This message applies to all UCLA Health faculty, staff, trainees, students and volunteers in the UCLA Hospital and Clinic System and the DGSOM.

Dear UCLA Health Community,

From September 15-October 15, we proudly observe National Hispanic Heritage Month by celebrating the histories, cultures and contributions Hispanic/Latino people have made to strengthen and enrich our diverse nation.

At UCLA Health we join in this national commemoration as we continue our efforts to increase the number of Latinos in science, medicine and other health care-related fields through pipeline programs, community outreach and education.

Since 2002, Médicos, Enfermeros y Dentistas Para el Pueblo/Medical Preparation and Education Pipeline (MEDPEP) has been working to guide Latino and other students of color who are underrepresented in medicine through their community college experience and transition into a four-year university or other health care professional programs. MEDPEP provides students with research opportunities, leadership development and peer mentoring support. The pipeline program is administered by the Center for the Study of Latino Health and Culture, the leading research institute in California providing reliable data on Latino health, which we are proud to say is based here at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA.

On-campus student associations are thriving in their efforts to support the training and development of Latino physicians and other health care professionals. The nationally recognized UCLA chapter of the Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics & Native Americans in Science continues its outreach to K-12, undergraduate, graduate and transfer students in the Los Angeles area to increase the number of underrepresented students in higher education and science. Additionally, the Latino Medical Student Association (LMSA)– which brings together students, alumni and health care workers – offers mentorship along with educational and volunteer opportunities for premedical students. Twice a year, LMSA organizes the Lennox Health Fair to provide community members with basic health services, including preventive care. Lennox is a predominately Spanish-speaking city south of the Los Angeles International Airport, where nearly a third of the residents live below the poverty threshold.

We also prepare and mentor bilingual physicians – U.S. citizens and permanent residents – for careers in family medicine through our successful International Medical Graduate Program (IMG). The IMG Program provides residency training in family medicine for medical school graduates who received their education from Latin American countries and are interested in working as bilingual primary care physicians in California’s rural and densely populated communities. The program was recently highlighted by CalMatters for helping to fill workforce gaps.

We at UCLA Health applaud the recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling that struck down attempts to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, and we support the University of California’s ongoing efforts against further undermining DACA recipients, many of whom are health care workers.
UCLA Health is proud to recognize and celebrate the many achievements of our Latino students, faculty and staff who strive to improve health care and the field of medicine while helping to train the next generation of scientists, physicians and other health care workers. We are honored to have you as part of our UCLA Health community.

Sincerely,

Johnese Spisso, MPA
President, UCLA Health
CEO, UCLA Hospital System

Kelsey Martin, MD, PhD
Dean, David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA