"Be The Cure" In South Dakota

A column by Lt. Gov. **Matt Michels**

I currently serve as South Dakota's Lt. Governor, but I have had the opportunity to wear a lot of different "hats" throughout the years. Few have been as formative as my nurse "hat." Nursing exposed me to people from many different walks of life and taught me about compassion, as well as countless other life lessons. But, it also taught me about the

far-reaching impact of medical ailments and the importance of doing what we can, as a society, to confront those

Public health should be everyone's concern. Over the years, the development of new medicines has been vital in helping people live longer and health-ier lives. Clinical trials are the primary route by which patients can voluntarily participate in the drug development process, receive

access to unapproved investigational medicines and contribute to the collection of data necessary for Food and Drug Administration

(FDA) approval. Successful clinical trials require diverse and robust volunteer participation. It is important that people of all races understand the benefits of clinical trials. Different racial groups can be affected by different diseases and may respond differently to certain

kinds of medications. Unfortunately, minority groups are typically underrepresented in clinical trials, resulting in limited evidence for how effective such treatments may be for those individuals.

As Lt. Governor, I have the opportunity to participate in a bipartisan group called the National Lieutenant Governors Association (NLGA). This year the NLGA is starting a new program called "Be the Cure." The goal of the

program is to increase education and awareness among legislators, policymakers, patients and providers about the clinical trial process, specifically the need for participation of diverse patient populations.

South Dakota is home to people of many different backgrounds, and we need to work to continue advancing medicines that could help all of our state's residents. It is important that we all spread the word about

the need for diversity enrollment in clinical trials and the value and benefits of increased participation by underrepresented communities.

I encourage you visit the National Lt. Governors Association "Be the Cure" web site at www.nlga.us to learn more about the importance of clinical trials and increased participation by all.

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