

Horacio Murillo

2005-2006 AAAS Congressional Fellow

U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

Currently a resident in diagnostic radiology and research in prostate and breast cancer at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio.

The lack of Hispanic leadership in health policy spurred Horacio Murillo into action. “I saw a need for more Hispanics with health policy skills, so I took it upon myself to build such skills,” he says. While completing his MD-PhD at the Mayo Clinic College of Medicine in Rochester, MN, he spent fall 2003 in Washington, DC, serving as a Christine Mirzayan Science & Technology Policy Graduate Fellow at the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies.

Seeking a more in-depth policy experience, Horacio applied for one of two AAAS Congressional Science and Engineering Fellowships. He obtained a placement in the health policy office of Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA), then the ranking member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee.

There, Horacio focused primarily on issues related to healthcare disparities, quality, and professions. His main duties involved monitoring legislative debates, news and policy developments, and bill introductions, as well as writing policy briefings and memos.

Horacio also met with constituents, advocacy groups, and other Senate staff members to write and negotiate legislation. He credits these meetings with enhancing his professional network and improving his knowledge of and insight into the federal legislative process and federal agencies, such as the National Institutes of Health, the Food and Drug Administration, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“A lot of trust and credibility was established in the meetings,” he says. “I will continue to interact with many of these health professionals in the future.”

Horacio spent considerable effort writing a bill that focused on the privacy of electronic health records, and he contributed language to the Safe Drug Compounding Act of 2007. He also contributed to the Consumer Assurance of Radiologic Excellence Act of 2006, which was introduced in the Senate.

Originally from the Mexican state of Jalisco, Horacio is now active in academic medicine at the national level, researching health disparities involving Hispanic women and breast cancer. His long-term goals are to continue to influence policymaking and to advance the needs of Hispanics, academic medicine, and cancer research.

