

**The National Hispanic Health Foundation** staff participate in policy development activities, including support letters and meetings to advance efforts to increase access to health care prevention and treatments for Latino communities.

## **NHMA Congressional Briefing on Obesity and Cancer Policies was another success in educating staff in Congress and national advocates on direction for policies that impact Latino health --**

Congressman Raul Ruiz, MD announced his support for obesity medications through the TROA Act and the importance of cancer support from Congress and thanked NHMA for support for his efforts for healthcare legislation on breast and cervical screening access.

Elena Rios, MD, President, NHMA and NHHF provided an overview of the purpose of our briefings to discuss policies that can improve health of Latinos and other underresourced communities --- and that obesity prevention/treatment is fundamental to decreasing cancer and other chronic disease and if Federal employees, Veterans and Medicaid patients can have access to insurance coverage of alternative obesity medications, AOMs, so should Medicare patients. Also we are engaged with cancer clinical trial researchers and the next generation of researchers through the National Hispanic Health Foundation to increase Latino cancer research and knowledge for better care for our community.

Expert Panelists suggested recommendations for policy on Obesity and Cancer --- and we thank them all for their contributions --- see [nhmamd.org](http://nhmamd.org) for the Webinar recording and slides.

Maricela Castillo MacKenzie, MD, Owner, Elle Weight Loss and Wellness Center, Michigan  
Lauren Teras, PhD, Senior Scientific Director, American Cancer Director  
Pascale Jean, PhD, Assistant Director, Nutrition & Health, Office of Science & Technology Policy, White House, Cancer Moonshot

**NHHF and NHMA joined others against the resolution calling for the American Association of Dermatology Resolution to ban all DEI Initiatives at their annual meeting last week. Thanks to the Latino dermatologist leaders.**

## **March is Women’s History Month ---**

**At the State of the Union 2024, President Biden called on Congress to restore the protections of Roe v. Wade in federal law so women in every state have the freedom to make deeply personal health care decisions.** And the Biden-Harris Administration will continue to take executive action to protect access to reproductive health care, including through ongoing implementation of the President’s three Executive Orders and a Presidential Memorandum issued since the Court overturned Roe v. Wade. To date, the Administration has taken action to:

- Protect access to abortion, including FDA-approved medication abortion;
- Defend access to emergency medical care;
- Support the ability to travel for reproductive health care;
- Strengthen access to high-quality, affordable contraception;
- Safeguard the privacy of patients and health care providers; and
- Ensure access to accurate information and legal resources.

**Department of Defense Amends Assisted Reproductive Services Policy for Seriously, Severely Ill or Injured Active Duty Service Members** – and allows for coverage of assisted reproductive technology services for a qualifying active duty service members' spouse, unmarried partner, or third party surrogate, so long as these parties are enrolled in TRICARE. While the amended policy no longer prohibits the use of a surrogate, paid surrogacy arrangements continued to be excluded.

**Another policy focus in Congress has been on the pricing of medications. One area that has received bipartisan traction and national advocate support is the call for reform of Pharmacy Benefit Managers or PBMs** - companies that manage prescription drug benefits on behalf of health insurers, Medicare Part D drug plans, large employers, and other payers. By negotiating with drug manufacturers and pharmacies to control drug spending, PBMs have a significant behind-the-scenes impact in determining total drug costs for insurers, shaping patients’ access to medications, and determining how much pharmacies are paid.

NHHF supports the Senate Committee on Finance Chair, Senator Ron Wyden and Ranking Member, Senator Michael Crapo legislation to have comprehensive, consensus-driven suite of bills aimed at modernizing and improving prescription drug benefits under Medicare Part D and Medicaid, support cost-cutting competition, mitigating misaligned incentives that drive up drug prices, and bolstering transparency across the medication supply chain.

Policymakers have considered three principal reforms to regulate PBMS:

- Require greater transparency around rebates that come from drug manufacturers to PBMs.
- Proposals to ban spread pricing to ensure that payers and employers are not overpaying PBMs for prescription drugs. A more limited proposal would mandate that PBMs update their cost schedules with pharmacies to reflect price increases for generic drugs.
- Require PBMs to pass through rebates to payers or to patients. The federal government has, in fact, proposed requiring PBMs contracted with Medicare Part D plans to pass through to patients at least one-third of the rebates and price concessions they receive.

NHHF has joined with medical and public health associations to urge Congress to

- Pass the Alternatives to Prevent Addiction in the Nation (Alternatives to PAIN) Act (H.R. 7142)
- Express our strong support for the United States’ vaccine safety systems
- Support for the Treat Obesity Act (TROA) to have Medicare Part D coverage for