2018 Sedgwick Memorial Medal for Distinguished Service in Public Health
Nomination Form

Describe in detail the current creative work, distinguished achievements, or distinguished service which make this nominee worthy of the award:

A legacy of innovation that is unprecedented and unparalleled. A legacy for equity that is transcendent and transformational. For 14 years, Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, MD, MBA, served as the President and CEO of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. She is the first woman, and first African-American to have led America’s largest health philanthropy, with a $10.5 billion endowment. A globally recognized leader, Lavizzo-Mourey has been named eight times to the Forbes list of the World’s Most Powerful Women. She has also been selected nine times by Modern Healthcare as 1 of the 100 Most Influential People. Today, she is the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Population Health and Health Equity Professor, the 19th Penn Integrates Knowledge University Professor at the University of Pennsylvania with joint faculty appointments in the Department of Medical Ethics and Health Policy at the Perelman School of Medicine, the Department of Health Care Management in the Wharton School, and the Department of Family and Community Health in the School of Nursing.

Raised in Seattle by Philip Lavizzo, a general surgeon, and Blanche Sellers Lavizzo, the first African-American female physician in the state of Washington, Risa Lavizzo-Mourey earned her medical degree from the Harvard Medical School and an MBA from the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School of Business. Lavizzo-Mourey completed a residency in Internal Medicine at Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston; was a Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholar at the University of Pennsylvania; and trained in Geriatrics at Penn.

Her academic, federal and philanthropic leadership is unparalleled and unmatched.

Before joining RWJF in 2001 as Senior Vice President and Director of the Healthcare Group, she was the Sylvan Eisman Professor of Medicine and Health Care Systems and Director of Penn’s Institute on Aging.

In Washington, DC, she was Deputy Administrator of what is now the Agency for Health Care Research and Quality. She also worked on the White House Health Care Reform Task Force, where she co-chaired the working group on quality of care. She also served on numerous federal advisory committees, including the Task Force on Aging Research, the National Committee for Vital and Health Statistics, and the President’s Advisory Commission on Consumer Protection and Quality in the Health Care Industry. She is a member of the Institute of Medicine of The National Academies, where she co-chaired a congressionally requested IOM study on racial and ethnic disparities in health care. She is also a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the President’s Council for Fitness, Sports and Nutrition.

Over the years, Lavizzo-Mourey has served on many corporate and nonprofit boards including: The Independent Sector, Princeton Medical Center, Ascension Health System, Beckman Coulter, Inc. and Genworth Financial. She currently serves on the Smithsonian Institution Board of Regents and served other boards of directors, including Living Cities and Hess.

She is the author of several books and dozens of articles. She is also the recipient of numerous honorary doctorates and other awards, including commendations for her work from the Harvard School of Public Health, US DHHS, American College of Physicians, National Library of Medicine,
American Medical Women’s Association, National Medical Association and the University of Pennsylvania.

Driven by the belief that the RWJF is a steward of private resources that must be used in the public’s interest, Lavizzo-Mourey combines the values she learned as a physician – altruism and a commitment to serve others – with the skills and knowledge of her business training – measuring results and outcomes, accountability, and managing resources and motivating people. Through it all, she is guided by the conviction that philanthropy is about simultaneously improving individual lives, transforming systems and communities, and achieving enduring social and behavioral change. During her tenure at RWJF, Lavizzo-Mourey spearheaded what some consider some of the Foundation’s boldest health initiatives – reversing the nation’s childhood obesity epidemic, creating the vision to Build a Culture of Health in America, and advancing health coverage for all.

For example, in 2007, RWJF committed an unprecedented $500 million to launch a national movement to raise awareness of the obesity epidemic and find solutions through funded research, communications campaigns, and changes in public policy. While there were many successes, many of the gains were fragile, and were not being shared among long-income communities and communities of color. To address this, the Foundation invested an additional $500 million to help ALL children achieve a healthy weight. In 2008, RWJF created the Commission to Build a Healthier America, a national, independent, non-partisan body of leaders who examined what factors in the medical care arena influence health. After collecting data and holding listening sessions across America, the Commission issued a landmark report in 2009 titled “Beyond Health Care.” The report underscored findings that good health depends more on where people live, learn, work and play, rather than medical care alone, and issues a list of national recommendations to improve health at the local, state and federal levels. The Commission’s findings informed Lavizzo-Mourey’s decision, with full support of the Board, to move the Foundation toward its current vision of Building a Culture of Health in America – emphasizing that well-being being is greater than the sum of many parts – including making health a shared value within every sector of society; creating healthier, more equitable communities; strengthening the integration of health systems and services; and ensuring every child in the United States has the opportunity to grow up as healthy as possible. Lavizzo-Mourey also built upon RWJF’s decades-long support for programs aimed at helping individuals obtain healthcare coverage, by providing relevant consumer research, and technical assistance to states implementing the Affordable Care Act. The Foundation also helped develop strategies to simplify enrollment in the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), engaging community leaders, schools, businesses, faith-based institutions, and civic groups across the nation in the initiative.

Over the course of an extraordinary lifetime of achievements, Lavizzo-Mourey has transformed America’s health and health systems so people can live healthier lives and receive the healthcare they need. She has fundamentally and strategically “altered the world’s health trajectory by pushing society to change for the better.” A global and local champion who believes that one’s zip code should not determine one’s health, she has transformed the trajectory of how health is attained, by investing in multiple generations of “glocal” health equity leaders, to embrace and actualize a transformational and transcendent Culture of Health.

The world has already witnessed the fruits of Lavizzo-Mourey’s labor – but what is different about Lavizzo-Mourey is her legacy – and the extraordinary potential that comes from creating the future –
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by investing in, and cultivating, the next generation of changemakers: inter- and trans-disciplinary health leaders and policy makers. She advanced this at RWJF and continues this at the University of Pennsylvania.

We can think of no one more deserving than Dr. Risa Lavizzo-Mourey for this year’s Sedgwick Memorial Medal, and we humbly, and respectfully, request the APHA Award Committee’s consideration of this transcendent and transformational scholar, practitioner, change-maker and legacy-breaker.

David Satcher, MD, MPH, 16th US Surgeon General & 2011 Sedgwick Memorial Medal Awardee (Co-Nominator)

Elena Ong, PHN, MS, APHA Executive Board Member (Co-Nominator)

We are honored to present to you Letters of Support from the following leaders who have risen to support Dr. Risa Lavizzo-Mourey’s nomination for the Sedgwick Medal:

1. Wendell Pritchett, JD, PhD, Provost, University of Pennsylvania
2. Amy Gutmann, PhD, President, University of Pennsylvania
3. Richard Besser, MD, President & CEO, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
4. William Frist, MD, Former US Senate Majority Leader
5. Donna Shalala, President, Clinton Foundation & 18th US Secretary of Health & Human Services
6. Howard Koh, MD, MPH, 14th US Assistant Secretary of Health & 2014 Sedgwick Memorial Medal Awardee
7. John Auerbach, MBA, President & CEO, Trust for America’s Health
8. Robert Ross, MD, MPA, President & CEO, The California Endowment
9. Victor Dzau, MD, President, National Academy of Medicine
10. Sherry Glied, Dean, NYU Wagner Graduate School of Public Service
11. Angela Glover Blackwell, CEO, PolicyLink
12. Nancy Brown, CEO, American Heart Association
13. JoAnn Jenkins, CEO, AARP
14. Kevin Washington, President & CEO, YMCA of the USA
15. Jerry Waukau, Health Administrator, Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin
16. Shiriki Kumanika, PhD, MPH, APHA Past President
17. Constance Jackson, MPH, Chair, APHA Committee on Women’s Rights
18. Kevin McNally, MBA, President, New Jersey Public Health Association
19. Mary Gallant, PhD, MPH (2018) & Caryn Etkin, PhD, MPH (2017), Chair, Aging & Public Health Section
20. Ashley Wennerstrom, PhD, MPH, Chair, Community Health Planning & Policy Development Section
21. Randolph Hubach, PhD, MPH, Chair, HIV/AIDS Section
22. Mary Jane Alexander, PhD, Chair, Mental Health Section
23. Libby Richards, PhD, RN (2018) & Andrew Kaczynski, PhD (2017), Chair, Physical Activity Section
24. Andrea Lowe, MPH, PhD, Chair, Public Health Education & Health Promotion Section
25. Paul Halverson, DrPH, MHSA, FACHE, Chair, Academic Public Health Caucus
26. Babette Galang, Chair, American Indian Alaskan Native Native Hawaiian Caucus
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27. Gem Le, PhD, MHS (2018) and Gabriel Garcia, PhD, MA, MPH (2017), President &
CEO, Asian & Pacific Islander Caucus for Public Health
28. Apryl Brown, MD, MPH, FRSPH, Past President, Black Caucus of Health Workers
29. Dorine Brand, PhD, MPH, Chair, Caucus on Public Health and the Faith Community
30. Kent Key, MPH, PhD, Chair, Community-Based Public Health Caucus
31. Sarah Gareau, DrPH, Chair, Women’s Caucus
32. Ryan Tingler, MPH, Chair, Student Assembly
33. Meg Traci, PhD, Chair, Disability Section

The attached Letters of Support include the following quotes re: Dr. Risa Lavizzo-Mourey:

"I cannot think of a more impactful foundation leader in modern history." – Former US Senator
William Frist, MD

"Her passion for the underserved is unmatched in the field of public health.” – Donna Shalala,
President, Clinton Foundation and 18th US Secretary of Health and Human Services

"In a dynamically changing world, (Lavizzo-Mourey) has transcended silos, and transformed current
and future leaders into upstream futurists, who will work together, synergistically, to actualize a
broader vision for a Healthy America, one that focuses on working together to be partners for
achieving and sustaining health equity, not just health.” – Howard Koh, MD, MPH, Harvey V. Fineberg
Professor of the Practice of Public Health Leadership at the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public
Health and the Harvard Kennedy School, 14th US DHHS Assistant Secretary of Health, and 2014
Sedgwick Memorial Medal Awardee

“There are not many people about whom one could say they altered the landscape of health efforts
within the nation. But Risa is one of those.” – John Auerbach, MBA, President & CEO, Trust for
America’s Health and 2017 APHA Award for Excellence Awardee

... (Dr. Lavizzo-Mourey) “is that exceedingly rare person who has achieved remarkable success – and
made a remarkable, positive difference – in a broad range of fields: academia (as both scholar and
administrator); public service; and philanthropy.” – Wendell Pritchett, JD, PhD, Provost, University of
Pennsylvania

“An eminent interdisciplinary change-maker, spirited champion of patient-centered care, and
trailblazing scholar of firsts, I can think of few who are more deserving of this special honor than Risa
Lavizzo-Mourey.” – Amy Gutmann, PhD, President, University of Pennsylvania

“Professionally, I hold her in the highest regard for her exceptional capabilities as an executive, a
physician, an educator and a coalition-builder. On a personal level, I admire her genuine, heartfelt
concern for those who face health disparities and her unwavering resolve to create meaningful
solutions on their behalf.” - Nancy Brown, CEO, American Heart Association

“She is the finest leader I have come to know for three reasons: (1) her moral, integrity and humility
compass … (2) consistently science- and data-driven … and (3) she is courageous and fearless, but
also a master consensus builder. – Robert Ross, MD, MPA, President & CEO, The California
Endowment
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... "She is undaunted in the face of major challenges. She questions the status quo. She dreams big and delivers on those dreams. She is a courageous, innovative, inspiring leader. She is personally very humble and doesn’t like limelight. But she has a passion for eliminating injustice, creating opportunities for all, and using the tools and abilities she has to help everyone live the healthiest life possible." – Richard Besser, MD, President & CEO, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

... (Dr. Lavizzo-Mourey) "is a globally recognized leader whose distinguished service in public health has advanced quality of life throughout the United States and the world.” – Apryl Brown, MD, MPH, FRSPH, Past Chair, Black Caucus of Health Workers

... "(O)ne of the most accomplished and transcendent changemakers and futurists in the history of public health. She has been named eight times to the Forbes List of Most Powerful Women in the World.” – Constance Jackson, MPH, Chair, Committee on Women’s Rights

... "(O)ne of our nation’s most respected and accomplished public health leaders ... she shapes the conversation around health, equity, and well-being in the United States.” - Kevin Washington, President & CEO, YMCA

“Under her leadership, the Foundation has undergone a significant transformation ... (the) New Jersey Public Health Association has had the opportunity to closely observe how (RWJF’s) change in priorities played out in its work with community organizations in our state.” – Kevin McNally, MBA, President, New Jersey Public Health Association

(Lavizzo-Mourey) “was instrumental in restructuring RWJF’s strategic investments to target bold, progressive and high-impact priorities, including forging transformational collaborations and partnerships to ensure all Americans have coverage and developing the next generation of health leaders and policymakers. She helped transform America’s health and health systems to support everyone’s opportunities to live healthier lives and receive the healthcare they need and deserve.” – Sarah Gareau, DrPH, Chair, Women’s Caucus

“She was instrumental in setting high impact priorities for ALL populations” – Lillian Tom-Orme, PhD, MPH, RN, FAAN and Babette Galang, Leadership, American Indian Alaskan Native Native Hawaiian Caucus

“No one has been a stronger advocate for changing the culture of health.” - JoAnn Jenkins, AARP

“The Culture of Health has the action areas of Making Health a Shared Value, Fostering Cross-Sector Collaboration, Creating Healthier More Equitable Communities, Strengthening Integration of Health Services and Systems, in turn, resulting in the Outcome: Improved Population Health, Well-Being and Equity.” – Dorine Brand, PhD, MPH, Chair, Caucus on Public Health and the Faith Community

“She has worked tirelessly to advance the vision of building a Culture of Health ... this vision emphasizes that health is an essential building block for personal fulfillment, thriving communities, equity, and a strong competitive nation.” – Kent Key, MPH, PhD, Chair, Community-Based Public Health Caucus
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“Using the culture of health action framework, including making health a shared vision, fostering cross-sector collaboration, creating healthier more equitable communities, and strengthening integration of health services and systems has given our community a sense of hope and encouragement in our improvement efforts.” Jerry Waukau, Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin

“The values embedded in her work of independence, dignity of risk, and equity, align with those defining the work of (the Disability) Section and the field of disability and health. Indeed, the opportunities afforded by Dr. Lavizzo-Mourey’s leadership on health equity has catalyzed our members to apply principles of universal design well beyond the built environment. The culture of disability is expanding as it interacts with the culture of health. Our members are coming to view and interpret the solutions that people with disabilities have for self-determination, optimism, agency, and safety as well as for housing, transportation, and employment as integral to the movement to achieve health equity.” – Meg Traci, PhD, Chair, Disability Section

(Lavizzo-Mourey) “has transformed the future of health, the future of public health and the future of aging. She is disrupting aging as we know it … she has an unusually well-developed ability to identify key population health challenges, and then to bring together experts and stakeholders to develop innovative and effective approaches to address the issue at hand.” – Mary Gallant, PhD, MPH (2018 Chair) and Caryn Etkin, PhD, MPH (2017 Chair), Aging and Public Health Section

“Risa led the foundation to champion health care reform at a critical moment … serv(ing) as a trusted resource for unbiased information during the health care debate … the foundation’s impact will endure even as the nation considers new health legislation … generating research and insights that will be critical as Congress navigates the next stage of health care reform.” – Victor Dzau, MD, President, National Academy of Medicine

(Under Risa’s leadership) “the Foundation didn’t stop with the passage of the (ACA), but implemented a set of evaluation-related activities to ensure that coverage translated into health outcomes.” – Sherry Glied, NYU Wagner Graduate School of Public Service

“What sets (Risa) apart from her counterparts is her legacy – creating the future – by investing in, and cultivating, the next generation of inter- and trans-disciplinary Culture of Health leaders and policymakers.” – Ashley Wennenstrom, PhD, MPH, Chair, Community Health Planning & Policy Development Section

“Risa Lavizzo-Mourey personifies our vision and ideals.” – Ryan Tingler, MPH, Chair, Student Assembly

“She realizes that in order to create healthier communities and to overcome structural problems requires collaborative solutions which bring communities and institutions together as equal partners.” – Randolph Hubach, PhD, MPH, Chair, HIV/AIDS Section

“Her impact has been nothing less than stunning … I can say with unwavering confidence, that we absolutely would not have transformed public health practice to the extent we have, were it not for the steadfast commitment, nudging and inspiration of the Foundation. Dr. Lavizzo-Mourey’s values, courage and enthusiasm as its leader created the atmosphere and culture that has supported transformational change that will be an important legacy of her leadership.” – Paul Halverson, DrPH, MHSA, FACE, Chair, Academic Public Health Caucus
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(Risa) “has a remarkable ability to influence and inspire ...(she) builds on RWJF’s legacy of leadership training by embracing innovation and intersectionality.” – Angela Glover Blackwell, PolicyLink

“Dr. Lavizzo-Mourey is a transdisciplinary global scholar whose transcendent and transformative vision evolves from her integrative world-view, and her trans-sectoral commitment to inclusion, diversity and equity... As an academic, administrator, philanthropist and a returning Professor of Health Equity at the University Pennsylvania, Dr. Lavizzo-Mourey is a force (who) will transform “the Culture of Health” into a “Culture for Equity.” – Gem Le, PhD, MHS (2018 President & CEO) and Gabriel Garcia, PhD, MA, MPH (2017 President & CEO), Asian & Pacific Islander Caucus for Public Health

“Her work with the American College of Physicians on ethics and human rights and her role as White House advisor to promote better access to health care and health insurance through the Affordable Care Act exemplify her stature as a scholar who makes change – truly a mentor and role model for all of us in public health who aim to create real opportunities for all people to choose to do and be what they value.” – Mary Jane Alexander, PhD, Chair, Mental Health Section

“... Nothing is more impressive than her relentless and tenacious leadership as a transdisciplinary and integrative action-taker and transformative changemaker for health equity. She thought-led and acted “outside the box” by bringing together people who may have never worked together on a common goal for population health, and encouraged them to co-develop innovative solutions to a childhood obesity epidemic that could have a ripple effect on the health and future of America’s economy. By investing for the future, Lavizzo-Mourey is an upstream futurist who leveraged resources/strategic investments so that all Americans – the population, consumers, and the industry alike – could work together and benefit together by collaboratively and collectively altering the trajectory of the childhood obesity epidemic.” – Libby Richards, PhD, RN, 2018 Chair, and Andrew Kaczynski, PhD, 2017 Chair, APHA Physical Activity Section

“In many ways, Risa has exceeded the requirements and expectations for the award.” – Andrea Lowe, MPH, PhD, Chair, Public Health Education and Health Promotion Section

“APHA has always appreciated Risa, and this is the perfect time to recognize her as she moves onto the next phase of what I am sure will be a continued stream of stellar contributions ... I strongly encourage the committee to name Risa Lavizzo-Mourey this year’s Sedgwick Medal awardee in recognition of her many professional accomplishments and those of others whose work has flourished under her leadership.” – Shiriki Kumanyika, PhD, MPH, Founder on Black Health, Drexel University Dornsife School of Public Health and Past APHA President

List positions (titles and dates) held during performance of work for which nomination is suggested:

See CV

List publications and invited presentation relevant to achievements on which nomination is based: