

Bio Sketch Felicia Marie Knaul

Felicia Marie Knaul, BA (International Development, University of Toronto), MA, PhD (Economics, Harvard University), has dedicated more than three decades to academic, advocacy and policy work in global health focused on reducing inequities and improving the condition of vulnerable groups, primarily in low- and middle-income countries and especially in Latin America and the Caribbean.

At the University of Miami, she is Professor at the [Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine](#), Director of the [Institute for Advanced Study of the Americas](#), and a Full Member of the Cancer Control Program at the [Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center](#). From 2009 to 2015, Dr. Knaul was Associate Professor at Harvard Medical School and Director of the [Harvard Global Equity Initiative](#), an inter-faculty program chaired by Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen.

Her research focuses on global health, cancer and especially breast cancer, violence against women and children, access to pain relief and palliative care, health systems and reform, health financing, women and health, medical employment, poverty and inequity, female labor force participation, and at-risk children and youth.

Dr. Knaul has produced approximately 250 academic and policy publications. She is the lead author of the Lancet report, "[Alleviating the access abyss in palliative care and pain relief – an imperative of universal health coverage](#)," which has been called a "landmark report" by the *Lancet* and was featured in the [BBC](#), the [Washington Post](#), [Project Syndicate](#), [The Guardian](#), and [Voice of America](#). From 2012-2015, she was a member of the [Lancet Commission on Women and Health](#) and a leading co-author of the June 2015 report. In 2013-2014, she participated in the [Lancet Series Universal Health Coverage in Latin America](#). In 2012, she led a [Lancet group publication](#) that reviewed the health system reform of Mexico; a follow-up to [The Lancet 2006 Mexico series](#) that she also chaired. She and her research team won the 2005 Global Development Network Prize for Outstanding Research on Change in the Health Sector for her work on *Seguro Popular* and financial protection in Mexico.

She has authored and served as lead editor of several books, including [Closing the Cancer Divide](#) (Harvard University Press/Harvard Global Equity Initiative 2012) and [Financing Health in Latin America: Household Spending and Impoverishment](#) (Harvard University Press/Harvard Global Equity Initiative 2013), and [Inclusión educativa para niños, niñas y jóvenes hospitalizados](#) (Fondo de Cultura Económica e Intersistemas 2006). Her doctoral thesis focused on street and working children and included extensive primary data collection in Colombia.

Dr. Knaul has created and coordinated many international research and advocacy networks and serves on several editorial boards. She currently chairs the [Lancet Commission on Gender-based Violence and Maltreatment of Young People](#). From 2014-2017, she founded and chaired the [Lancet Commission on Global Access to Palliative Care and Pain Relief](#). She serves on the Lancet Commission on the Value of Death and the [Vatican-Lancet-Mario Negri Commission on the Value of Life](#). She founded and directed the Harvard [Global Task Force on Expanded Access to Cancer Care and Control](#) and was a member of the [Global Task Force on Radiotherapy for Cancer Control](#). Dr. Knaul also coordinated the [Global Network for Health Equity](#), an initiative that brought together researchers from Latin America, in association with the Asia EQUITAP network and the Africa SHIELD network, and chaired the [Pan American Health Organization Task Force on Universal Health Coverage](#). She serves on the international advisory board of [The Lancet Global Health](#) and on the editorial board of the [Journal of Global Oncology](#) of the American Society of Clinical Oncology. Dr. Knaul has also served as Chief Editor of the [Global Health and Cancer section of The Oncologist](#).

Based on research accomplishments, Dr. Knaul was made a member of the [Mexican National Academy of Medicine](#) and, holds Level III (the most senior) of the [Mexican National](#)

[System of Researchers](#). She was inducted into the [Canadian Academy of Health Sciences](#) in 2020.

Dr. Knaul maintains a strong and synergistic global program of research and advocacy anchored in Mexico, where she is Senior Economist at the [Mexican Health Foundation](#) and Honorary Research Professor of Medical Sciences at the [National Institute of Public Health of Mexico](#). In 2008, as a result of her breast cancer experience, Dr. Knaul founded [Cáncer de Mama: Tómatelo a Pecho](#), a Mexican non-profit agency that has promoted research, advocacy, awareness, and early detection of breast cancer since its inception, and has since expanded to promote women's health broadly. She lectures globally on the challenge of cancer, both as patient-advocate and health systems researcher, and published the memoir [Tómatelo a Pecho](#) (Grupo Santillana, 2009) and [Beauty without the Breast](#) (Harvard University Press/ Harvard Global Equity Initiative 2013). Her story and her work have been featured in [Science](#), [Cancer Today](#), [Miami ABC 10](#), [The Miami Herald](#), [The Lancet](#), [WHO Bulletin](#), and [Newsweek en Español](#).

She has expanded her advocacy work internationally. She currently serves on philanthropic boards including [NCD Child](#), [Casa de Esperanza](#), [Women in Global Health](#), and the [International Association for Hospice & Palliative Care](#), and previously with the [Union for International Cancer Control](#) from 2010-2014.

She has held senior, federal government positions at the Ministries of Education and Social Development of Mexico, and the Colombian Department of Planning and worked on health reform and social development in both countries. Dr. Knaul also worked as a consultant and advisor for bilateral and multilateral agencies such as the World Health Organization and the World Bank. She has led or participated in several global policy reports, including the World Health Report 2000, and directed the production of various papers for the government of Mexico on education, health and children's rights. While working for the Minister of Education of Mexico she designed and implemented a thriving, national, inter-institutional program [Sigamos Aprendiendo en el Hospital](#), and catalyzed the placement of officially-recognized schools in tertiary hospitals throughout the country. As the founder and director of the program, she put in place an inter-institutional group of government leaders, advocates, donors and academics, working with the First Lady and the ministers of health and education. She also chaired a multi-sectorial, inter-institutional working group and lead authored the *Programa Nacional de Acción en favor de la Infancia 2002-2010* (the national action program for children), the blueprint for the Mexican response to the Special 2012 Session of the United Nations.

She has received several recognitions of her work including being named "Local Hero" by the American Medical Women's Association in 2016, and one of Mexico's most influential women in 2013. She was awarded "Flama, Vida y Mujer" by the Autonomous University of the State of Nuevo Leon, and the Global Health Catalyst Award by students of Harvard University. She is a recognized leader in South Florida and received the Philanthropy Award from Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden and has been featured in the [Boca Raton Observer](#), [Indulge Magazine](#), and [Ocean Drive](#).

Dr. Knaul is a citizen of Canada and the United Kingdom, and a permanent resident of Mexico. She has multiple hobbies: promotes and practices physical fitness through daily exercise; regularly undertakes equitation; collects orchids; and, is an avid walker with her dog Tikvot.

She and her husband, Dr. Julio Frenk, have two children, Hannah Sofia (25 and a December 2020 graduate of the University of Miami) and Mariana Havivah (16). Her mother Marie Knaul and brother Major Jonathan Knaul live in Toronto.