



## YOUR VOICE

Education, support and collaborative knowledge development  
to advance cultural competence in health care

### Background and Goals

Since 1997, the mission of DiversityRx has been to inform, educate and support a growing field of health care providers, policymakers, researchers and advocates working to design and implement health services that are responsive to the cultural and linguistic differences presented by minority, immigrant, and indigenous communities. The mission of DiversityRx is currently carried out through a website, a listserv, and as a co-producer of a biennial national conference series.

Based on recently conducted interviews, focus groups, and surveys with our key constituency, we propose to enhance our core work by offering new opportunities to stay informed about developments in the field and to make connections with colleagues for the purpose of sharing information, resources and supporting each others' work. We will do this by organizing peer learning networks on specific topics; hosting an agenda of virtual learning events (webinars and mini-conferences), and enhancing our website to offer professional networking and user-friendly resource database tools. Our goal is to bridge distance and institutional isolation, to unearth the practice innovations and challenges faced by those on the front lines, and to share those experiences broadly for both mutual support and for collectively advancing the field, thereby improving the quality of care received by culturally diverse populations.

Our target audience includes front-line health care professionals, community advocates, policymakers at all levels, academics, and the constituencies of national health care organizations, with a core of participants and experts from California, complemented by others from around the country. The intention is to involve the community directly in identifying critical topics of interest for each activity, and to create a bottom-up peer-learning and knowledge development platform where members of this community interact with and educate each other.

DiversityRx is a project of the Tides Center.  
The Your Voice Initiative is funded by The California Endowment

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Upon completion of this project, we expect that several thousand health professionals working in this area will have participated in a learning network or virtual learning event, or visited the DiversityRx.org website and report knowledge gains and professional support. The ongoing and virtual nature of the project activities should demonstrate an increase in the ability to stay up-to-date on developments in the field and participate in collaborative problem-solving in a cost-effective manner. In an effort to leverage expertise and other program efforts, this project will partner with other policy, advocacy, and professional efforts to strengthen cultural and linguistic competency capacity. This will allow us to maximize the awareness and participation in our activities, keep up with emerging needs, and influence the broader field.

## **Activities**

This initiative of DiversityRx will focus on three main activities: peer learning communities; virtual learning opportunities; and improvements to the DiversityRx website.

- The peer learning communities will offer small groups (12-20 participants) of professional colleagues the opportunity to ‘meet’ monthly through teleconference or virtual learning platforms to discuss common practice challenges and share information about strategies and resources. This will be supported by a listserv for ongoing dialogue between meetings and a wiki where the information base developed over the course of the project will be documented for use by others. We will also host several less-structured peer networks that will interact through a listserv on specific themes.
- The virtual learning agenda will feature a program of 90 minute – 3 hour presentations and mini-conferences on a variety of practice, research and policy related cultural competence topics. Using on-line surveys, the prospective audience will prioritize session themes, and presenters will be identified through our advisory committee and a call for proposals. These events will be hosted and archived on the DiversityRx website, and we will also feature a calendar of similar learning opportunities offered by other organizations in the field.
- The DiversityRx website will be updated with a selection of Web 2.0 and database tools to allow users to interact with each other professionally, contribute content related to organizations and resources they are involved with, and use the site as a gateway to information on other websites.

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### Glossary of Project Activities

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#### Peer Learning Communities

**Peer Learning Groups:** communities of 12-20 professionals who want to engage with, learn from and support each other around an issue of common interest over the course of a year. Participants will be selected through a formal application process, and commit to:

- actively participating in monthly teleconferences/online meetings (60-90 minutes per month)
- taking the lead in presenting a theme or topic from their own experience during one of the monthly meetings
- participating in listserv/blog discussions between meetings
- sharing information, case examples, tools, resources, institutional documents, commentaries for the collaborative knowledge vault

**Peer Learning Networks:** communities of 50-100 professionals interested in learning, sharing information, and supporting each other around a common theme. Individuals are selected through a simple application process, and commit to participate actively over the course of a year. Network activities will be determined by consensus of the network moderator, participants and the Your Voice project team, and may include:

- Communication through a members-only listserv
- Ongoing discussion of real-life situations, resource needs, recommendations
- Collaborative problem solving
- Periodic online discussion forums with optional readings or resource materials
- Occasional conference calls/webinars
- Participation of outside content experts

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## **Virtual Learning Events**

**Webinars:** 60-90 minute presentations featuring 1-3 speakers on a topic. Presenters make PPT presentations over an internet-based platform that allows participants to view slides and listen to the speaker. After the presentations, the moderator will manage Q&A and discussion among the presenters and participants.

**Webconferences:** Using the same format and technology as the webinars, webconferences will last from 3-5 hours, featuring several topics and multiple presenters.

**Online forums:** Using a listserv email discussion group as the platform, an invited expert will present a topic (through a brief written presentation, suggested readings) and pose questions to the listserv community. Community members will email comments and other questions and answers to the listserv, creating a discussion between the presenter and participants over the course of a week. Forums may be one-time events (one expert for one week), or a series of related topics over the course of 3-6 weeks.

## **DiversityRx enhancements**

**Public users:** Casual visitors to the website can browse all the content, sign up for updates, sign up for a listserv, participate in webinars and other events, email resources to themselves or others, and use social bookmarking tools like Digg and Del.icio.us to share or save useful resources.

**Registered users:** Individuals can sign up to be registered users by providing their name and stating their interest in cross cultural health care. Project staff will screen applications to filter out spammers and maintain the integrity of the community. Registered users can create an individual and organizational profiles, view the profiles of other registered users, add resource documents, save resources to a personal folder, and comment on resources or blogs

**Interactive database:** A searchable database of individual profiles of registered users, organizational profiles, and resources.

**Individual profiles:** registered users can create profiles with information about themselves and their expertise and work activities related to cross cultural health care. They can also search for and view the profiles of other registered users

**Organizational profiles:** organizations involved in cross cultural health care can create profiles of their organizations expertise and resources. These can be viewed by all website users.

**Resource documents:** individuals and organizations can create documents that describe programs, tools, policies, and publications related to cross cultural health care.

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Registered users can comment on these resources, and the resources can be viewed by all website users.

**Blogs** (generic definition): an online feature where one or more people write a regular posting, usually with links to other websites (news items, commentaries, etc) and readers can add (and read) related comments directly below each posting. On the DiversityRx website, individuals must register as members in order to make comments on blogs.

**Editor's Blog:** A blog featuring news, resources and commentaries by the DiversityRx editor. Updated 1-2 times monthly.

**Expert Blog:** A blog featuring news, resources and commentaries written on a rotating basis by members of the project advisory groups, and invited experts. Updated 1-2 times monthly. Members of the advisory groups are invited to post as frequently as they wish.

**Q&A Blog:** The public is invited to submit questions about clinical, administrative, practical, and ethical concerns related to the culturally competent health services. Questions will be answered by the editor or members of the Expert Advisory Group, with additional comments by registered members of DiversityRx.

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