

## *Press Release*

# **At a recent symposium sponsored by PAHO, the regional work on diversity for the Decade of Human Resources for Health was moved forward**

*At the end of May, experts from several countries participated in an international symposium on strategies to diversify human resources in health services. The event advanced the work of the “Decade of Human Resources for Health,” a 10-year period, initiated in 2006, in which there will be worldwide efforts by key actors from public and private institutions to meet specific needs of the health workforce.*

**Washington, D.C., 14 June 2006 (PAHO)** — The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) held a symposium in Washington, DC at the end of May, as part of the Global Health Council’s 2006 Annual Conference. The symposium focused on access to health care through the diversification of human resources in health services.

Participants at the PAHO-sponsored symposium agreed that four of the most important challenges facing the Region of the Americas and the rest of the world, revolved around the concepts of management and technical developments in areas of recruitment, retention of personnel, monitoring and reaching quality health services, as well as standardization of admission requirements for training programs, certification of skills and abilities, and accreditation of current and future programs.

### **The many faces of diversity**

A symposium final report observed that the many faces of diversity in human resources for health include urban and rural communities, ethnic and linguistic minorities, and populations and economically disparate geographic areas.

"These diversity variables affect access to the attention... In dealing with the obstacles to access, the solution has to consider both socioeconomic and ethnic differences in the composition of the work force and in the populations which they serve," as indicated in the conclusions of the cited report.

The symposium panelists presented testimonies and model case studies, sharing experiences with the nearly 100 participants in the audience, on what and how the issue of diversity of human resources is being dealt with in their respective institutions or health centers.