

## **Equality is not enough; Advocating for Health Equity for First-Generation Low-Income (FLI) Students at Stanford School of Medicine: A Community Health Project**

Kayla R. Kulhanek; Margarita Ramirez Silva, MPH; Livier Camarena Sanchez; Shayena Shah; Felipe D. Perez, MD, FAAP; Reena Thomas, MD, PhD; and Mijiza Sanchez-Guzman, MPA, EdD

### **COMMUNITY PARTNER**

Stanford University Minority Medical Alliance (SUMMA)

### **ABSTRACT**

**Objective:** To improve the physical and mental health outcomes of first-generation low-income (FLI) students at Stanford Medicine by advocating for equity to support their unique needs.

**Background:** FLI@SMS creates an inclusive community and works to improve access to resources and networks to support and empower first-generation and/or low-income students at Stanford Medicine. The organization aims to increase the representation of FLI individuals in medicine to enable innovation and improvements in healthcare delivery and culture to provide better care for diverse patient populations.

**Methods:** A retrospective cohort study through semi-structured written and live interviews with SOM faculty, administration, and FLI students was conducted to identify challenges faced by FLI students, followed by partnership with SUMMA to build a network of support and advocacy.

**Results:** Interview data was presented to SOM leadership, resulting in several initiatives under development, including increased financial aid and scholarship opportunities, expanded mentorship and networking programs, and additional resources for academic and professional development. The project has helped raise awareness of unique challenges faced by FLI students, both within Stanford and beyond.

**Conclusion:** The advocacy efforts of this community health project have helped to improve the physical and mental health outcomes of Stanford Medicine FLI students by addressing their unique needs and promoting greater access to resources and support services. This project elucidates the importance of community-driven initiatives to promote health equity and improve population health outcomes.

*Funding provided by SUMMA*