



Wednesday, August 23, 2017

California is changing. Its population is growing, rapidly aging, and becoming increasingly diverse. Our state has also been a leader in expanding insurance coverage to millions of additional Californians who now need access to care. For California to thrive in the face of these powerful trends, we need a health workforce that can adapt and grow with them.

Unfortunately, our health workforce is falling behind. The pipeline of caregivers, including doctors, nurses, behavioral health providers, and public health professionals has not kept pace with demand, particularly in underserved, rural, and ethnically and linguistically diverse communities. It's not just that we don't have enough health providers, we don't have the right people in the right places with the right training.

For example, by 2030, Californians age 65 and over will increase by 87 percent. Additionally, 38 percent of providers are age 55 or older and are expected to reduce their hours or retire within the next decade. These are only some of the challenges that will leave California with a severe shortage of primary care providers and other vital members of our health workforce. If we want to have the workforce to support a healthy economy and quality of life tomorrow, we must prepare now.

As leaders of the largest health sciences education and training system in the nation (University of California) and one of the state's top health employers (Dignity Health), we see these challenges firsthand. Our investments required for recruiting and retaining our health care workforce have increased dramatically. We cannot address this challenge in isolation.

We have convened the **California Future Health Workforce Commission** to ensure that the state has the capacity to deliver high-quality, affordable health care to all Californians for years to come. Now is the time to craft a plan that will help guide policymakers, health care providers, educators, and other state and community leaders in implementing a sustainable and forward-looking strategy that ensures all Californians have access to excellent and comprehensive health care.

We are bringing together 24 of the most accomplished and respected [health, education, policy, and workforce development leaders](#) in our state with the vision, expertise, and know-how to develop and implement a comprehensive, statewide health workforce strategy. In addition to this All-Star team of California leaders, we have also assembled a Technical Advisory Committee, which brings together many of the state's brightest minds in health workforce development.

Over the next 15 months, the Future Health Commission will develop a blueprint for building a modern health workforce in California. The plan will also contain recommendations for an implementation strategy, including a structure, resources, and process for effective action.

Access to quality, affordable health care is one of the great challenges of our time. This commission has the expertise and experience to move California forward, especially if we build on existing public and private efforts in education, workforce, health, and economic development and leverage them for greater innovation, improvement, and impact.

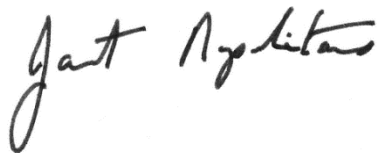
The Future Health Commission is being convened by California's leading health philanthropies: The California Endowment, California Health Care Foundation, The California Wellness Foundation, and Blue Shield of California Foundation. These foundations recognize that our impact will be far greater when we address the issue together.

Our children, mothers and fathers, and grandparents want better and more equitable health care – quality preventive care, timely appointments, comprehensive behavioral health, and health care from professionals who speak their language and understand their culture. Technology has an important role to play in achieving this vision, but only if we pair these new tools with the right talent. Creating this new generation of health professionals will also require us to work together in unprecedented ways to link education with employment and to ensure that the sum total of care is greater than the collection of individual parts.

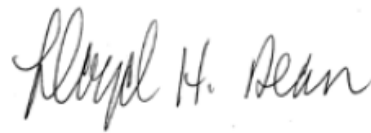
This generation of leaders has a profound responsibility to plan for the wellbeing of the next. The stakes in this effort are high. So too are benefits to all Californians, both in terms of economic opportunity and healthier communities.

Please join us in imaging the possibilities and turning them into action. We invite you to learn about the work of the Future Health Commission and stay informed by [subscribing](#) to receive regular news updates.

Sincerely,



Janet Napolitano
President
University of California



Lloyd Dean
President/CEO
Dignity Health