



# Latino Coalition for a Healthy California

The Latino Coalition for a Healthy California is the leading organized voice for policies, services, and conditions to improve the health of Latinos.

## HELP:

*Health Enhanced by Latino Professionals*

### Increasing the Number of Latinos in Health Professions

The overall health of the nation has improved over the last two decades. However, research shows escalating differences in the incidence, prevalence, mortality and burden of diseases and other adverse health conditions in the Latino community. Factors which contribute to health disparities include inequities in income and education, as well as the lack of access to culturally and linguistically appropriate care.

Racial and ethnic diversity in the health professions workforce is imperative for the delivery of quality health care. Minority physicians are more likely to provide care to minority populations, practice in underserved areas, and serve uninsured patients.

While Latinos constitute one third of all Californians and one half of all children born in the state, they represent less than 5% of all licensed physicians. Overall, for every non-Latino physician in California, there are 335 non-Latino Californians, resulting in a ratio of 335:1. For Latinos, the physician to patient ratio is alarming — there are 2,893 Latino Californians for every one Latino physician in the state (ratio 2893:1).



Similar disparities exist within other medical fields, including nurses, pharmacists and mental health providers.

The magnitude of this physician shortage will only increase given that Latinos will constitute the majority of Californians by the year 2040. Currently, to reach parity with the non-Latino patient population, there would need to be approximately 27,309 more California Latino physicians. The physician shortage is the difference between the number of Latino physicians that should be available — given the non-Latino physician to patient ratio — and the number of Latino physicians that actually exist.

To develop a workforce that can improve the health status of all Americans, and adequately meet the needs of the working poor and racial/ethnic minorities, initiatives and policies must ensure the development of health professionals in the dental, medical, mental and research fields that reflect the nation's increasingly diverse population. It is also equally as important to train non-Latino physicians in culturally-effective ways of providing medical care.

**While Latinos constitute one third of all Californians and one half of all children born in the state, they represent less than 5% of all licensed physicians.**

**Latino Coalition for a Healthy California**

- ◆ Less than 5% of all licensed physicians in the state are Latino.
- ◆ There are 2,893 Latino Californians for every one Latino physician in the state (ratio 2893:1) compared to the non-Latino population which has a physician to patient population of 335:1.
- ◆ To reach parity with the non-Latino patient population, there would need to be approximately 27,309 more California Latino physicians.

#### Strategies to Increase Latino Health Professionals:

- ◆ Outreach, recruitment, admissions and retention efforts;
- ◆ Tuition reimbursement, loan repayment/forgiveness;
- ◆ Promote the use of non-biased cultural measures and assessments for admissions, licensing exams, accountability and performance standards;
- ◆ Licensure preparation courses, and alternate competency examinations to retrain and promote use of foreign-trained health professionals;
- ◆ Develop curricula that promotes cultural competency skills of all medical students, faculty and medical staff; and
- ◆ Recruit Latino health professions in faculty and research positions as well as editorial boards of health and science journals/publications.