

Report Highlights Need for Latino Physicians

A UCLA report uncovers significant underrepresentation of Latino physicians in the United States.

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A [recent report](#) uncovered a significant [underrepresentation](#) of Latino physicians in the United States and California, according to the University of California Los Angeles Latino Policy and Politics Institute (UCLA LPPI).

Led by Yohualli Balderas-Medina Anaya, MD, MPH; Paul Hsu, PhD; Seira Santizo Greenwood; and David E. Hayes-Bautista, PhD, the UCLA [report](#) sheds light on the current state of Latino physician representation and notes how the disparity between the Latino population and the number of Latino physicians impacts health equity, according to a [UCLA news release](#).

Although Latinos account for almost 18% of the U.S. population, the report found that Latinos made up only 6.3% of the physician population. Latinas, specifically, made up a mere 2.4%. What's more, in California, where Latinos account for 39% of the population, only 6% of physicians are Latino.

"These findings highlight the pressing need to prioritize investments in [health equity](#) and proactively address the shortage of Latina physicians and the importance of doing so at all levels of the educational pathway," said Anaya, the report's lead author, in the news release. "It is evident that previous efforts to diversify the physician workforce have fallen short, particularly in addressing the scarcity of Latino physicians and trainees."

The report emphasizes challenges—such as language barriers—that Latino patients face and highlights the need for more Spanish-speaking Latino physicians.

The report's authors recommend ways for policymakers, academic institutions and researchers to promote and prioritize Latino representation in the medical field, including:

- Incorporating evidence-informed educational strategies from an early stage, including active learning exercises and peer-led team learning, to improve outcomes for all students and engage underrepresented students in STEMM fields;

- Enhancing premed advising support for students, including state and institutional investment, and developing best practices to promote underrepresented in medicine (URiM) student success;
- Investing in community college student support, including scholarships and clinical exposure opportunities, to address socioeconomic disadvantage and increase representation;
- Adopting inclusive admissions practices that consider socioeconomic disadvantage alongside academic metrics, protecting the ability of DACA and undocumented students to pursue medical education and leveraging Centers of Excellence to demonstrate sustained growth in URiM students and faculty.