

## Workforce Pathways

### *Fostering a more diverse healthcare workforce*

A diverse healthcare workforce is essential to address racial health inequities. Greater representation of Hispanic/Latinx, Black, Indigenous, and other historically underrepresented groups can enhance understanding of diverse patients' health challenges, their unique needs and can lead to more inclusive policies and programs.

#### Priority Actions to Foster a Diverse Workforce

To help improve health outcomes, patients from historically underserved communities need providers who have shared lived experiences that help them better understand and address specific health concerns.

**Engage students from historically underserved communities:** An intentional and collaborative effort to engage underserved communities must be made early and be collaborative to increase representation in the healthcare workforce.

- Establish and expand fellowships and apprenticeships to place students in healthcare positions.
- Create a forum for communication strategies to address digital platforms that may hinder or enhance access to employment and educational opportunities.
- Increase the percentage of diverse faculty by expanding targeted recruitment and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs.
- Build on evidence-based interventions and other programs in underserved communities to develop more healthcare professionals.

**Support community health workers:** Community health workers (CHWs) are trusted frontline workers from the communities they serve. Their diverse backgrounds—including representation from refugee, immigrant, and migrant communities—enable them to connect with populations that might otherwise remain disconnected or mistrust the healthcare system.

- Identify and increase funding mechanisms for accreditation and health professionals in vulnerable populations.
- Expand Medicaid coverage of Community Health Workers services to build strong community and government partnerships and provide more opportunities for CHWs.
- Provide training, support, and programming to enhance the knowledge, skills, and abilities of CHWs to respond to issues of systemic racism, implicit bias, and racial health inequities.
- Improve digital and quantum literacy skills of CHWs to maximize their ability to leverage available community health information and data for design and implementation of community health interventions.
- Provide cultural and linguistic training and mentorship programs that facilitate entry-level community health worker programs in all states.

**Invest in government, tribal and territorial contributions:** Developing a sustainable, diverse healthcare workforce requires coordinated efforts across multiple sectors. To continue to increase the diversity of the healthcare workforce across governing bodies, recruitment and promotion processes and practices should be refined, and ample professional development opportunities should be created.

- Implement a multi-sector approach that promotes collaboration between educational systems, nursing and medical schools, healthcare professional organizations, and community health

advocates to work with federal, state, and local governments and elected officials to identify and implement funding mechanisms to support the goal.

- Generate more graduate medical education (GME) opportunities through partnerships between academic institutions and professional medical associations.
- Enhance recruitment efforts by fostering collaboration between community-based organizations, healthcare professional organizations Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).
- Encourage government and foundations to support a new line of research about Health Equity training at health institutions to help document effective solutions to racial health inequities.
- Leverage digital information platforms at an academic institution level to track talent gaps, inform recruitment, and reduce turnaround times in application processes.

### Key Community Resources\*

- [Read about The University of Houston's Community Health Workers Initiative](#), which pairs students with community members to become licensed community health workers.
- Explore government programs, such as [National Health Service Corps](#), [Nurse Corps](#) and [Rural Health Clinic Program](#) which focus resources on Health Professional Shortage Areas and Medically Underserved Areas/Populations.

To learn more about drivers of inequity and practical solutions, go to [An Action Guide to Disrupt Inequitable Health Outcomes](#).

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