



## LINDA BURNES BOLTON

DrPH, RN, FAAN

### *The Executive*

Linda Burnes Bolton's passion for nursing began early in life when she spent much of her childhood in and out of hospitals for asthma treatments. "The individuals who touched my life the most were the nurses. They told me asthma would not impair me. They gave me hope and encouragement," she said.

Linda's career as a nurse began in 1970 when, for the first time, she experienced the death of a 16-year-old leukemia patient. "I was only three months out of school. It was a life-changing moment for me," she said. "It was then that I knew I needed to learn more about how I could help. I am passionate about humans and how they can help each other." And there began her quest for knowledge — a quest she compares to a turning and twisting river.

After earning a master's degree in nursing and public health and a doctorate in public health, Linda became an executive at Cedars-Sinai Hospital in Los Angeles. "It's a huge responsibility, but it humbles me every second," she said. "I have the best of all worlds. I can stay in touch with patients, nurses and doctors. I am connected to the community because of my research. And I stay connected to academia." Through her work with the National Black Nurses Association, she is cofounder of the Community Collaboration Model, which is setting the framework for improved community health. The model focuses on the power of a community to heal itself through collective knowledge, skills and commitment. Health care providers are part of the process — the community owns it.

While her days are long and sometimes hectic, Linda spends a few moments each morning reflecting. "I thank God for seeing another day. Leadership can take a physical and emotional toll on you. To be a good leader you need a sense of belonging and sense of self — where you are in the universe, what your purpose is," she said. Her desire for reflection also takes her fishing, one of her other passions, because when you are fishing, "you are one with the water and one with nature," she said. "I just love it."

Linda has always believed in the potential of African Americans, and she's working to promote nursing as a profession of choice, particularly among men. She grew up in a housing project and is committed to leaving something behind. "Each one of us has the potential to make things better for the time that we are here," she said.

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