

Latino Medical Students Awarded Full Scholarships

The L.A. Care Health Plan scholarship program supports future physicians who prioritize culturally sensitive and community driven care.

August 22, 2025

Eight Latino medical [students](#) passionate about serving low-income communities have been awarded full scholarships from L.A. Care Health Plan, a public agency providing [health insurance](#) to low-income or uninsured [Los Angeles](#) county residents, according to a [news release](#).

The Elevating the Safety Net (ESN) Medical School Scholarship program covers the cost of medical school in full for future [physicians](#) committed to serving medically underserved communities across Los Angeles County. Now in its eighth year, the program removes financial barriers that may impede talented students from becoming doctors.



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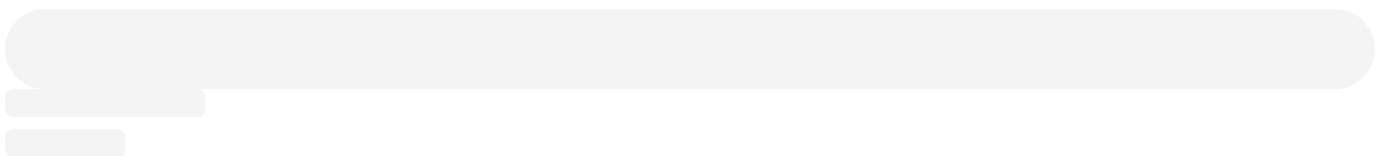
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About 11.4 million Californians live in a federally designated Primary Care Health professional shortage area, according to the California Health Care Foundation. To address this crisis, L.A. Care has awarded 64 scholarships to students attending the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA and the Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science since 2018.

“The need for primary care providers who reflect the communities they serve is now greater than ever, and this scholarship is not only life-changing for these students but also for the patients they will one day serve,” L.A. Care CEO Martha Santana-Chin said in the release. “We’re proud to be able to provide local students the opportunity to make their medical school dreams come true. We look forward to the day they join the 23 ESN scholars who have graduated from medical school, are currently completing their residency programs, and will soon come back to serve the communities who helped them along the way.”

Latinos now [make up just 6%](#) of country’s physicians, despite accounting for almost 19% of the U.S. population. What’s more, there are only about [5,000 Latino psychologists](#) in the United States, representing about 5% of all psychologists.

[Only 11.6% of medical school applicants](#) identified as Latino in the 2021–2022 application cycle, and only 6.1% of medical school graduates that year were Latino.





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A post shared by David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA (@dgsomucla)

Scholarship recipient Ezenna Onuoha double majored in public health and biochemistry and molecular biology at Brown University. Originally from Carson, California, he will now attend the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA.

“I want to practice medicine to increase the pool of doctors in my community working to reduce the mortality and morbidity of individuals who lack access to an empathetic and determined physician,” Onuoha said. “I also want to serve as a role model to help foster interest in practicing medicine among the younger generations in my communities, ultimately facilitating sustainable health for decades to come.”

According to the release, the four scholars who will attend the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA are Daisy Huerta of Castaic; Wendy Perez of San Fernando; Ezenna Onuoha of Carson; and Delmy Ruiz of South Los Angeles.

The four scholars who will attend the Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science are Hermona Okbu of Inglewood; Jessi Cristóbal Jerónimo Ruiz of Los Angeles; Tenisha Janisse of Pico Rivera; and Jessica Liliana Porras of Lennox.

Learn more about all the L.A. Care Scholars [here](#).

To read more, click [#Students](#). There, you’ll see headlines such as “[The Ripple Effects of Shrinking U.S. Science](#),” “[\\$2.8M Grant to Expand Educational Opportunities for Latino Students](#)” and “[CVS Health Foundation Grant Expands Pharmaceutical Opportunities for South Texas Students](#).”