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Media contact: Alison MacLeod, (916)225-6317

UCLA Pilot Program Brings Biomedical Sciences Curriculum to Three Los Angeles High Schools

***Partnership with CA Society of Anesthesiologists and Project Lead the Way Aims to Inspire
and Encourage Future Physicians and Healthcare Providers***

Los Angeles, CA (October 2, 2017) - The California Society of Anesthesiologists (CSA) has teamed up with the national nonprofit Project Lead the Way to help build our future healthcare workforce by bringing a new biomedical sciences curriculum into three Los Angeles area high schools: Venice High School, El Segundo High School and GALA – the Girls Academic Leadership Academy, which is located on the campus of L.A. High. This exciting project will bring together specially trained teachers, eager students, and physician residents from UCLA to help bring real world biomedical skills and application into LA classrooms.

This new program is the result of a partnership between the California Society of Anesthesiologists; Project Lead the Way; the Department of Anesthesiology at the Ronald Reagan/UCLA Medical Center; and the office of Assemblymember Sebastian Ridley-Thomas. It will enable participating schools to bring rigorous, project-based biomedical sciences curriculum into the classroom and offer hands-on learning to encourage the next generation of health care providers. CSA hopes to expand the program at additional schools throughout California, in partnership with anesthesiology resident programs at Stanford, USC, UC Davis and elsewhere.

Encouraging future physicians and health care workers addresses a national priority. According to an April, 2016 report by the Association of American Medical Colleges, the United States will face a shortage of physicians over the next decade. The projections show a shortage ranging between 61,700 and 94,700, with a significant shortage showing among many surgical specialties.

Project partners will come together for a **launch event at Venice High School on Thursday October 5th from 10am-1pm**. The event will include remarks from Assemblymember Sebastian Ridley-Thomas; CSA President Karen Sibert, MD; Bob Bachmeier from Project Lead the Way; as well as participating teachers and students.

“We at CSA are truly committed to the future of our profession,” said Karen Sibert, MD, CSA President and Director of Communications at UCLA Dept. of Anesthesiology and Perioperative Medicine. “In order to support the future of anesthesiology, encourage our patient safety values, and foster a strong health care system overall, we must also dedicate ourselves to the success of today’s students – and the communities in which they live. The Project Lead the Way Biomedical Sciences curriculum is an ideal way for us as physicians to lend a helping hand to the next generation.”

"I am thrilled to see this program brought to reality in my district," said Assemblymember Sebastian Ridley-Thomas. "This is a strategic way to inspire and empower students from a diversity of backgrounds with high quality public education, while filling our healthcare workforce pipeline with young people who are passionate and have practical skills."

According to the California Healthcare Foundation, our state's health care industry employed more than 1.4 million people in 2015, and "An aging population, population growth, and federal health reform will likely contribute to increased workforce demand." California must pursue a variety of strategies to address the skills gap and build up its future workforce.

"We are grateful to welcome this exciting partnership to our schools," said Fonna Bishop, an instructional director in L.A. Unified's western region. "Enabling our students to receive hands-on application from anesthesiology residents at UCLA is a terrific example of the type of meaningful and relevant educational experiences we seek to offer our students."

"Our PLTW students at El Segundo High School are thrilled to interact with the anesthesiology residents from UCLA," said Dr. Melissa Moore, Superintendent of El Segundo Unified. "Working side by side with a young, enthusiastic physician - even in a classroom, promotes relevant learning and our students can more easily imagine themselves in a healthcare career."

The pilot program is based on the unique collaboration of its key partners: CSA provides overall program coordination and underwrites the cost of annual teacher training; PLTW provides the curriculum and offers comprehensive professional development during the summer; the Anesthesiology Dept. at UCLA coordinates classroom presentations by physician residents and will host a field trip for each program at its Simulation Center; and Assemblymember Ridley-Thomas and his staff provide broad-based community and public support.

According to the Project Lead the Way website, the Project Lead the Way curriculum will help transform the classroom experience for students: "Whether discovering new cancer treatments or teaching healthy lifestyle choices to their communities, today's biomedical science professionals are tackling big challenges to make the world a better place. PLTW Biomedical Science students are taking on these same real-world challenges – and they're doing it before they even graduate from high school. Working with the same tools used by professionals in hospitals and labs, students engage in compelling, hands-on activities and work together to find solutions to problems. Students take from the courses in-demand knowledge and skills they will use in high school and for the rest of their lives, on any career path they take." For more information, visit www.pltw.org/our-programs/pltw-biomedical-science

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