



EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE
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\$4 Million Program Announced Supporting Future Leaders in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Fields

Alliance/Merck Ciencia Hispanic Scholars Program Awards 10 Alliance/Merck Ciencia Scholar Awards and 25 Ciencia National Scholarships to Hispanic Students

WASHINGTON, DC – Ten remarkable Hispanic students beginning their college careers this month were announced today as the first group of Alliance/Merck *Ciencia* Scholars.

According to Dr. Jane L. Delgado, President and CEO of the National Alliance for Hispanic Health, “These students will redefine the frontiers of science. I have no doubt they will be the next generation of Nobel prize winners, lab directors, professors, and health professionals leading scientific discovery that improves our health and well-being.” Dr. Delgado also announced that the applications for the next class of *Ciencia* Scholars opened up today. Interested students can apply online at www.alliancescholars.org.

Each Alliance/Merck *Ciencia* Scholar recipient announced today will major in a STEM field and will receive up to \$42,500 in college scholarship and summer research internship support over the next four years. In addition, the Alliance announced that 25 Hispanic college students majoring in a STEM field are recipients of a \$2,000 *Ciencia* National Scholarship to help them complete their education.

The *Ciencia* Scholars and National Scholarship recipients are remarkable with aspirations that range from saving coastal environments to landing on Pluto. Among their stories:

- A grandmother’s uncontrolled diabetes motivates a student’s commitment to science and a career path in endocrinology;
- A father hopes to inspire his children by pursuing an education in engineering after an on-the-job injury prevents him from doing the heavy physical labor he once did;
- A student learns to master English and then masters the language of computers;
- A student moves from the Bunsen burner in the lab to fighting forest fires in California’s national parks;

- A chance discovery of a book about the brain leads to a decision to study neuroscience and a dream of helping to build libraries for others to discover new knowledge;
- An engineering student puts his talents to work developing music-writing software offered on free computers to children;
- Living with hemophilia, a young man seeks a career in science and dreams of helping to find cures for hereditary blood disease;
- A student growing up in Colombia who marveled at the majesty of a bridge with his mother, , dreams of helping to engineer his own marvel one day for his mother to see; and
- A young woman honors her grandfather's reliance on the ocean's bounty by conducting research to save coastal ecosystems and better understand plant life.

These are just a few of the stories of the Alliance/Merck *Ciencia* Scholar Award and National Scholarship recipients announced today (please see attached bios). The program is made possible by a \$4 million grant from The Merck Company Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the research-based pharmaceutical company Merck & Co., Inc. This is the largest grant to date that The Merck Company Foundation has made to the field of Hispanic education. The Alliance, along with its supporting arm, the Health Foundation for the Americas, is partnering with the Merck Institute for Science Education (MISE) to implement the program.

According to Dr. Carlo Parravano, executive director of MISE, "The Merck Institute's ultimate goal is to improve student performance and participation in science. With our investment, these scholarships, summer lab experiences, and mentorship opportunities can increase Hispanic college graduation rates in STEM fields. The effort is critical to achieving an inclusive science community and fostering the next generation of discovery."

Today's announcement marked the first of five groups of *Ciencia* Scholars and students. Over the next five years, the program will provide a total of 50 promising Hispanic high school students from Brownsville, TX; Elizabeth, NJ; and Los Angeles, CA with up to \$42,500 in college scholarships and summer research internship support to pursue STEM degrees (up to \$20,000 in scholarship, and up to \$22,500 in internship support). The program will also feature mentorship opportunities and an annual *Ciencia* Scholars symposium. In addition, over the next five years, a total of 125 Hispanic college students with a declared major in a STEM field will receive \$2,000 scholarships. More information is available at www.AllianceScholars.org.

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About the National Alliance for Hispanic Health

The National Alliance for Hispanic Health (the Alliance) is the nation's foremost science-based source of information and trusted advocate for Hispanic health and well-being. The Alliance represents thousands of Hispanic health providers across the nation and provides services to more than 15 million annually, making a daily difference in the lives of Hispanic communities and families. For more information, call the Alliance's *Su Familia* National Hispanic Family Health Helpline at 1-866-783-2645 or visit www.hispanichealth.org.

About the Health Foundation for the Americas

The Health Foundation for the Americas (HFA) is the support organization for the National Alliance for Hispanic Health. HFA encourages philanthropy that invests in the human and social capital of community-based organizations that deliver innovative solutions for health and well-being in the Americas. For more information, visit www.healthyamericas.org.

About the Merck Institute for Science Education

Created in 1993, the Merck Institute for Science Education (MISE), an award-winning program, improves science education and raises the levels of science performance for students from kindergarten through 12th grade. MISE is funded through a 15-year, \$38 million commitment from the Merck Company Foundation. Now expanded to include college and graduate-level education, MISE works to build capacity in the biomedical sciences through partnerships with higher education institutions. For more information, visit www.mise.org.

About the Merck Company Foundation

The Merck Company Foundation is a U.S.-based, private, charitable foundation. Established in 1957 by the global research-driven pharmaceutical company Merck & Co. Inc., the Foundation is funded entirely by the Company and is Merck's chief source of funding support to qualified, non-profit, charitable organizations. Since its inception, the Merck Company Foundation contributed more than \$524 million to support important initiatives that address societal needs consistent with Merck's overall mission to enhance the health and well-being of people around the world. For more information, visit www.merckcompanyfoundation.org.