



Mission and Charter of the Health Professionals for Diversity

Health Professionals for Diversity is a coalition of organizations and individuals that represent the hundreds of thousands of health-care providers, researchers, educators, students, suppliers, and others dedicated to improving the health of all who live in this nation. ***Our mission is to promote diversity in the health professions.*** We understand that diversity in the health professions is crucial for protecting and promoting the health of the nation. The widening gap in health disparities, coupled with substantial growth among a number of the nation's racial and ethnic populations, bring urgency to an area that already requires critical attention. We believe that promoting diversity in the health professions not only serves as a strategy for addressing the growing problem of health-care disparities, it also contributes to improved health for all Americans.

Health Professionals for Diversity is guided by four major principles:

- I. We are aware of the benefits of promoting diversity in the health professions.*** Bringing together people of diverse backgrounds and experiences facilitates innovative practices and advances that improve the health of all people. This is true for all segments of the health-care system, including health-care providers, researchers, educators, students, suppliers, and all others sharing an interest in health care. Diverse environments help health professionals acquire skills for treating people from a wide range of backgrounds and understanding of how culturally determined factors affect health.
- II. We acknowledge our social obligation to address public-health crises.*** Current disparities in health-care quality and access result in people suffering unnecessarily from treatable, curable, or preventable diseases. Health professionals believe that everyone has the right to have access to quality and equitable health care.
- III. We understand the need to promote mechanisms that enhance diversity in the health professions.*** Existing programs and policies, such as affirmative action, are vital for promoting diversity and, because of this, must be continued. Health professionals also recognize the need to expand and develop new, more effective mechanisms to promote diversity in the health professions.

IV. We recognize that we must play a role in addressing the core problems that obstruct promoting diversity in the health professions. While there are a number of problems that hinder the creation of a diverse health-care workforce, the underlying obstacle is severe inequalities in the nation's education system. Until disparities in educational opportunity are addressed, there will be no significant increase in the number of students from underrepresented backgrounds adequately prepared to enter health-professions training.

Health Professionals for Diversity will pursue the following activities to fulfill our mission and support our guiding principles:

- 1. We will document the need for diversity.** Our coalition will publicize health-care literature and research studies that provide evidence of the need for, and benefits derived from, diversity in the health professions.
- 2. We will conduct education campaigns to raise awareness of the need for diversity.** We will target this message to educators, business leaders, policymakers, opinion leaders, legislators, courts, and the public at large. We will endeavor to gather the necessary political will and resources to address the problems that hinder efforts to diversify the health professions.
- 3. We will advocate for the need for diversity.** We will speak out against policies, legislation, ballot initiatives, and lawsuits that obstruct the ability of the health professions to promote diversity and cause harm to the health of the nation. Those who shape and create policy must come to understand that diversity in the health professions is crucial for the health of the nation.
- 4. We will share best practices for promoting diversity.** Our coalition will serve as a forum for sharing information about programs and policies that demonstrate success in promoting diversity in the health professions. Information about best practices should be readily available to those engaged in designing, funding, and managing programs and interventions designed to promote diversity.
- 5. We will encourage collaborative activities.** We will encourage health-professional groups to work together to promote diversity. By combining knowledge and resources, health professionals may be able to promote real change in diversifying the health professions. Strengthening relationships among health professionals will also help us better respond to health crises in the future.