
Dear Faculty, Staff and Students,

[National Hispanic Heritage Month](#) is September 15-October 15, and we take this opportunity to celebrate the numerous contributions Hispanics have made throughout history to enrich our diverse nation.

The designation originated in 1968 as Hispanic Heritage Week under President Lyndon B. Johnson and was later expanded by President Ronald Reagan and enacted into law in 1988. Since then, Americans have honored the month-long period by “celebrating the histories, cultures and contributions” of Hispanics to our national heritage.

We at UCLA Health and the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA join in this commemoration as we continue to make efforts to increase the number of Hispanics serving in medicine and other healthcare fields through pipeline programs, community outreach and education. We also prepare and mentor bilingual physicians for careers in family medicine through our successful [International Medical Graduate Program](#).

Yet, while this month is intended to celebrate the more than 55 million Americans who trace their roots to Mexico, Spain, and the Spanish-speaking nations of Central America, South America and the Caribbean, we know that this year the Hispanic community is dealing with many serious issues. Among them: the phasing out of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). This federal program has allowed nearly 800,000 undocumented young people – including more than 4,000 UC students, staff and health care providers – to legally live, work and study in the United States.

In a [statement announcing the University of California’s lawsuit](#) challenging the end of DACA, President Janet Napolitano, affirms it is “imperative . . . that we stand up for these vital members of the UC community. They represent the best of who we are – hard working, resilient and motivated high achievers.”

A [letter to the Daily Bruin](#) from the [Latino Medical Student Association](#) at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA and Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science, notes that, “seventy Dreamers are our classmates in medical schools around the country, and they are dedicating their lives to serving and protecting the health of those in their communities.” Signed by 21 UCLA medical students, the letter continues, “Without DACA protection, though, our colleagues will face even greater adversity in fulfilling their hopes and dreams.”

We at UCLA Health and the David Geffen School of Medicine commend President Napolitano for her strong support and stand in solidarity with these talented young people who are striving to excel in the face of extraordinary challenges.

Sincerely,

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