California Recruits Doctors From Latin America

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Although Latinos comprise nearly 40 percent of the population in California, only 5 percent of licensed doctors in the state are of Latino descent, according to data published by the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) and reported by NBC Latino. Michelle Bholat, MD, executive vice chair of the Family Medicine Unit at UCLA, and Patrick Dowling, MD, have founded the UCLA International Medical Graduate (IMG) program to address the shortage of primary care physicians who possess both language and cultural connections to Latino patients. Created in 2006, the program gives doctors trained in Latin America the opportunity to study and undergo training for U.S. licensing. Participants go through test preparation courses, English classes and clinical observation. IMG participants are required to serve in one of California's medically underserved areas for two to three years after graduating from the program.

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