



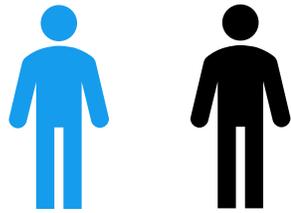
Growing and Supporting Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx Professionals in California's Medical and Nursing Workforces

Emerging Insights from a Study of Pathway Programs

The California Health Care Workforce Lacks Diversity

45%

of California residents identify as Black/African American or Hispanic/Latinx



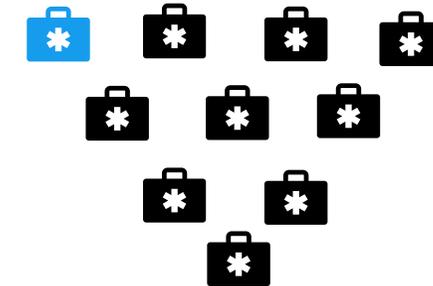
14%

of California medical school graduates identify as Black/African American or Hispanic/Latinx



< 9%

of practicing physicians in California identify as Black/African American or Hispanic/Latinx



- California's nursing workforce has a similar underrepresentation of Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx nurses as they move through their education and careers.

Sources: "Quick Facts: California," US Census Bureau, accessed March 28, 2022, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/CA>; California Physicians, "California Health Care Almanac Quick Reference Guide" (Oakland, CA: California Health Care Foundation, 2021); LPOC Organization, "In a Diverse State, California's Latino Doctors Push for More of Their Own," Latinx Physicians of California, January 2, 2018, <https://latinxphysiciansofca.org/diverse-state-californias-latino-doctors-push/>; and Joanne Spetz, Lela Chu, and Lisel Blash, [Diversity of California's Nursing Workforce Chartbook](#) (San Francisco: University of California, San Francisco, 2018).

A Diverse Health Care Workforce Can Help Improve Health

A more **diverse health care** workforce can improve and promote the following outcomes



Health equity



Patient choice and satisfaction



Patient-clinician trust



Access to high-quality and culturally effective care



Diverse representation in leadership, policymaking, and research

Source: HHS Advisory Committee on Minority Health, [Reflecting America's Population: Diversifying a Competent Health Care Workforce for the 21st Century](#) (Washington, DC: US Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health, 2011).

Pathway Programs Are Instrumental in Increasing the Diversity of the Health Professional Workforce

- Pathway programs are designed to recruit and support people from systemically excluded groups in health care professions.
 - Investments have been made to recruit Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx students into medical professions, though not enough to achieve equity.
- **Comparable pathway programs for Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx nursing students and professionals are lacking.**

Effective Pathway Programs Offer Academic, Financial, Social, and Institutional Supports and Include Sustainability and Accountability Measures

Support	Examples
Academic	Summer enrichment programs, exam preparation, study tips, academic and career advising, research opportunities
Financial	Scholarship, tuition waivers, room and board, financial literacy education, paid internships
Social	Mentorship, affinity groups, social activities
Institutional	Commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in an organization's policies and practices, curricula, and operations
Sustainability and accountability	Support to build program capacity and ensure long-term sustainability through program monitoring activities and research and evaluation



What Could This Look Like for California?

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Provide **Academic Supports** to Increase Youth's Exposure to Health Professions and to Strengthen the Academic Skills of Those Interested in Health Professional Careers

- Invest in K–12 pathway programs to increase exposure to and knowledge of nursing and medical professions among Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx students and provide additional support for those interested in nursing and medical professions.
- Support programs that strengthen the academic skills, as needed, of prospective and enrolled Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx nursing and medical students who have the potential to succeed and thrive with additional support.
- Invest in linkages across programs at each educational level to ensure students progress along their desired career pathways in medicine and nursing.
 - Example: [Associate Degrees for Transfer in Health Majors at the Community Colleges and California State University System](#)

Expand **Financial Supports** for New and Existing Initiatives to Recruit and Retain Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx Students in Health Professions Schools

- Provide funding to community colleges and public four-year colleges and universities to support comprehensive pathway programs to recruit and retain undergraduates from systemically and structurally excluded groups.
- Fund mentoring and support programs for Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx clinicians who are already practicing.
- Expand direct financial support to students, including unconditional grants, scholarships, and stipends that defray the living and other expenses associated with obtaining education and training, and give students a freedom of choice in specialty and geographic area of practice.
- Continue to support and increase funding for scholarship programs with a track record of increasing opportunities for students from systemically and structurally excluded groups, like the Health Resources and Services Administration's Health Careers Opportunity Program and Centers of Excellence, which have various pathway programs.



Implement and Sustainably Fund Culturally Appropriate **Social Supports** to Positively Affect Students' and Professionals' Experiences and Retention

- **Financially incentivize nursing and medical schools to create formal mentoring programs** and other initiatives to diversify their faculties and student bodies.
- **Adopt cohort model approaches** to provide continued mentoring and other resources to students from acceptance into through graduation from medical or nursing school.
- **Support the development and maintenance of health profession mentorship programming**, including guidance, training, and compensation for mentors.
- **Develop and implement an evaluation metric for mentors and advisers** to assess if they are effective and unbiased, need additional skills, or should be let go.

Mandate the Use of Holistic Admissions Practices in California Nursing and Medical Schools

- Holistic admissions criteria value applicants' qualities such as **commitment, resilience, work ethic, and passion for service**, as well as socioeconomic disadvantage; these practices can promote greater diversity in nursing and medical schools.
- Funding is needed for the development and implementation of training for recruitment and admissions staff to remove implicit racial bias from their processes.
 - Example: [UC Davis School of Medicine admissions adjustment for socioeconomic disadvantage](#)

Recruit California Talent

- Health professions schools can invest in “growing their own” pools of qualified candidates by conducting early outreach in local communities and creating pathway programming to nursing and medical schools for systemically and structurally excluded K–12 and college students.
- Example: [UC Davis Undergraduate and Community College Outreach Programs](#)



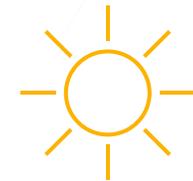
Create Pathways to Support Ancillary Health Care Workers' Entry into Nursing and Medical Careers

- About half of medical assistants and nursing, psychiatric, and home health aides are people of color.¹ Investments in recruitment, guidance, and supports for interested ancillary health workers could more rapidly increase diversity in the nursing and medical professions.
- Develop culturally effective career progression advising.
- Develop accessible and affordable pre- and postbaccalaureate and baccalaureate programs that build on participants' health-related work experience.
- Increase recognition of foreign-awarded degrees from the breadth of countries represented among California residents.
- Underwrite tuition for prelicensure nursing programs for incumbent ancillary health professionals.

¹ US Department of Health and Human Services and Health Resources and Services Administration, National Center for Health Workforce Analysis, [Sex, Race, and Ethnic Diversity of U.S. Health Occupations \(2011-2015\)](#) (Rockville, MD: US Department of Health and Human Services and Health Resources and Services Administration, 2017).

Invest in Comprehensive Pathway Programs to Ensure Sustainable Funding and Built-In Accountability Systems

- Increase and sustain state-level diversity pathway program funding for health professions.
 - Example: [UC Programs in Medical Education](#)
- Require institutional matching to sustain programs past seed funding.
- Engage health profession students and professionals in the creation, implementation, and evaluation of pathway programs and workforce development policies and strategies.
- Redefine how program success is measured; improvements in grades or graduation rates are a success, even if pathway participants ultimately choose a different field of study.



Invest in Outcomes Research and Evaluation

- Incentivize and support investments in pathway program data and evaluation infrastructure and capacity to inform workforce development strategies.
- Collect longitudinal data on nursing and medical school applicants to track their educational and career progression, satisfaction, and retention in practice.
- Work with the Medical Board of California and experts to understand the representation of Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx doctors in all medical specialties (not just primary care), inform specialty workforce development strategies, and monitor how gaps in diversity change over time.
- Work with the California Board of Registered Nursing and experts to map Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx practicing nurses to understand which geographic areas have the biggest gaps in diversity and assess change over time.

Incentivize Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Initiatives in Academic and Health Care Institutions

- Financially incentivize nursing and medical schools and residency programs to use emerging best practices for the recruitment, retention, and graduation of Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx students.
- Develop, embed, and publicly report standardized metrics to measure progress on DEI initiatives.
- Financially reward institutions that meet or exceed DEI metrics.
- Example: [The Diversity Engagement Survey](#)



Recommendations for the Medical Field

- Encourage and support trade associations and health care systems to create and fund pathway programs for Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx students interested in specialties.
- Expand the number of and funding to accelerated three-year medical programs and/or programs that guarantee a residency spot upon admission and prioritize students from financially disadvantaged households.
 - Example: [Accelerated Competency-Based Education in Primary Care Program](#)
- Invest in proactively expanding and diversifying specialty residencies by funding targeted recruitment and retention activities while ensuring mentorship and other supports are in place for systemically and structurally excluded students.

Recommendations for the Nursing Field

- Develop and support an interdisciplinary, multisector working group on pathways to nursing for Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx populations.
- Work with nursing schools to develop a California-specific online compendium of pathway programs and/or other financial and career planning supports for Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx students interested in nursing.
- Create academic enrichment programs for high school graduates interested in nursing to help them gain admission into associate's degree and four-year nursing programs.
- Encourage and support professional associations and health care systems to create and fund mentoring programs for Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx nursing students and professionals.
- Establish direct transfer agreements between associate's and baccalaureate nursing programs to facilitate admission into and graduation from baccalaureate nursing programs among students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

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A longer version of this presentation is available at <https://www.urban.org/policy-centers/health-policy-center/projects/diversifying-health-care-workforce>.

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