



Maria S. Gomez, R.N., M.P.H.
President and CEO
Mary's Center

Maria Gomez is the founder of [Mary's Center](#), a community health organization that provides healthcare, education and social services in the DC metropolitan region. The goal of Mary's Center is to provide healthcare early and throughout the individuals' lifecycle, as well as to support and guide families and individuals to move up the economic ladder through education and training opportunities.

Under Maria's leadership, Mary's Center has grown from an initial budget of \$250,000 serving 200 participants in a basement in 1988 to an annual budget of \$52 million serving over 40,000 individuals at eight locations in the District of Columbia and Maryland.

Maria is among the strongest leaders in the region. As testament to her significant commitment to giving back to the community, President Barack Obama selected her as one of the 18 recipients of the [2012 Presidential Citizens Medal](#), the nation's second-highest civilian honor.

Maria is frequently recognized for her role in the nation's capital health care system and has become a recurrent health advisor for the District of Columbia Mayor's office. As such, the current Mayor, Muriel Bowser, and former DC Mayors Vincent Gray and Adrian Fenty named her a member of their transition team.

Her commitment to helping others made her one in 10 community leaders among 1, 200 in the country selected by United Way to be featured in the Hero Effect documentary that aired on Oprah Winfrey Network in February 2017.

Maria is also the recipient of numerous awards including the Washington Post Award for Excellence in Nonprofit Management, the Washington Business Journal Women Who Mean Business and the Minority Business Leader Awards, the Hispanic Heritage Award, the Washingtonian of the Year, DC Dental Society Foundation Humanitarian of the Year Award, the Washington Examiner's Amazing Change Award, among others. Maria was named to the 2017 Powermeter 100 class by El Tiempo Latino newspaper, recognizing her as one of the 100 most influential people for the Latino community in the DC metro area. In October 2010 the Washingtonian Magazine named Maria as one of the 45 individuals who shaped Washington DC between 1965 and 2010. The magazine also acknowledged Mary's Center for its role as a "critical piece of the region's healthcare system."

It was Maria's hard work and dedication that led First Lady Michelle Obama to choose Mary's Center as her first official visit to a non-profit organization in February 2009. In 1995, First Lady Hillary Clinton also visited Mary's Center during the National Immunization Week in recognition of the Center's efforts to get children vaccinated and ready to learn and thrive in school.

Maria currently serves as a board member of the DC Primary Care Association, the Primary Care Coalition of Montgomery County, the Meyer Foundation, the Washington Area Women's Foundation. She is also Co-Chair of the Latino Health Steering Committee of Montgomery County and serves on the Advisory Boards of the DC Fiscal Policy Institute. In addition, she is a member of the State Early Childhood Development Coordinating Council (SECDCC).

Prior to establishing Mary's Center, Maria worked in hospitals throughout the area, from the emergency room to the neurosurgical unit. Later, she transferred to the DC Department of Health as a public health nurse providing both primary care and home-based care throughout every Ward in DC. She also worked with the Red Cross in community education programming and disaster services throughout the country, and at DC Visiting Nurses Association.

Originally from Colombia, South America, Maria immigrated to the United States with her mother at age 13 and attended DC Public Schools. She obtained her Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing from Georgetown University and a Master's degree in Public Health from the University of California at Berkeley.

Maria and Miachel Rexrode have been married for 24 years and have a daughter, Amalia.