

News Release

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For Immediate Release

CareFirst Teams with Hispanic College Fund

117 Maryland High School Students Participate in College, Career Symposium

Towson, Maryland (July 19, 2010) — Last year, 70.1 percent of U.S. high school graduates enrolled in college (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics). Among Hispanic students, the number was significantly less, only 59.3 percent. CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield (CareFirst), throughout its market region, has donated \$100,000 in 2010 to fund programs that help Hispanic students pursue college degrees and careers in health care. This July, the Hispanic College Fund and CareFirst brought 117 Maryland Hispanic high school students to the campus of Towson University for an innovative series of workshops geared to inspire the students to overcome cultural disparities and find success in college and professional employment.

“We had 19 volunteers from CareFirst serve as mentors and speak with the students. The experience was rewarding for our team as well as the students,” said Maria Harris Tildon, CareFirst’s Senior Vice President of Public Policy and Community Affairs. “Ninety percent of students participating in these workshops go on to attend college, an amazing success rate in reaching these kids and helping them advance toward their ambitions.”



Lyliam Vasquez, a graphic designer for CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield, who grew up in Colombia, explains to students how speaking more than one language can help increase career opportunities. (Photo by John O'Donnell)

The Hispanic Youth Symposium is a four-day, three-night college campus experience, enabling promising high school juniors and sophomores to attend workshops that stress academic achievement, career choices, community service and civic responsibility. Small groups of students team with mentors from the business community who offer encouragement and advice on how to succeed in both the classroom and the boardroom. Every few minutes, the mentors move to a new table of students, until all of the students have an opportunity to hear their insights and advice.

“Since we began our partnership with CareFirst over five years ago, they have been a steadfast supporter of our students’ educational and professional development,” said Walter Nagel, Chairman of the Board of the Hispanic College Fund. “We are grateful that CareFirst shares our vision of a future America where young Hispanics are prepared and motivated to pursue challenging careers.”

Thus far in 2010, the Hispanic College Fund has awarded more than \$1.1 million in scholarships to nearly 400 of the most deserving and talented Hispanic students in the nation. The average grade point average of a 2010 scholarship winner is 3.5 and the median household income is \$30,200. In 2009, the Hispanic College Fund awarded more than \$2 million in scholarships to 600 students. The average grade point average of a 2009 scholarship winner was 3.5 and the median household income was \$22,000. Since 1993, the Hispanic College Fund Scholarship Program has awarded nearly 5,000 scholarships for more than \$13 million.

The Hispanic College Fund has three objectives:

- Increase the number of students who graduate from a four-year college or university
- Increase the number of students who pursue careers in health care, business, law, science, technology, engineering or math
- Increase the number of students who serve as volunteers and leaders in their communities

In its 73rd year of service, CareFirst, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, is a not-for-profit health care company which, through its affiliates and subsidiaries, offers a comprehensive portfolio of health insurance products and administrative services to nearly 3.4 million individuals and groups in Maryland, the District of Columbia and Northern Virginia. Through its [CareFirst Commitment](#) initiative and other public mission activities, CareFirst supports efforts to increase the accessibility, affordability, safety and quality of health care throughout its market areas. To learn more about CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield, visit our Web site at:

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