

National Hispanic Medical Association (NHMA) and LPOC Announce MOU



GILBERT BURGOS, MD, MPH
President of NHMA

STATEMENT ON NHMA:

NHMA recognizes the severity of the Latino physician shortage in the U.S. and its repercussions on patient care. In addition to the projects NHMA regularly leads to advocate for Hispanic and Latino physicians and health care professionals, NHMA continuously partners with organizations that reflect a similar commitment to helping Hispanic and Latino health care professionals excel in their practice in the U.S.

STATEMENT ON THE MOU:

The MOU between NHMA and LPOC will allow both organizations to support Hispanic and Latino communities in California more effectively. By leveraging each organization's strengths and interests, we can lead initiatives that increase access for Latinos seeking admission to medical schools, other health care professional schools and residencies. Together, we aim to strengthen our collective voices to improve health care and address the challenges facing our communities today and tomorrow.

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JAMES CRUZ, MD

Board President,

LatinX Physicians of California (LPOC)

Chief Medical Officer,

*Gold Coast Health Plan (Ventura
County's Public Health Plan)*

Board-certified,

American Board of Family Medicine

STATEMENT ON LPOC:

Since 2011, LatinX Physicians of California (LPOC) has built a statewide network representing over 4,000 LatinX physicians, alongside a growing pathway of health-professional students and allies. Because research consistently shows that LatinX patients have better outcomes, higher trust and greater engagement when treated by physicians who share their cultural and linguistic background, LPOC works directly with health plans, hospitals, CBOs, universities and policymakers to increase the number of LatinX students who train and stay in California to practice. Countless native LatinX Californians are forced to leave the state for medical school and face additional barriers when trying to return for residency, so LPOC pairs its pathway work with efforts to expand residency opportunities in the communities that need them most, alongside mentorship, leadership development and advocacy training.

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STATEMENT ON THE MOU:

This MOU marks an important step toward a stronger, unified presence for LatinX physicians in California and across the nation. By coordinating mentorship for medical students and emerging physician leaders and supporting LatinX-focused conferences, research and advocacy, both organizations can extend their reach while retaining their independence. Together, LPOC and NHMA are better positioned to strengthen the physician workforce pathway and expand culturally responsive care for the communities they serve.

[Learn More Here](#)

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National Hispanic Medical Association

ABOUT NHMA:

Established in 1994 in Washington, DC, the National Hispanic Medical Association (NHMA) is a non-profit association representing the interests of more than 50,000 licensed Hispanic physicians in the United States. NHMA leads the transformation of health care by centering Hispanic and Latino physicians and communities as architects of equity and innovation. We amplify our collective voice to reshape policy, advance sustainable and just access to care and cultivate a thriving, inclusive health care workforce. NHMA fosters a vibrant, connected network that promotes mentorship, professional growth and leadership among Hispanic and Latino physicians, while strengthening diversity and collaboration across the entire medical field.



National Hispanic Medical Association



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ABOUT LATINX PHYSICIANS OF CALIFORNIA (LPOC):

LPOC was established in 2011 to address concerns that, while LatinXs represent the largest ethnic group in California, access to the positive social determinants in life has continued to elude them.

LPOC noticed a pattern of inequity across income and poverty; health status and disparity; and educational access, attainment and dropout rates – all measurements of well-being and social standing of LatinXs.

While LPOC's core purpose is rooted, governed and influenced by the needs of LatinX physicians, making a difference requires considering what has made them successful, imparting those keys to success to future LatinX physicians and finding ways to support all LatinX physicians and their affiliates in the effort to eliminate health disparity and promote and optimize the health and quality of life for LatinXs.

The LatinX Physicians of California is a member organization. The base funding of the organization is derived from physician annual dues. Grants and/or donations support LPOC projects. We believe we can help LatinX physicians complete the myriad of activities they must accomplish in the health care setting, at home and in their efforts to support their communities.

The health environment is changing rapidly, and to the extent that we support LatinX physicians, we will continue to assure a loyal following and create and maintain a network of support for LatinX communities.

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GILBERT BURGOS, MD, MPH
President of NHMA

Dr. Gilbert Burgos is the President of the National Hispanic Medical Association (NHMA), which represents the interests of over 57,000 Latino/Hispanic physicians in the US and the communities they serve. Dr. Gilbert Burgos is the Executive Director of Medical Affairs for Elderplan/Home First, a Special Needs Managed Care Organization in New York State (NY). Most recently, he was the Executive Director and Chief Medical Director for Nassau Queens PPS, where he worked with the NY Department of Health and three major health systems in New York City to implement the DSRIP (Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment) program, a major state initiative to restructure how Medicaid recipients receive health care in NY. Dr. Burgos is board-certified in Internal Medicine and is also a Certified Physician Executive through the American Association of Physician Leaders. He has over twenty years of experience as a senior executive with physician groups, hospitals and health plans. Previous positions include Executive Director of Medical Management with

Advantage Care Physicians (ACP) in NY, Executive Vice-President and Chief Medical Officer for Preferred Health Partners (PHP) in NY, Senior Vice-President and Chief Medical Officer of Mercy Memorial Hospital System in Michigan and Chief Medical Officer for Care Choices Health Plan, part of Trinity Health System in Michigan. He obtained his medical degree from Albert Einstein College of Medicine and completed an Internal Medicine Residency at Montefiore Medical Center. In addition, he acquired a master's degree in public health from Harvard University's School of Public Health with a concentration in health policy and management.

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JAMES CRUZ, MD

*Board President,
LatinX Physicians of California (LPOC)
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Dr. James Cruz is a transformative, data-driven physician leader adept at evidence-based physician practice and hospital-physician collaborations that strengthen provider networks, improve access to care and reduce total cost of care. He is an expert at initiating and executing creative solutions to improve utilization management, transitions of care and provider network performance.

With nearly 10 years of senior executive health care experience, Dr. Cruz came to his current role from Molina Healthcare of California, a Medicaid- and Medicaid/Medicare-focused managed care organization that arranges the delivery of health care services to low-income families and individuals eligible for government-sponsored programs in California. During his tenure at Molina, Dr. Cruz served as Senior Medical Director, Medical Director and Chief Medical Officer. He restructured Molina's Quality Improvement Department, implemented a practice facilitation program in collaboration with key medical groups, augmented Molina's pay-for-performance incentives and supervised the reorganization of Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS) data collection processes. He led a multidisciplinary team that developed and implemented performance improvement initiatives targeting dual-eligible members, resulting in a 15 percent reduction in the total cost of care. Before Molina Healthcare, Dr. Cruz served as Associate Vice President of Health Services and Medical Director at Arcadian Management Services, where he oversaw the quality improvement program, all utilization management nursing functions, case management and utilization data analysis. He developed and managed a \$3 million departmental budget and was responsible for ambulatory and acute care authorization review, claims review and review of provider appeals and grievances.

Throughout his career, Dr. Cruz has prepared young physicians for practice in California's medically underserved communities. In 1992, he established California's first family medicine residency program sponsored by a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) in Fresno. He provided administrative and academic leadership for family medicine training programs in Sacramento and Pomona, California.

Dr. Cruz earned his medical degree from the University of California, San Diego School of Medicine. He completed his residency in family medicine and a fellowship in community medicine at White Memorial Medical Center in Los Angeles. He is board certified by the American Board of Family Medicine.