

Meet Adriana Padilla, MD . . .

As the daughter of a monolingual, Spanish speaking mother, Dr. Padilla recalls serving as translator between physicians and her mother. Watching with frustration as her mother tried to navigate a complicated health care system, Dr. Padilla vowed that she would work to improve the system. Growing up, she earned solid scores in school, but lacked guidance and encouragement toward higher education. Her parents were supportive, but couldn't offer much in terms of academic advice. It was then that the Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP) entered Dr. Padilla's life. Through the various activities, she gained the confidence to pursue a career in the health professions and fulfill her academic potential. Today, her professional positions include Associate Clinical Professor of Family and Community Medicine and Director of Undergraduate Medical Education at the Fresno campus of the University of California, San Francisco. A leader, she is a regional board representative for the California Academy of Family Physicians, and serves as a board member for United Health Centers, a federally qualified health center. Dr. Padilla is also actively involved in activities to improve the health status of urban and rural Latinos.



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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. Padilla . . .

I excelled in science and math but was never encouraged to consider either graduate studies or professional school, like medicine. My parents were always supportive of my education, but for lack of education on their part, were unable to guide me in this direction. I came upon an organization in college, HCOP, and there I was able to stretch my mind to think of medicine as a career. With HCOP's help and assistance, I was able to experience summer enrichment programs like the Harvard Summer Premed program, as well as other activities and supported experiences that gave me the confidence and knowledge to think, "Wow, I can do this!"

Another life event that confirmed my desire to become a physician was the struggles and uncertainties of my mom's experiences with her health and the health care system. Because my mom is monolingual Spanish speaking, I was always the family member that translated for her during her challenges with her health. The difficulties that I saw my mom go through were difficulties of language and sophistication of the health care system. The system can be such an intimidating process. I promised myself that I would and could make a difference.



For more information, contact: **Erica Froyd** (efroyd@aamc.org) or **Tannaz Rasouli** (trasouli@aamc.org)

Association of American Medical Colleges, Office of Governmental Relations

2450 N Street NW • Washington, DC 20037 • Ph: 202.828.0525 • Fax: 202.862.6218

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