



NHMA Legislative Update – June 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.

Announcements

Wayne State University President M. Roy Wilson invited Dr. Elena Rios to receive an honorary degree during their School of Medicine's commencement ceremony on Tuesday, June 6 at 1:00 pm in Detroit, MI. The Wayne State University School of Medicine has prepared students to be health care leaders and advocates who go on to change the world since 1868.

GlobalMindED, an inclusive success network dedicated to closing the equity gap for students, has [recognized](#) NHMA's Dr. Elena Rios as their 2023 Inclusive Leader Award Winner for Health & Wellness, for dedicating her life to championing health equity and empowering underserved communities. The 2023 GlobalMindED Conference took place at the Sheraton Denver Downtown Hotel (Denver, CO) from June 7-9, 2023.

Advocacy Letters, Comments & Statements

NHMA joined the Health Equity Coalition for Chronic Disease (HECCD) and over 25 National Health Equity Leaders in sending a letter to Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Administrator Chiquita Brooks-LaSure and CMS Office of Minority Health Director Dr. LaShawn McIlver to ensure that the 2023 CMS Health Equity Conference positions the obesity epidemic as a major focal point for discussion and future collaboration—including examining how CMS can expand access to the full continuum of obesity care and treatment for communities of color who are disproportionately impacted by the epidemic.

NHMA joined Vaccinate Your Family and the Biotechnology Innovation Organization (BIO) in sending a letter to U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra urging efforts to ensure that new technologies for the prevention of the highly contagious respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) are included in the Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program. Equitable access to these innovative prevention products is tantamount to ensuring protection of our most vulnerable populations and a successful public health response.

NHMA joined the Climate Action Campaign in sending a letter to U.S. Department of Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm urging the Agency, as it develops recommendations around the Inflation Reduction Act's clean hydrogen tax credits, to ensure that such tax credits reduce climate and air pollution and does not derail progress towards 100 percent clean electricity by 2035.

NHMA sent a letter to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) expressing concern with recent FDA [actions](#) regarding aluminum toxicity in parenteral nutrition. We urge the FDA to withdraw its guidance document issued in December 2022 suggesting that the FDA may approve "total parenteral nutrition" (TPN) products with high levels of aluminum, and rescind and prohibit approval of high aluminum products promptly to eliminate aluminum toxicity threat to the hundreds of thousands of preterm babies born each year.

NHMA sent a letter to Congress expressing concern regarding reports about the so-called "permitting reform" proposals under negotiation to be included in a bill to address the debt ceiling. NHMA opposes legislation or provisions that would gut key public health laws like the Clean Air Act or put public health at greater risk of harm from air pollution.

NHMA joined Advocates for Community Health in sending a letter to House Energy and Commerce Committee and Senate Health Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee Leadership urging increased funding for federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) as part of the Community Health Center Fund reauthorization, which must pass by September 30, 2023.

NHMA sent a letter to House Committee of Appropriations leadership urging approval of the full authorized level of tobacco user fees and oppose any efforts to weaken or alter FDA's authority over tobacco products through the appropriations process for the Fiscal Year 2024 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

White House/Administration Activity

NHMA met with Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) staff for a conversation on implementation of the Medicare provisions of the *Inflation Reduction Act* with the goal of ensuring patient access to affordable treatments. CMS sought initial reactions to implementation of the drug law, experiences with patients in the care setting, and how CMS/HHS can help foster understanding of benefits under the law for both patients and providers. Attendees included Meena Seshamani, Deputy Administrator and Director, Center for Medicare; Kristi Martin, Chief of Staff and Senior Advisor, Center for Medicare.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Climate Change and Health Equity (OCCHE) [released](#) a new resource, "Protecting Vulnerable Patient Populations from Climate Hazards: A Referral Guide for Health Professionals". This resource is intended to inform education and referrals in clinical settings for patients who are vulnerable to climate change's

health impacts, and can be used by health and human services providers to address climate-related threats to their clients' well-being.

The White House [convened](#) state and local leaders for a "Forum on Mental Health and Well Being" during Mental Health Awareness Month held on May 10, 2023. The Administration has focused on advancing the President's Mental Health Strategy across its three objectives: strengthening system capacity, connecting more Americans to care, and creating healthy and supportive environments.

The Biden-Harris Administration [announced](#) new efforts that will advance the research, development, and deployment of responsible artificial intelligence (AI) that protects individuals' rights and safety and delivers results for the American people. The Administration has taken significant action to promote responsible AI innovation that places people, communities, and the public good at the center, and manages risks to individuals and our society, security, and economy. This includes a new request for public input on critical AI issues. T

The White House [convened](#) a meeting, on May 15, 2023, with civil rights leaders and health insurance providers to discuss the Biden-Harris administration's ongoing efforts to lower health care costs and protect access to affordable health care for all Americans. Administration officials and key stakeholders discussed how CMS, states, insurers, and community stakeholders are working together to ensure people remain connected to coverage as Medicaid redeterminations resume.

FDA finalizes blood donor eligibility guidelines. On May 12, 2023, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) [issued](#) revised recommendations for evaluating blood donor eligibility which now rely upon individual risk-based questions to reduce the risk of human immunodeficiency virus transmission by blood and blood products, including Source Plasma.

Congressional Activity

Senator Bernie Sanders, Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, [announced](#) a new legislative package that would pour nearly \$200 billion of new money into the health care system. The plan would over five years provide \$130 billion for community health centers and \$60 billion in funding to grow the healthcare workforce. Within that \$60 billion, a set aside of \$15 billion for graduate medical education programs with an emphasis on primary care access. This new package is in response to discussions on the Senate HELP Committee about how to address growing health care workforce shortages and financial woes of community health centers in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The House Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health held a [meeting](#) on May 17, 2023, to mark up 17 health-related bills, including the Supporting Safety Net Hospitals Act (H.R. 2665). The bill would eliminate the disproportionate share hospital payment reductions under the Medicaid program for fiscal years 2024 and 2025; and, the Strengthening

Community Care Act of 2023 (H.R. 2559), which would extend funding for the Community Health Center Fund and National Health Service Corps.

The Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions held a field hearing on Friday, May 12th, 2023 at Morehouse School of Medicine (Atlanta, GA) “Roundtable: How Can We Improve Health Workforce Diversity and Address Shortages? A Conversation with Historically Black College and University Leaders and Students”. Participants discussed how to address the crisis in our nation’s health care workforce, raise the number of Black Americans in the medical field, increase access to primary care, and improve health outcomes for Black Americans.

The Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions held a hearing on Wednesday, May 17, 2023, titled “A Crisis in Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Care: Closing Gaps in Access by Bringing Care and Prevention to Communities” to examine a crisis in mental health and substance use disorder care, focusing on closing gaps in access by bringing care and prevention to communities.