



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Association for the Bladder Exstrophy Community Announces Changes to Advisory Board**

St. Petersburg, FL, May 6, 2019 — Association for the Bladder Exstrophy Community (A- BE-C), a global nonprofit organization providing education and support to bladder exstrophy patients and their families, announces the addition of Dr. Evalynn Vasquez and Misty Blue Foster to its Advisory Board. In addition, Dr. Paul Merguerian was recently elected Board Chair, replacing Dr. Aseem Shukla.

Dr. Evalynn Vasquez serves as the Director of Complex Reconstruction and Malformations Program and is an Assistant Professor of Urology working in the Division of Pediatric Urology at Children's Hospital Los Angeles. Dr. Vasquez focuses on the medical and surgical management of complex pediatric urology anomalies, including reconstructive surgery for incontinence and neurogenic bladder, Spina Bifida, bladder exstrophy, colorectal malformations and cloacal malformations. Dr. Vasquez earned her undergraduate degree at the University of California, Los Angeles. She then went to medical school at Saint Louis University where she earned a dual MD-MBA degree. After graduation she started her residency at Saint Louis University, then completed her residency in Urology at Loyola University in Chicago. She went on to complete her Pediatric Urology Fellowship through Harvard University's program at Boston Children's Hospital. Dr. Vasquez is board-certified from the American Board of Urology in Urology.

Misty Blue Foster is a foster care alumni with both Cloacal Exstrophy and Spina Bifida, and is currently working as a school nurse in Menlo Park, CA. She graduated from nursing school in 2009 from NCP College of Nursing. She has three Associates degrees in Behavioral, Social, and Natural Sciences from Skyline College in 2015 as Magna Cum Laude. In 2015 she graduated Summa Cum Laude from Notre Dame de Namur University with a Bachelors of Science in Human Services. From 2017 through 2018 she completed an extensive Public Health internship for A-BE-C while completing a Master's of Public Health at San Jose State with honors. Misty has worked with A-BE-C intermittently since 2009 by speaking at international and local conferences, and creating numerous presentations, videos and articles. She has 14 years of extensive, well-rounded experience in the healthcare industry.

"It's been a big year for A-BE-C and we are thrilled to add both Dr. Vasquez and Ms. Foster to our council," stated Pamela Artigas, Executive Director of A-BE-C. "Both women have extensive experience in their fields and have great ideas and talents that will continue to grow and improve our organization."

Dr. Paul Merguerian is the Division Chief of Urology at Seattle Children's and Professor of Urology at the University of Washington. Dr. Merguerian is an accomplished scholar, a committed teacher and mentor, and surgeon. His area of academic focus has been on complex reconstruction, transplantation, and more recently safety, efficiency, and cost within the field of pediatric urology. Dr. Merguerian received

his medical degree from Hadassah Medical School in Jerusalem and completed his Residency in Urology at the University of Rochester. He then went on to complete a Fellowship in Pediatric Urology at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. He received his Masters in Science from the Dartmouth Institute of Health Policy and Clinical Practice, and has received Lean Six Sigma training at the Dartmouth School of Engineering.

“Dr. Shukla served A-BE-C tirelessly as the Board Chair and was instrumental in launching our Centers of Excellence program. He helped coordinate our trips to both Uganda and India to perform surgeries and provide support. A-BE-C will be forever indebted to him for his many contributions to growing and improving our organization,” stated Artigas. “At the same time we are excited for the vision Dr. Merguerian has for the organization and look forward to the growth A-BE-C will experience under his direction.”

Dr. Aseem Shukla was elected to a two year term as board chair in 2017. He will remain on the A-BE-C Advisory Council and will continue to lead the Global Care committee within the organization.

### **About Association for the Bladder Exstrophy Community (A-BE-C)**

A-BE-C is dedicated to supporting people worldwide who are affected by bladder exstrophy. Founded in 1995, the organization works to ensure all who live with this rare and life-altering condition have the opportunity to realize their greatest purpose and potential. Funding for the 501©(3) nonprofit’s work comes from contributions from members, individual and corporate donors, and sponsors.

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