

# Meet Christopher Bencomo, MD . . .

As the youngest of five kids in a Mexican-American family, Dr. Bencomo was the first to graduate from college, though the path there was not straightforward. While he did well in high school, counselors offered little in terms of career guidance. When he didn't find direction in community college either, he left to continue the supermarket job he had held since high school. Two years later, he felt compelled to return to college. Upon enrolling at California State University (CSU), Fresno, his childhood interest in biology was rekindled, and he discovered the Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP). With the support of HCOP, Dr. Bencomo was accepted to Harvard Medical School and completed a Master's degree in public policy at the prestigious JFK School of Government. After residency training at UCLA, Dr. Bencomo returned to Fresno to practice as an obstetrician/gynecologist, working with a historically underserved population of mostly poor, Spanish-speaking, immigrant women. Today, he also teaches and supervises residents. And Dr. Bencomo is still active in HCOP, a true role model of success for students dreaming like he once did.



*“I remain active in HCOP, for many times I see myself in the faces of young students – students who come from backgrounds such as my own, where becoming a physician is like reaching for the stars.”*

## About the Program

- HCOP is authorized under Title VII of the Public Health Service Act. Together with the Centers of Excellence (COE), HCOPs function to increase the representation of minority and disadvantaged students in the health professions.
- The CSU, Fresno HCOP offers assistance and resources to help students become competitive applicants for medical, dental, pharmacy, physical therapy, and other health/allied health professional schools and graduate programs.
- The HCOP office also serves as a hub from which other academic programs are conducted, including a Hispanic COE.
- More information on the Fresno HCOP activities is available on the program website:

<http://hcop.csufresno.edu/>

## According to Dr. Bencomo . . .

A whole new world opened up to me through conferences, field trips, and role models provided by HCOP. It was through HCOP that the medical profession became a reality – the program offered constant encouragement and support for students who traditionally would have not entertained the idea of a career in medicine.

I believe the program continues to provide students with excellent opportunities to reach their full potential. I remain active in HCOP, for many times I see myself in the faces of young students to whom I speak - students who come from backgrounds such as my own, where becoming a physician is like reaching for the stars. I hope that I serve as a role model through my own academic experiences that the study of medicine and the ability to contribute to your community is within their reach with the appropriate support and assistance. In our rural San Joaquin Valley, many of these former HCOP students have returned to their communities to work with underserved populations and provide much needed medical care and role models for our youth.



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