Najla Al-Sonboli is the head of the Pediatric Department of Al-Sabeen Hospital for Maternity and Children. This hospital is the biggest tertiary referral pediatric hospital in Yemen. It receives patients from Sana'a, the largest city in Yemen, and all the surrounding governorates, which includes nearly 4 million people, half of whom are displaced due to war. In the face of war and grave personal risk, Najla has shown incredible resilience, working tirelessly to provide essential medical care to save babies and children's lives, organising staff to provide voluntary services with minimal resources and being responsive to new challenges.

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### **THE TOUGHEST CHALLENGE SHE FACES IN THE FIELD**

"Each day when you leave home you don't know if you will be back home or not. But when I see how sick people come to the hospital, despite all the security challenges, this make me strong enough to go to the hospital to help them and stand by them."

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### **THE GREATEST PIECE OF ADVICE SHE'S RECEIVED**

"To be a good leader you have to lead by example – you have to become a symbol."

# Claire Cahill

## *HEROINE of HEALTH in Ireland*



### **ISSUES SHE'S FOCUSED ON**

Children's health and access to scoliosis care

### **ABOUT HER WORK**

Claire is a community mental health nurse and also cofounded The Scoliosis Advocacy Network, which supports over 650 Irish families whose children live with scoliosis. Their aim is to ensure that every child has access to timely assessments and care and to build a community for all children who live with scoliosis in Ireland. Since their founding, Claire and her cofounder Michelle Long have campaigned tirelessly to bring change. One of their main goals is to see the lack of timely care recognised as a children's rights issue - and they were hugely proud to welcome the Children's Ombudsman Report on Scoliosis: Waiting for Scoliosis Treatment - A Children's Rights Issue.

### **HER INSPIRATION FOR GETTING INVOLVED**

"My son Darragh was diagnosed with infantile idiopathic scoliosis at the age of two. It was a great shock to us as a family. It meant that my son would require ongoing specialist orthopaedic care for his childhood. From the outset it was apparent that although in Ireland we have world class surgeons, the long waits for treatment would mean that my son would be at risk of progression of his curve and deterioration in his overall wellbeing and health."

### **THE GREATEST PIECE OF ADVICE SHE'S RECEIVED**

"That patient stories can change the world - that we must ensure that the patient voice is always heard and represented."

# Anne Kinuthia

## *HEROINE of HEALTH in South Sudan*



### **ISSUES SHE'S FOCUSED ON**

HIV, sexual and reproductive rights, and maternal health

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### **ABOUT HER WORK**

Anne is the country representative for IntraHealth International in South Sudan. She leads a team tasked with introducing and scaling up HIV services in the country. They have successfully worked to roll out HIV testing, prevention of mother-to-child transmission and HIV treatment services in different regions of the South Sudan. She has also supported the Ministry of Health and the South Sudan AIDS Commission to develop the necessary guidelines and strategic plan to inform HIV programming in the country.

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### **THE GREATEST PIECE OF ADVICE SHE'S RECEIVED**

"Put your fear and doubt aside, and you will surely discover the greatness in you. We all have it in us, but only a few have the courage and confidence to show theirs to the world."

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### **HER ADVICE TO YOUNG WOMEN IN GLOBAL HEALTH**

"Women in global health are key to the success and wellbeing of fellow women in need of health services. They should always aim to leave a place better than they found it. As health workers, we have life in our hands."

# Professor Rose Leke

## *HEROINE of HEALTH in Cameroon*



### **ISSUES SHE'S FOCUSED ON**

Immunology research and policy; polio eradication

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### **ABOUT HER WORK**

For nearly three decades, Dr. Rose Leke has been a leader and role model within the global health community. Her groundbreaking research encompasses broad areas of immunology, parasitology and global health, with a particular focus on malaria, in addition to her significant contributions to polio eradication across the African continent. In 2011, she was one of 6 women who received the African Union Kwame Nkrumah Scientific Award for Women, which recognizes female excellence in scientific research. She also received the 2012 award for Excellence in Science from the Cameroon Professional Society. Through her work, Dr. Leke has shown tremendous leadership in advancing gender equality and empowering women in the field of public health, science and research.

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### **HER INSPIRATION FOR GETTING INVOLVED**

“The desire to provide solutions to health problems within my community, and the need to provide sustainable solutions by training younger women scientists.”



# Christine Mataza

## *HEROINE of HEALTH in Kenya*



### **ISSUE SHE'S FOCUSED ON**

Fighting for patients' rights to quality care

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### **ABOUT HER WORK**

Christine has been the nurse in charge for Kilifi sub-county, Kenya for the past 15 years, playing a key role in Kenya's public health system. Her supportive supervision, drive, and tireless dedication to ensure that basic care is available to those who cannot afford access to private care is a source of inspiration in her community. Many low and middle income countries have been decentralising their services from central governments and large hospitals to local governments and district health clinics. This process has been promoted for its potential to improve efficiency, responsiveness and local accountability. In practice if and how this works is highly shaped by the decisions and actions of managers at the district level; a role that is often under-recognised and that Christine has taken on at different levels.

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### **THE GREATEST PIECE OF ADVICE SHE'S RECEIVED**

"When we look at patients, we should not look at them only individually but also look at what's behind them, in their homes and in their health systems."

# Margaret Nakanjakko

## *HEROINE of HEALTH in Uganda*



### **ISSUES SHE'S FOCUSED ON**

Sexual and reproductive health

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### **ABOUT HER WORK**

In Margaret's community, many people call her "mummy" as she shows tremendous support and dedication to anyone asking her for help. For nearly two decades, Margaret has worked with Reproductive Health Uganda to offer sexual and reproductive health information and counseling to different groups in her community. She is helping to improve the lives of thousands of young Ugandans by giving them the tools they desire to avoid unintended pregnancies, stay in school and live healthy, productive lives. In a country like Uganda, where 75% of the population is under the age of 30, and 1 in 44 women has a lifetime risk of maternal death, access to quality sexual and reproductive health and rights information and services from providers like Margaret have never been more important.

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### **HER INSPIRATION FOR GETTING INVOLVED**

Margaret's own experience of getting pregnant at 18 and having her son taken away from her inspired her to work with girls and women in her community so that they could be better informed and feel empowered. "Ignorance is the worst disease. In certain countries where girls don't have information and where they are not empowered, they are blamed for what they have fallen into instead of helped," says Margaret.

# Audra Renyi

## *HEROINE of HEALTH in Canada*



### **ISSUES SHE'S FOCUSED ON**

Hearing and Hearing Loss

### **ABOUT HER WORK**

Audra leads earAccess, a social enterprise that is disrupting the hearing aid industry, providing hearing services (testing for hearing loss and hearing aids) that are 70% cheaper than comparable options. Today, there are 466 million people living with hearing loss, of whom 34 million are children, many living in low-income countries. earAccess has been helping provide an affordable solution to hearing loss and hearing aids for the world's most remote communities. Audra also helped grow World Wide Hearing, an NGO focused on helping children with hearing loss.

### **HER INSPIRATION FOR GETTING INVOLVED**

“As a young child, it was the moment I realized my father needed his hearing aids to hear me, and so did my aunt, his sister. That has remained with me my whole life, the knowledge that without hearing aids they would be completely isolated.” Her goal is to ensure that every person with hearing loss, no matter how poor, can reach his or her full potential.

# Professor Sabina Rashid

## *HEROINE of HEALTH in Bangladesh*



### **ISSUES SHE'S FOCUSED ON**

Sexual and reproductive health and rights; sexuality and rights, focus on vulnerable populations

### **ABOUT HER WORK**

Sabina heads the BRAC School of Public Health in Bangladesh. She has worked closely with a team on curriculum reform to continue to transform the international Masters of Public Health (MPH) program, so that students learn first-hand in the community. She's also spent a large portion of her career dedicated to gender, sexual and reproductive health, and the health needs of people in urban slums. In 2008, she established a Centre for Gender and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights with seed funding from an UN organization, pushing for evidence-based research, laws to stop child marriage, providing a safe space for LGBTQI communities and working to develop online resources on sensitive topics.

### **THE GREATEST PIECE OF ADVICE SHE'S RECEIVED**

"Whenever I felt intimidated by the brilliant and inspiring individuals I met, my father, who was always very supportive of me, would say: 'Sabina, 99% is aspiration, 1% is inspiration.' Basically, you don't have to be brilliant to make a difference, just work hard, remain sincere, committed, and passionate about what you do, and your work will speak for itself."

# Professor Malabika Sarker

## *HEROINE of HEALTH in Bangladesh*



### **ISSUES SHE'S FOCUSED ON**

Sexual and reproductive health and rights; focus on vulnerable populations

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### **ABOUT HER WORK**

Malabika demonstrates female leadership in action. Her work is deeply rooted in human rights frameworks. As the Director of Research at the BRAC School of Public Health in Bangladesh she teaches, conducts research, and oversees research activities. Bangladesh has been described as an “exceptional health performer” despite low spending on health care, a weak health system, and widespread poverty. Through her work in the country, she is documenting these improvements, identifying areas of weakness, and recommending ways forward. Her work is embedded within policy and practice in Bangladesh and has real impact on the ground.

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### **A MOMENT THAT INSPIRED HER**

“BRAC launched a ‘maternity waiting home’ for women with high-risk pregnancy from remote villages. In 1993, a woman named Banu was admitted with her ninth pregnancy. At the home, she was restless and kept talking about how her children would suffer without her. She left after a day. Three days later, I received news that she was at the hospital with obstructed labour. The baby died and after the craniotomy, Banu had tried to walk the 6km home and passed away on the way. After this, I realized the complexity of public health and how simply addressing a patient’s clinical needs isn’t enough.”



# UP FOR DISCUSSION

*share your thoughts on...*

1. What one change in your organization would have the greatest impact on gender equality?
2. Can you give an example from your career where having a woman in leadership led to improved health outcomes?
3. How would you engage male decision makers in supporting gender equality in health?

# This event is hosted by:



## *With special thanks to our co-sponsors:*



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