



NHMA Legislative Update – April 2023

The national office continues to work diligently to monitor federal, state, and local policy developments, including legislative and regulatory changes, to advocate initiatives representing the interests of our 50,000 licensed Hispanic physicians in the United States.

We maintain weekly communication with strategic national partners to empower Hispanic physicians to be leaders who will help eliminate health disparities and improve the health of Hispanics in the United States, including Washington DC and Puerto Rico.

California State Advocacy Meetings on Cardiovascular Disease. As part of our ongoing efforts for the Cardiovascular Disease & Hispanics Education Initiative, NHMA has partnered with Amgen to increase awareness among key policymakers on the prevalence of cardiovascular disease in the Hispanic community. On March 28, 2023, NHMA President & CEO Dr. Elena Rios was in Sacramento, CA to meet with the Office of California Governor Gavin Newsom, Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon, and other California State Legislators and staff, including leadership on the Health Committees, Budget Committees, and California Latino Legislative Caucus.

NHMA discussed key prevention strategies and educational priorities on Cardiovascular Disease for Hispanic communities, given the high risk of Hispanic patients in California. Also, NHMA discussed the importance of supporting diversity in medical education, such as recruiting Latinos to medical school as students and faculty. Legislators shared policy priorities from expanding access to Covered California regardless of immigration status, covering continuous glucose monitors for Medi-Cal recipients, efforts to establish a financially distressed hospital emergency loan program, updating continuing medical education standards to further promote cultural and linguistic competency and enhance the quality of physician-patient communication, and more.

Advocacy Letters, Comments & Statements

NHMA Statement on Access to Reproductive Health Care. NHMA released a [statement](#) reaffirming our commitment to ensuring full access to women's health care amid the growing challenge and corrosion of access to reproductive health care. NHMA recognizes FDA approval of a drug reflects a rigorous science-based drug approval process which provides benefits that outweigh its risks. NHMA opposes judicial interference in FDA approval and regulation of medication for all Americans.

Advocating for HRSA Title VII Health Workforce Development Programs. NHMA joined the Health Professions and Nursing Education Coalition (HPNEC) in sending a letter to Senate and House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and

Related Agencies leadership urging them to provide \$1.51 billion for the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Title VII health professions and Title VIII nursing workforce development programs for FY 2024. This funding will help address health workforce shortages in critical areas of need, and shape the future health workforce at all stages of the continuum.

Supporting H.R. 12, the *Women's Health Protection Act*. NHMA joined The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, and over 100 diverse organizations, in sending a letter to the House of Representatives in support of H.R. 12, the *Women's Health Protection Act of 2023*. This legislation is an important step towards reproductive justice, which emphasizes the structural inequality and discrimination underlying bans and restrictions. The letter urges all Members of Congress to lend their strong support in favor of the bill and to call for its immediate passage.

Advocating for Medicaid Federal Funding. NHMA joined Families USA in a letter to Congressional Leadership, in support of the critically important Medicaid program and to express opposition to any proposals to cut Medicaid funding as part of upcoming negotiations over the federal budget, debt limit, or any other legislative priorities.

Calling for Increased Breastfeeding Funding. NHMA joined our partners at the United States Breastfeeding Committee (USBC) in a letter to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees urging them to increase funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Hospitals Promoting Breastfeeding program to \$20 million. This investment represents a critical course correction in national investment in the health, safety, and well-being of infants and young children.

Advocating for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Programs Funding. NHMA joined our CDC Coalition partners in sending a letter to Senate and House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies leadership urging \$11.581 billion for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's programs in the FY 2024. This funding will enable the CDC to carry out its prevention mission and to ensure an adequate translation of new research into effective state and local programs.

Advocating for CDC's Social Determinants of Health Program Funding. NHMA joined our partners at the Trust for America's Health (TFAH) in sending a letter to Senate and House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies leadership requesting \$100 million for the CDC's Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) program in fiscal year 2024, which aligns with the President's Budget Request for FY24. CDC intends to implement and evaluate action plans and to build the evidence base for SDOH-directed interventions through applied research, data collection, and surveillance.

Advocating for CDC's Climate and Health Program Funding. NHMA joined our Healthy Air Partners in sending a letter to Senate and House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies leadership urging increased funding for the CDC's Climate and Health Program to \$110 million. This funding is needed to

support state and local health departments in their efforts to prepare for and protect their communities from the health threats they are facing from extreme weather and other environmental health hazards.

Advocating for HHS Office of Climate Change and Health Equity Program Funding. NHMA joined our Healthy Air Partners in sending a letter to Senate and House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies leadership urging robust funding for the HHS Office of Climate Change and Health Equity (OOCHE) at \$5 million in FY 2024. This funding is needed to begin to fulfill OOCHE's commitment to protecting the health of the American people in the face of climate change, especially those experiencing a disproportionately high share of exposures and impacts, as well as addressing the climate impacts on the health care sector.

Advocating for EPA's Clean Air Program Funding. NHMA joined our Healthy Air Partners in sending a letter to Senate and House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies leadership urging increased funding for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to \$12 billion in the fiscal year 2024. EPA programs save lives and safeguard health, including by improving air quality. From air monitoring networks to pollution standards, every action the agency takes has the potential to impact health.

White House/Administration

White House Plan to Expand Health Coverage to DACA Recipients. President Biden [announced](#) a plan to expand health coverage for DACA recipients. The Department of Health and Human Services will propose a rule amending the definition of "lawful presence," for purposes of Medicaid and *Affordable Care Act* coverage, to include DACA recipients. Under the proposed rule, DACA recipients will be able to apply for coverage through the Health Insurance Marketplace, where they may qualify for financial assistance based on income, and through their state Medicaid agency. Read the White House [Fact Sheet](#).

National Institutes of Health-Wide Strategic Plan for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility. The [Fiscal Years 2023–2027 NIH-Wide Strategic Plan for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility](#) outlines the National Institutes of Health's commitment to embracing, strengthening, and integrating Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) across all of its activities to achieve the agency's mission. The plan aims to grow and sustain DEIA through structural and cultural change; implement organizational practices to center and prioritize DEIA in the biomedical and behavioral research workforce; and advance DEIA through research.

Biden-Harris Administration Announces Actions to Protect Patient Privacy. These [announcements](#) on April 12, 2023 build on actions that the Administration has taken to protect privacy and access to accurate information in the wake of the Supreme Court's decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, as the President directed in his first Executive Order to protect access to reproductive health care, including abortion. Efforts to protect

sensitive health information, including related to reproductive health care, have taken on renewed importance, as states seek to penalize and criminalize health care providers and interfere in deeply personal medical decisions.

HHS Proposes Measures to Bolster Patient-Provider Confidentiality Around Reproductive Health Care. On April 12, 2023, the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS), through its Office for Civil Rights, [issued](#) a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) to strengthen Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Rule protections by prohibiting the use or disclosure of protected health information (PHI) to investigate, or prosecute patients, providers, and others involved in the provision of legal reproductive health care, including abortion care. A [fact sheet](#) on the NPRM is available in English.

Medicare Drug Price Negotiation Program. NHMA joined an informational call with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Administrator Chiquita Brooks-LaSure, and Dr. Meena Seshamani, Deputy Administrator and Director, Center for Medicare, who provided an update on CMS' implementation of the new prescription drug law. Specifically, CMS discussed the recent [press releases](#) related to [initial guidance](#) on the Medicare Drug Price Negotiation Program.

Event Honoring Dr. Lester Martinez Lopez. NHMA joined our Latino national partners at an event honoring the Honorable Lester Martinez Lopez, MD, MPH, who was Senate-Confirmed to serve as Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs. He now serves as the principal advisor for all Department of Defense health and force health protection policies, programs, activities.

ACA Anniversary Celebration at HHS. NHMA staff joined HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra and CMS Administrator Chiquita Brooks-LaSure for a celebration to commemorate the 13th Anniversary of the Affordable Care Act. Since its enactment, the ACA has led to historic gains in health coverage and has advanced equity and improved the health of all Americans, including women and families, older adults, people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ and communities of color. Thanks to the ACA, millions more Americans have gained health coverage without limits, and protections are in place for people with preexisting conditions. NHMA joined other champions of the ACA to celebrate this progress and hear about work to further strengthen the law.

White House Challenge to End Hunger and Build Healthy Communities. As a continuation of the work started at the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health, the Biden-Harris Administration [launched](#) the White House Challenge to End Hunger and Build Healthy Communities. Through this Challenge, the Administration is encouraging stakeholders across all sectors of society to make bold and impactful commitments that will allow us to collectively achieve the goal the President set out: end hunger and increase healthy eating and physical activity by 2030 so fewer Americans experience diet-related diseases – all while reducing disparities.

Medicaid Unwinding, CMS Waivers, Flexibilities, and Transition Forward. During the COVID-19 pandemic, millions of people have been continuously insured by Medicaid as a result of public health emergency rules (PHE) in effect since early 2020. With this policy set to expire soon, and Medicaid will be allowed to terminate people's coverage. NHMA is working national partners on community education efforts to protect Latino families' health care.

CMS released a [fact sheet](#) on what to expect at the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE). CMS [released anticipated state timelines](#) to begin renewing eligible Medicaid enrollments and terminating others as the federal Public Health Emergency (PHE) for COVID-19, declared under Section 319 of the Public Health Service (PHS) Act, set to expire on May 11, 2023. You can find other Medicaid unwinding resources at [Medicaid.gov/unwinding](https://www.Medicaid.gov/unwinding).

Congressional Activity

Promoting College Access and Encouraging Doctoral Degrees in Health Care. Congressman Dr. Raul Ruiz introduced H.R.2470, the *Accessing Higher Education Opportunities Act*, which would expand the types of activities that Hispanic-Serving Institutions can support with grant funds to help students pursue a career as a physician, dentist or other health care occupations. This may include mentoring, advising, and enhancing existing student support services to encourage students to advance from four-year institutions to doctoral programs in the healthcare field. The bill would also allow these funds to be used to assist with expanding access to dual enrollment and early college high school programs. The bill would authorize the appropriation of nearly \$108 million for fiscal year 2024. To read the bill, click [here](#).

Pallone Introduces Bill to Support and Expand Medical Training in Underserved Communities. Congressman Frank Pallone, Jr. (NJ-06) introduced legislation to permanently authorize the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education (THCGME) program to support the training of primary care medical and dental residents with a focus on supporting residents in high-need communities. H.R. 2569, the [Doctors of Community \(DOC\) Act](#) permanently authorizes the THCGME program and provides annual increases in funding for fiscal years (FY) 2024-2033, from \$277 million in FY 2024 to \$582 million in FY 2033. This additional funding will allow the program to increase the number of residency slots available each year.

Meeting with Office of Senator Edward Markey. NHMA met with the office of Senator Edward Markey of Massachusetts to discuss a bold package of progressive health care legislation to establish a *Green New Deal for Health* to prepare and empower the health care sector to protect the health and wellbeing of our workers and our communities in the face of the climate crisis. The *Green New Deal for Health Act* will be introduced during Earth Week 2023.

Strategic Advocacy Partnerships

Understanding AI and Its Impact on Our Communities. NHMA joined our partners at ALLvianza as part of ongoing conversations about policies and initiatives that impact underserved communities. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming an integral part of our society, and if it is

developed responsibly, it has the potential to make quality of life more equitable for underserved communities by improving city infrastructure, healthcare access, and more. This conversation addressed the lack of understanding, education and access to AI, as well as lack of diversity in the development of AI, and potential threats to underserved communities.

Alzheimer's Association Advocacy Forum Dinner. NHMA joined our partners at the Alzheimer's Impact Movement (AIM) Advocacy Forum for the National Alzheimer's Dinner to raise awareness to benefit the care, support and research of the Alzheimer's Association. The National Dinner honors public figures, partners and their constituents for their efforts to take the fight against Alzheimer's to the next level. The Alzheimer's Association and Alzheimer's Impact Movement presented the 2023 AIM Humanitarian Award to Senator Susan Collins (R-Maine). Senator Collins started the Congressional Task Force on Alzheimer's in 1999, creating a path to elevate Alzheimer's issues with fellow lawmakers.

CHCI Capitol Hill Policy Briefing Series. Dr. Elena Rios joined the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI) for virtual policy briefing titled, "A Journey to Better Health: Advancing Latinos in the Health Workforce." Dr. Rios discussed policy priorities for supporting a diverse health workforce, key barriers to and incentives for recruiting and retaining our health workforce, and efforts to expand medical education. You can watch the virtual recording [here](#).