



Born to a Puerto Rican family in Philadelphia, PA, Dr. Vélez de Brown obtained her bachelor's degree in Biology from Swarthmore College prior to working in a T-cell development lab at the University of Pennsylvania. Later, she coordinated a grant-funded program that connected Hispanic families with medical resources and primary care. She pursued her medical degree at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine in Cleveland, OH. There she was involved in clinical research studying physician communication with families regarding withdrawal of care in the MICU. This sparked her professional interest in End-of-Life planning in the outpatient

setting (rather than at a time of crisis in the hospital). After completing a Family Medicine internship at Christiana Care Health System in Wilmington DE, she entered the University of Rochester Preventive Medicine and Public Health Residency program. She graduated from that program with the Masters of Public Health in June 2016 after focusing her MPH thesis on addressing disparities in knowledge and rates of participation in Advance Care Planning between different racial/ethnic groups in Rochester, NY. She has continuously focused her work on historically underserved populations and health disparities. She helped start a medical Spanish course in Medical School, designed a rotation with inner city Spanish-speaking populations while a Family Medicine resident and with rural migrant workers as a Preventive Medicine resident. She has been an invited speaker on topics such as Domestic Violence, Breast Cancer Screening, Diabetes, Smoking Cessation, Nutrition, the impact of the ACA on Communities of Color, suicide prevention, the opioid epidemic, and the COVID-19 epidemic and vaccines. Prior to her current role, she has advocated for increased funding for cancer screening programs and the humane treatment of undocumented immigrants with local, state and national elected officials. She is Board Certified in General Preventive Medicine and Public Health. In 2017 she was presented with the Berg Award for Excellence in Public Health Services by the University of Rochester Department of Public Health Sciences. In 2019 she was selected as one of the Rochester Business Journal's 40 under 40 honorees. From 2016 to 2024 she has served as the Deputy Commissioner of the Monroe County Department of Public Health. She is now the Acting Commissioner of Public Health.