



NHMA Statement on Florida's Discriminatory and Harmful Legislation Signed into Law

June 1, 2023

The National Hispanic Medical Association (NHMA) condemns Governor Ron DeSantis' signing of discriminatory and harmful legislation into state law because we are dedicated to improving health care access and outcomes for all who reside in the U.S.

Legislation which imposes some of the harshest penalties and restrictions in the country on immigrants by limiting their employment opportunities, requiring hospitals to collect patients' citizenship status, and depriving free movement in the state of Florida. Legislation which bans public colleges and universities from using state or federal funds for programs that "advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion." Legislation which enables medical professionals and certain insurers to deny patients care based on religious, moral or ethical beliefs. It is a broad license for health care providers and insurance companies to refuse services to people. It will decrease access to health care and undermine public health. Floridians will hesitate when seeking health care in the state of Florida, or worse, it will cause a scenario where someone forgoes medically necessary treatment out of fear of retribution.

As an organization founded on the most vital oath of medical practice, to "do no harm", NHMA stands against any and all legislation that targets the health access and well-being of underserved communities. Discriminatory beliefs should not be wielded as a sword to deny critical medical care.

Hispanic physicians, Hispanic-serving physicians and health care professionals encompass a diverse, multiethnic population, who are often bilingual and are more likely to practice medicine in rural and underserved communities. They provide a tremendous resource to patients who often face challenges accessing health care services or communicating needs.

We encourage all of our physicians, partners, community leaders, and allies to stay up to date on legislation in their state, contact their representatives, make sure they're registered to vote, and continue to work with patients to establish the trust necessary to ensure a healthier future for all.

###

About the National Hispanic Medical Association (NHMA)

Established in 1994 in Washington D.C., NHMA is the premier non-profit membership association representing the interests of 50,000 licensed Hispanic physicians in the United States. The mission of NHMA is to empower Hispanic physician leaders to improve the health of Hispanics in the United States.