

May 2005

Dear Colleague:

We are writing to express our support for the Medicare Quality Improvement Organizations' (QIOs) efforts to enhance the cultural competency curriculum for primary care physicians. As organizations dedicated to reducing health care disparities, we are committed to supporting physicians' understanding of the array of cultural and linguistic factors surrounding quality care for underserved populations. We are pleased with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' commitment to provide physicians with assistance from state-based QIOs over the next three years under their 8<sup>th</sup> Statement of Work beginning Aug. 1, 2005.

Chronic disease, cancer, and infectious disease disproportionately affect African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans. These populations, collectively identified as the underserved, also face challenges in health care delivery caused by miscommunication between doctors and patients, cultural preferences and experiences of patients, and health system failures.

One of the biggest health care challenges facing America is implementing successful strategies to eliminate disparities in care. That is why we are excited about the work QIOs are undertaking with doctors to strengthen cultural and linguistic competence as a means to reduce health care disparities. **We encourage you to support and participate in efforts by your local QIO to reduce health care disparities by improving data collection on race, ethnicity, and primary language; reducing language and cultural barriers to health care; and completing a QIO-sponsored cultural competency training program.** By doing so, you are making a significant contribution toward improving care for our most vulnerable patients.

Sincerely,

American College of Physicians

American Academy of Family Physicians

American Medical Association

National Medical Association

National Hispanic Medical Association



Michael Fleming, M.D.

Board Chair

American Academy of Family Physicians



Winston Price, M.D.

President

National Medical Association



American Medical Association

Physicians dedicated to the health of America

