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Dr. José R. Romero is the Director of the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, where he leads CDC's efforts to detect, prevent, and respond to vaccine-preventable and respiratory infectious disease threats. Dr. Romero has been active in clinical medicine, public health as well as basic and clinical research for more than three decades. Before joining CDC, Dr. Romero served as the Arkansas Secretary of Health and the Director of the Arkansas Department of Health, where he led the state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. He has also worked as Chief Medical Officer of the Arkansas Department of Health and Director of the pediatric infectious diseases section at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. Dr. Romero earned his medical degree from the

Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico, and is board-certified in pediatrics and pediatric infectious diseases. As a professor and clinician scientist, Dr. Romero has made important contributions through his nearly 200 publications and extensive work on antivirals, pneumococcal surveillance, enteroviral pathogenesis, and disease. Dr. Romero is passionate about improving the health of underserved communities and addressing health equity.