

# NEWS RELEASE



United Health Foundation<sup>SM</sup>

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*(For Immediate Release)*

## **UNITED HEALTH FOUNDATION TO PROVIDE \$1.2 MILLION IN SCHOLARSHIPS FOR 200 STUDENTS WHO WILL PURSUE CAREERS IN HEALTH CARE**

### **Diverse Scholars Initiative Convenes “Young Minds, Bright Futures” Forum in Washington, D.C. to Mentor and Empower Students to Make a Difference**

**Washington, D.C. (July 28, 2009)** – The United Health Foundation’s Diverse Scholars Initiative will award grants this year to as many as 200 students from diverse, multicultural backgrounds enabling them to pursue careers in health care. The Foundation has committed \$1.2 million to the initiative for the 2009-2010 academic year, a sharp increase in funding compared with previous years.

The scholarships, averaging \$5,000 per student, focus on African American, American Indian, Asian American and Latino American students.

To formally recognize scholarship recipients, the United Health Foundation is convening 32 students from around the country in Washington, D.C. for a “Young Minds, Bright Futures” Diverse Scholars Forum. The forum begins today with a reception on Capitol Hill. Representatives from the Congressional Black Caucus, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, and the Asian Pacific Islander Caucus have been invited to attend the reception.

On July 29, the students will have an opportunity to learn about efforts to modernize our health care system during a question-and-answer session with Washington policy experts. The exposure to the policy process is essential in helping these scholars advance the health of the nation and overcome disparities in health outcomes.

“It is more important than ever that we encourage our country’s brightest young minds to pursue careers in the health professions, and expose them to the political and policy environment,” said Reed V. Tuckson, M.D., United Health Foundation board member and executive vice president and chief of medical affairs, UnitedHealth Group. “Expanding our Diverse Scholars Initiative to support more young people who are committed to advancing the health of our nation and of underrepresented minorities is especially important given the challenging economic times and a growing physician and nurse shortage.”

### **Diverse Scholars Initiative Seeks To Improve Quality of Culturally-Competent Health Care**

The goal of the Diverse Scholars Initiative, established in 2003, is to increase the number of qualified, yet underrepresented, college graduates entering the health workforce. By cultivating health professionals from diverse, multicultural backgrounds, the United Health Foundation hopes to increase culturally-competent health care delivery, close the health disparities gap and improve health outcomes over the long term.

The program is administered through partnerships with a variety of non-profit and civic organizations. While the United Health Foundation does not influence recipient selection, scholars must demonstrate financial need, the pursuit of a degree that will lead to a career in a health field, and a commitment to working in underserved communities, including community health centers. Additional requirements and application deadlines vary by organization.

The organizations are experienced in scholarship administration and have reputations for achieving excellence with these programs. They also have the ability to identify and engage with students who are most in need of financial support. The Diverse Scholars Initiative partner organizations include:

American Indian College Fund, Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund, Auxiliary to the National Medical Association, California Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Inc., Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute, Fort Worth Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities, Hispanic College Fund, Hispanic Scholarship Fund, Jackie Robinson Foundation, Magic Johnson Foundation, National Hispanic Health Foundation, National Medical Fellowships, Inc., South Florida Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Inc., Tavis Smiley Foundation, Thurgood Marshall College Fund, United Negro College Fund.

“We applaud the United Health Foundation for its commitment to helping cultivate the next generation of minority health care leaders,” said Elena Rios, M.D., president and CEO, National Hispanic Medical Association and the National Hispanic Health Foundation.

In addition, the United Health Foundation is increasing its commitment to community colleges by providing funding for students to make the transition from two-year to four-year colleges. The support comes at a time when the Obama Administration – also seeing the value in these institutions as training grounds for the country’s future work force – has increased financial support for community colleges.

For more information about the Diverse Scholars Initiative, visit [www.unitedhealthfoundation.org/dsi.html](http://www.unitedhealthfoundation.org/dsi.html)

### **About the United Health Foundation**

Guided by a passion to help people live healthier lives, United Health Foundation supports activities that expand access to quality health care services for those in challenging circumstances and partners with others to improve the well being of communities. The Foundation also provides helpful information to support decisions that lead to better health outcomes and healthier communities. Since established by UnitedHealth Group [NYSE: UNH] in 1999 as a not for profit private foundation, the Foundation has committed more than \$160 million to improve health and health care. For more information, visit [www.unitedhealthfoundation.org](http://www.unitedhealthfoundation.org).

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