



## PARTNERSHIP TO FIGHT CHRONIC DISEASE

**Richard H. Carmona, M.D., M.P.H., FACS**  
*Canyon Ranch Institute*  
*17th Surgeon General of the U.S. (2002-2006)*



Dr. Richard H. Carmona was born to a poor family in New York City. Dr. Carmona experienced homelessness, hunger and health disparities during his youth. The experiences greatly sensitized him to the relationships among culture, health, education and economic status and shaped his future.

After dropping out of high school, Dr. Carmona enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1967. While serving, he earned his General Equivalency Diploma and went on to become a combat-decorated Special Forces Vietnam veteran. After leaving active duty, he was able to attend Bronx Community College of the City University of New York through an open enrollment program for veterans. He earned an associate of arts degree and then attended the University of California, San Francisco, where he received a bachelor of science degree (1977) and medical degree (1979). At the University of California Medical

School, Dr. Carmona was awarded the prestigious gold-headed cane as the top graduate.

Originally trained in general and vascular surgery after medical school, Dr. Carmona completed a National Institutes of Health-sponsored fellowship in trauma, burns and critical care. He is a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons. Recruited jointly by the Tucson (Arizona) Medical Center and the University of Arizona, Dr. Carmona started and directed Arizona's first regional trauma care system, and became the chairman of the State of Arizona Southern Regional Emergency Medical System, a professor of surgery, public health and family and community medicine at the University of Arizona, and the Pima County Sheriff's Department surgeon and deputy sheriff.

Public health came as a second career after Dr. Carmona went back to graduate school while working in order to complete a masters degree in public health. His interest in public health stemmed from the realization that most of his patients' diseases and injuries were completely preventable.

In 2002, Dr. Carmona was nominated by President George W. Bush and unanimously confirmed by the United States Senate to become the 17<sup>th</sup> Surgeon General of the United States. President Bush chose Dr. Carmona because of his extensive experience in public health, clinical sciences, health care management, preparedness and his commitment to prevention as an effective means to improve public health and reduce health care costs while improving the quality and quantity of life.