



Joining the Hearing World: Cochlear Implant Program

Interview with Salpy Akaragian, PhD, MN, RN, NPD-BC

Dr. Salpy Akaragian is the President and the Founder of the Armenian International Medical Fund (AIM Fund) and Director Emeritus of UCLA Health's International Nursing Program and Nurse credentialing. She received a Bachelor of Science, Master of Science, and Philosophy of Doctorate degrees in Nursing from UCLA School of Nursing. She was the US Partner Representative for USAID/AIHA grants from 1995-2004, directed multiple healthcare projects, and initiated reforms and development programs in Armenia. In 2003, she co-founded the cochlear implant program at Erebouni Medical Center, Yerevan, Armenia. She is the founder and the first president of the Armenian-American Nurses Association in California (1989) and, in 1996, facilitated the formation of the Armenian Nurses Association in Armenia. She has served on the California Board of Registered Nursing as a board member and as a Magnet Appraiser for American Nursing Credentialing Center. She is a national board-certified in nursing professional development. Salpy received Regional and National Gem awards from Nurse.com, and in 2014, she received the Ellis Island Medal of Honor. She is a member of several professional organizations and has presented on various health-related topics at Local, National, and International Conferences.

Dr. Vicken Sepilian is a Reproductive Medicine specialist and is the founder and director of American Fertility Specialists Medical Group. He is double board-certified in Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility, as well as Obstetrics and Gynecology. Dr. Sepilian has been an active member of the Armenian American Medical Society (AAMS) holding multiple leadership positions, including serving as the President from 2009 to 2013. Dr. Sepilian served as the Chairman of the 11th Armenian Medical World Congress and currently is the President of the Armenian Medical International Congress (AMIC), a nonprofit organization with chapters all over the world, with the aim of coordinating global efforts in improving healthcare in Armenia. Passionate about community education, in 2008, Dr. Sepilian launched the "Your Health" educational TV program aimed at sharing with the community the latest and most important healthcare topics. Since 2008, the show has been making house calls to tens of thousands of viewers helping educate them on preventative care and healthy lifestyles. In 2010, Dr. Sepilian, alongside other civic leaders and the former Mayor of the City of Glendale co-founded the Glendale Health Festival. Dr. Sepilian worked closely with city and state officials and local hospitals to organize this large-scale event with the aim to improve the health of the community. Dr. Sepilian is a strong believer that success and wealth are measured by life's experiences and human interactions and that true happiness and purpose are achieved by giving. Cherished memories include debates about life and death with Dr. Jack Kevorkian, delivering pens to students in villages in Sri Lanka and teaching chess to orphans in Nepal.