



**Connecting the Dots:
A Comprehensive Approach to Increase Health Professions Workforce Diversity In
California**

Executive Summary

The UC Berkeley School of Public Health and the Public Health Institute jointly received a grant from The California Endowment (TCE) to increase health professions workforce diversity in California. Recent reports from The Institute of Medicine, The Sullivan Commission, and The UCSF Center for Health Workforce Studies have documented the need for and importance of increasing diversity in the health professions and have made recommendations. Many racial and ethnic groups are underrepresented in key health professions while evidence shows that a health workforce that more closely represents the population can contribute to improved access and quality of care. This statewide initiative reflects TCE's understanding of the need for a coordinated, evidence-based approach to this important issue. For the last year and a half, PHI and UCB staff, consultants, and partners have conducted a seven-part, comprehensive inquiry that includes the following:

- A quantitative assessment of the current level of diversity in CA health professions and professional schools, current demographic trends and projections, and what data are needed to validate meaningful progress.
- Key informant interviews with the leadership of health professions education institutions, employers, and regulators to identify innovations and progress to date, key issues and challenges, and opportunities for advancement.
- Documentation of over 30 exemplary practices in areas such as investment in the pipeline, admissions, institutional climate, faculty recruitment and retention, and reducing financial barriers.
- An analysis of how the issue of diversity is framed in the California media, and an examination of strategies to better engage specific constituencies and the general public
- Focus group discussions with health professions education students and key informant interviews with under-represented faculty to explore the benefits of diversity in the educational environment.
- Development of a comprehensive annotated bibliography and literature review that covers research to date into the issue of diversity.

Key findings and recommendations from each of these inquiries will be reviewed and discussed at a statewide conference in Los Angeles in October 2007. Participants in the conference will contribute to the development of a set of formal recommendations to guide future funding priorities by TCE and other foundations, and to facilitate the development of statewide, regional, and local strategies to advance health professions workforce diversity in California. Input from conference participants will be integrated into a set of final reports that will be published and disseminated in January 2008

The project team is supported by a statewide advisory committee of key leaders from academic institutions, provider organizations, and employers from the public and private sector. The primary focus of the inquiry and recommendations will be the disciplines of medicine, dentistry, nursing, and public health. The inquiry will also examine opportunities to increase entry into allied health professions.