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PRESS RELEASE

HOPE and BWOPA-TILE Report Reveals Barriers and Solutions for Black Women and Latinas in California's Healthcare Workforce

Los Angeles, CA (March 11, 2026) - A new report released today by Hispanas Organized for Political Equality (HOPE) and Black Women Organized for Political Action (BWOPA-TILE), *Pathways and Priorities in California's Healthcare Workforce: Insights from Black Women and Latinas*, draws on the experiences of more than 800 Black women and Latinas across California.

Despite representing a significant share of the population, Black women and Latinas remain markedly underrepresented in healthcare professions—holding as few as 2-16% of key roles depending on the field. The report examines barriers to entry, advancement, and leadership in healthcare careers while outlining actionable solutions to strengthen and sustain California's healthcare workforce. Building on previous research on mental and maternal healthcare access for Black women and Latinas, HOPE and BWOPA-TILE continue to advance efforts that expand opportunity for all and improve quality of life, starting with healthcare.

California faces a growing healthcare workforce shortage, reflecting a broader national challenge. The Association of American Medical Colleges projects the United States could face a shortage of more than 85,000 physicians by 2036. Within this context, Black women and Latinas remain dramatically underrepresented across the healthcare workforce pipeline. Latinos make up 40% of California's population but hold just 10-16% of key healthcare roles, while Black Californians, 5.3% of the population, occupy only 2-4% of midwifery roles and 3-3.9% of physician positions. Rising education costs, student debt, limited program access, scarce mentorship, and caregiving responsibilities create persistent barriers. Expanding opportunities for these professionals strengthens their career pathways, helps close critical workforce gaps, and improves health outcomes for communities across California.

"California stands at a pivotal moment as healthcare workforce shortages intensify and demand for care continues to grow. This research comes at a critical time, elevating the voices and lived experiences of Black women and Latinas who are eager to serve in these essential roles," said Helen Iris Torres, CEO of HOPE. "By listening to their insights and acting on the solutions they have identified, we have a clear pathway to strengthen the healthcare workforce and improve health outcomes for communities across our state."

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“This research makes clear that Black women and Latinas see healthcare careers as meaningful pathways to serve their communities and achieve economic mobility – yet the systems designed to support them are not keeping pace,” shared LaNiece Jones, State Executive Director of BWOPA-TILE. “Removing systemic economic barriers, expanding accessible training pathways, and strengthening workplace supports are essential to closing representation gaps. When we invest in their success, we strengthen families, communities, and California’s healthcare system as a whole.”

The report identifies the following key findings:

- **Financial pressures limit career advancement:** Nearly all respondents cited the rising cost of living (98%) and housing affordability (95%) as major obstacles. Four in ten reported that reductions in financial aid (40%) or recent job loss (41%) negatively impacted their career pursuits.
- **Mentorship gaps impede workforce entry:** Over half (56%) reported being discouraged from pursuing a career by family, teachers, or counselors, and only 49% received encouragement to pursue healthcare professions.
- **Healthcare careers are valued yet challenging:** While 80% consider healthcare jobs highly important to their communities and 85% agree that pursuing a career in healthcare is a solid and stable career pathway, 69% describe healthcare careers as very stressful and emotionally taxing.
- **Practical solutions are clear:** Respondents highlighted the need for hands-on learning (92%), flexible class and internship schedules (92%), and financial supports that cover childcare and transportation (90%).
- **Pipeline priorities are clearly defined:** Respondents identified top strategies for strengthening the pathway of Black women and Latinas into healthcare careers, including expanding financial aid and loan forgiveness (79%), increasing affordable transfer pathways and health degree programs (74%), improving workplace conditions and supports (74%), expanding early STEM and health exposure (73%), and increasing paid healthcare internships (72%).

Behind these numbers are women navigating financial pressures, family responsibilities, and limited opportunities. Their experiences highlight the supports needed to succeed in healthcare careers: reducing economic barriers, expanding accessible education-to-career pathways, and providing mentorship and paid training. Centering their insights ensures solutions respond to the real challenges Black women and Latinas face in the workforce.

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HOPE and BWOPA-TILE urge policymakers, educators, healthcare employers, and philanthropy leaders to act on these findings to strengthen California's healthcare workforce pipeline.

The *Pathways and Priorities in California's Healthcare Workforce: Insights from Black Women and Latinas* report is based on qualitative and quantitative research, including two online focus groups and a survey of 800 Black women and Latinas ages 18-29 conducted in November 2025 by EVITARUS, a public opinion research and strategic consulting firm. This report is the third in a multi-year initiative led by HOPE and BWOPA-TILE to identify strategies that expand healthcare opportunities and improve outcomes for Black women and Latinas. Previous reports in the series examined equity in [mental healthcare](#) and [maternal healthcare](#).

About HOPE

Hispanas Organized for Political Equality (HOPE)[®] is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization committed to ensuring political and economic parity for Latinas through leadership development, advocacy, and education—strengthening all communities and advancing the status of women. HOPE prepares and supports Latinas as civic leaders while providing inclusive leadership opportunities open to all who want to learn from the Latina perspective.

HOPE advances civic education, fosters community leadership, and advocates for fair and informed policy solutions that expand opportunity for every community. For more than 35 years, HOPE's innovative programs have trained and inspired over 65,000 participants nationwide, while our public education and advocacy efforts have reached millions more. To learn more, visit www.latinas.org.

About BWOPA-TILE

Black Women Organized for Political Action (BWOPA) is a statewide movement committed to building Black women's political power and advancing policy solutions that improve conditions for Black communities across California. BWOPA activates, mobilizes, and equips Black women through civic engagement, public policy advocacy, and strategic leadership development to ensure representation at local, state, and national decision-making tables.

The organization's training arm, **Training Institute for Leadership Enrichment (TILE)**, develops and supports the next generation of Black women leaders with the skills,

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strategy, and confidence to serve in public office, on boards and commissions, and in executive leadership roles. Learn more at www.bwopatitleads.org.

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