

**Medical Leadership Council on Cultural Proficiency**  
**Press Release**  
11-15-06

**Physician and Health Care Leaders Work to Improve Health Care  
for California's Limited English Proficient Patients**

*Los Angeles, CA* – (DATE) – Physician, hospital and health system leaders are taking a stand on behalf of the millions of Californians who need interpreters and improved cultural understanding in the nation's largest health care market.

Meeting together as the Medical Leadership Council on Cultural Proficiency, representatives of 33 medical specialty societies, medical associations, and advocacy organizations approved final language for Policy Principles for Improving Cultural Proficiency and Care to Minority and Medically Underserved Communities at their November 15 meeting in Sacramento. Each Medical Leadership Council member organization now will seek its respective organizational endorsement of the Policy Principles, which include a range of recommendations on issues such as language access, cultural competence, provider education, workforce recruitment and training, and payment for interpreter services.

“The organizational members of this Council are the state's leaders in bringing culturally appropriate health care to the millions of patients whose lives depend on it,” said Robert K. Ross, president and CEO of The California Endowment, which convenes the Medical Leadership Council twice a year. “Together, we are changing the way health care is delivered in California.”

Medical Leadership Council member organizations also presented updates on new projects under way, all designed to improve the delivery of culturally competent care.

Projects include:

- The California Medical Association Foundation's sponsorship of the Network of Ethnic Physicians Organizations' work to improve quality and access to care provided to safety net communities and to advocate for solo and small group ethnic physicians serving these populations;
- A National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) project to understand and address barriers to care for minority patients in small primary care practices;
- A California Medical Association project to learn more about how small group practices address language access issues for their patients with Limited English Proficiency;
- A project by the Institute for Medical Quality, a subsidiary of the California Medical Association, to provide technical assistance to continuing medical education (CME) providers to meet the new state requirement that all CME activities address cultural and linguistic competence in the practice of medicine.

- A California Academy of Family Physicians project to help physicians and other health care providers better identify and meet their patients' language access needs through a Web-based language access resource center.

“The Medical Leadership Council organizations are doing exciting work,” said Leonard Fromer, MD, FAAFP, Past President of the California Academy of Family Physicians, the lead administrative organization for the Council. “We all want to provide the best care possible to all the people of California in all our wonderful diversity. Through research, education, policy and cultural awareness we can make it happen.”

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The California Endowment, a private, statewide health foundation, was established in 1996 to expand access to affordable, quality health care for underserved individuals and communities, and to promote fundamental improvements in the health status of all Californians. Headquartered in downtown Los Angeles, The Endowment has regional offices in San Francisco, Sacramento, Fresno and San Diego, with program staff working throughout the state. The Endowment makes grants to organizations and institutions that directly benefit the health and well-being of the people of California. For more information, visit The Endowment's Web site at [www.calendow.org](http://www.calendow.org).

### **Medical Leadership Council Member Organizations**

(CURRENT LIST OF MEMBERS RUNS HERE.)