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P R E S S R E L E A S E

Dr. Pejman Salimpour Appointed to National Latino Healthcare Task Force; Findings to be Presented to President Bush and Congress

Sherman Oaks, CA--- Dr. Pejman Salimpour, President and CEO of NexCare Collaborative, has been appointed to the National Latino Healthcare Task Force, effective immediately. The appointment was made by the two leaders of the Task Force, Josh Valdez, Senior Vice President of Healthcare Management, Wellpoint West Region; and Robert de Posada, President of The Latino Coalition.

The National Latino Healthcare Task Force, comprised of 15-20 prominent healthcare leaders, policymaker and small business owners, is chartered to improve the delivery of healthcare services to Latino communities nationwide.

The Task Force's main purpose is to identify prevalent Latino healthcare issues and formulate effective strategies and action plans; and determine legislative, resource and other barriers that could negatively impact strategies and action plans. Task Force members will work to ensure fulfillment of the organization's Charter and will provide a final recommendation to the President and Congressional leaders.

According to Valdez, "Dr. Pejman Salimpour's distinguished career and accomplishments on behalf of Latinos will add great depth and insight to the final recommendations to President Bush and Congressional leaders. We look forward to the opportunity of closely working with him."

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Latino Americans represent 13.7% of the total U.S. population, and it is reported that by the year 2050, 24% of the population will be Latino (U.S. Census Bureau, September 2004). As the Latino population increases, it is important that healthcare providers and systems recognize the health needs and behaviors of the Latino community.

“I am deeply honored by this appointment,” commented Dr. Salimpour. “NexCare Collaborative has been very committed to assisting the Latino community, particularly in the area of helping parents obtain health insurance for their children. A major part of our success is because of our strong partnership with Telemundo television in Los Angeles, Channel 52. Their weekly, remote newscasts from our Call Center have helped spread the message of the importance of health insurance and other key healthcare issues to Southern California’s Latino population. We have assisted in the enrollment of more than 18,000 children in health insurance programs in just the past two years and we will continue these efforts. The formation of this Task Force is a great opportunity for America’s Latino population and I am eager to contribute in any way I can,” Salimpour continued.

In particular, accessing and receiving healthcare is a major problem and the availability of healthcare remains divided along social, economic and ethnic lines. About 30% of Latino Americans lack a usual source of healthcare, compared with less than 16% of Whites (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality). The percentages of uninsured Latinos are particularly high in Texas, Arizona, California, Florida, New York and New Jersey (Source: The California HealthCare Foundation, “Snapshot California’s Uninsured 2004”). The lack of insurance significantly impacts one’s ability to receive benefits of preventative care, such as cancer screenings, diabetes education and smoking cessation. Ultimately, many Latinos suffer from complications due to their chronic disease states.

More details regarding the National Latino HealthCare Task Force will be announced soon.

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NexCare Collaborative is a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit organization that serves the healthcare and social service needs of individuals and organizations through its comprehensive, professional Call Center, Web site and resource databases. Its Advisory Board is composed of numerous collaborators, including the National Institutes of Health, National Library of Medicine, the UCLA School of Public Health, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services, the Los Angeles County Medical Association, Shriners Hospital for Children and the Los Angeles County Office of Education.