



Legislative Update - March 2024

The National Hispanic Medical Association (NHMA) continues its active involvement in policy development, advocating for improved healthcare access and treatments for Latino communities. Staff members engage in various activities such as drafting support letters and participating in meetings to advance these efforts.

Bridging the Gap in Obesity and Cancer Policies

On March 13, NHMA hosted a Congressional Briefing focused on Obesity and Cancer Policies, which garnered significant attention and support from both Congressional staff and national advocates. During the [briefing](#), U.S. Rep. Raul Ruiz, M.D., expressed his backing for obesity medications through the [TROA Act](#) and emphasized the crucial role of congressional support in addressing healthcare challenges, particularly in areas such as breast and cervical screening access.

Dr. Elena Rios, President of NHMA and NHHF, discussed the importance of passing policies aimed at improving the health of Latino and other underserved communities. She emphasized the interconnectedness between obesity prevention and cancer reduction, advocated for broader insurance coverage of alternative obesity medications, and called for increased support for cancer research within the Latino community.

The expert panelists provided valuable insights and recommendations on obesity and cancer policies. Check nhmamd.org for the Webinar recording and slides.

NHMA thanks the following speakers: U.S. Rep. Raul Ruiz, Dr. Maricela Castillo MacKenzie owner of 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.

NHMA Stands Firm Against Anti-DEI Resolution at AAD Annual Meeting

NHMA opposed a resolution aimed at banning Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives at the recent American Association of Dermatology annual meeting, standing in solidarity with Latino dermatologist leaders, who [testified in favor of keeping the academy from ending its DEI initiatives](#).

Women's Rights Advocacy Gains Momentum

March also marks Women's History Month. [President Biden's recent State of the Union address highlighted the administration's commitment to protecting women's reproductive rights](#), including efforts to restore the protections of [Roe v. Wade](#) at the federal level and ongoing executive actions to safeguard access to reproductive healthcare. 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.

Furthermore, the Department of Defense amended its [Assisted Reproductive Services Policy](#) to expand coverage for seriously ill or injured active-duty service members and their spouses, partners, or surrogates enrolled in [TRICARE](#).

NHMA Supports Bipartisan Efforts to Reform Pharmacy Benefit Managers and Lower Medication Costs

In Congress, bipartisan efforts to reform Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) have gained momentum, with NHMA supporting legislative initiatives aimed at enhancing transparency, reducing drug costs, and improving prescription drug benefits under [Medicare Part D](#) and Medicaid.

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.

NHMA's Advocacy Agenda: Prioritizing Health Equity and Access

NHMA has also joined other medical associations in advocating for policies such as the [Alternatives to Prevent Addiction in the Nation](#) (Alternatives to PAIN) Act, ensuring vaccine safety, and supporting the [Treat Obesity Act](#) (TROA) for Medicare Part D coverage.

Poll: FDA's Menthol Cigarette Ban Gains Strong Support, Especially Among Black Voters

As the White House considers the FDA's final rule prohibiting the sale of menthol cigarettes, a new [poll](#) shows that voters support the rule by a substantial 29-point margin (58% to 29%) and Black voters support it by an even larger 37-point margin (62% to 25%). Contrary to claims made by the tobacco industry, implementation of the rule would not harm President Biden's electoral prospects, with no change in Biden's overall standing after voters were asked to assume that the Biden Administration ended the sale of menthol cigarettes, the poll shows.

The poll was conducted by The Mellman Group, a leading political research firm, on behalf of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. For more information read the report's.