



# *Redes En Acción*

*Cancer Awareness • Research • Training*  
[www.redesenaccion.org](http://www.redesenaccion.org)

Redes En Acción



## **Redes Report**



Report On  
**The Second Annual  
Redes En Acción  
National Steering Committee  
Meeting**

➔ August 15-17, 2001  
San Antonio, Texas



Report on  
**The 2nd Annual  
*Redes En Acción* National Steering Committee Meeting**  
 August 15-17, 2001 • San Antonio, Texas

**M**ore than 50 participants in the 2nd Annual *Redes En Acción* National Steering Committee Meeting engaged in two days of lively discussion and debate, heard several perspectives from keynote

speakers and panelists, and worked together to move the *Redes* Latino cancer awareness, research and training agenda forward. A report of the activities – in words and photos – is presented on the following pages.

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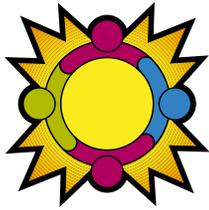


**Redes En Acción wishes to thank the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, a major sponsor of the 2nd Annual National Steering Committee Meeting.**



*Redes En Acción*: Cancer Awareness, Research and Training  
 is a Special Populations Network initiative of the National Cancer Institute.  
 NCI Grant No. UO 1 CA 86117-01





# REDES EN ACCIÓN

**R**edes En Acción: Cancer Awareness, Research and Training is a National Cancer Institute-funded initiative to combat cancer among Latinos. A multi-faceted approach to cancer prevention and control, *Redes En Acción* is building a nationwide network of community-based organizations, research institutions, government health agencies and the public. Core activities include promoting training and research opportunities for Latino students and researchers, generating research projects on key Latino cancer issues, and supporting cancer awareness activities within the Latino community. *Redes En Acción* represents one of 18 Special Populations Network (SPN) programs (but one of only five national programs) funded by NCI to create or implement cancer control, prevention, education, research and training programs in minority and underserved populations. The net effect of *Redes En Acción* activities is to bring a wide range of cancer issues as they impact Latinos to the forefront among cancer investigators, educators, program administrators and the public.

## National Steering Committee

The purpose of the *Redes En Acción* National Steering Committee (NSC) is to set program policy, provide guidance and review network-sponsored activities. As mandated by the National Cancer Institute, one-third of the NSC members have expertise in such fields as epidemiology, biostatistics, public health/education, sociology, medicine and nursing, while other members represent such disciplines as business, media and information systems. The diverse nature of the NSC is reflected by membership representation of academic institutions, federal and private entities, and various community-based organizations.

## Media coverage of the meeting

The 2nd annual meeting of the *Redes En Acción* National Steering Committee attracted extensive media coverage in San Antonio and South Texas.

U.S. Rep. Ciro Rodriguez, D-San Antonio, drew the most attention when he opened the conference August 15 with a speech to NSC members on economic and ethnic disparities in health care. Most news stories on the Congressman's speech also mentioned the *Redes En Acción* conference and its new public service announcement campaign designed to promote Latino participation in cancer studies.

Both English- and Spanish-language television and radio stations covered Congressman Rodriguez's speech and interviewed Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez, Principal Investigator of *Redes En Acción*.

The San Antonio Express-News, the major daily newspaper in South Texas, also covered the meeting and wrote extensively on the problem of attracting more Latinos as researchers and study participants.



Dr. Amelie Ramirez is interviewed by a San Antonio television station during the National Steering Committee meeting.

### AGENDA 2001

#### Wednesday, August 15, 2001

6:00 to 7:30 p.m. Welcome & Reception

#### Thursday, August 16, 2001

7:45 to 8:30 a.m. Continental Breakfast and Registration  
 8:30 to 9:00 a.m. Welcome: Goals of the Meeting  
 Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH, Principal Investigator, *Redes En Acción*  
 Ken Chu, PhD, Health Scientist Administrator, Center to Reduce Health Disparities, National Cancer Institute  
 9:00 to 9:30 a.m. Update on the Congressional Hispanic Caucus's Health Task Force  
 U.S. Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez, Honorary Chair, *Redes En Acción*  
 9:30 to 9:45 a.m. Break  
 9:45 to 10:45 a.m. Year in Review: Activities and Achievements:  
 • Overview of *Redes En Acción*  
 • Role of the National Steering Committee  
 • *Redes* Accomplishments  
 Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH  
 10:45 to 11:45 a.m. The *Redes En Acción* 2001 Latino Cancer Agenda: Priorities for Awareness, Research and Training  
 Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH  
 11:45 to Noon Group Photo Shoot  
 Noon to 1:15 p.m. Lunch  
 How *Redes En Acción* Can Actively Participate in National Cancer Dialogues and Initiatives  
 Armin D. Weinberg, PhD, Director, Chronic Disease Prevention and Control Research Center  
 Opportunities for Collaborations with Non-Profit Organizations Panel Discussion  
 Moderator: Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH  
 Diana D. Vaca, MPA, Diversity Project Manager, American Cancer Society  
 Jennifer Reseck-Segall, MPH, Education Division, Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation  
 Malcolm Williams, MPP, Senior Program Associate, Grantmakers in Health  
 Links with *Redes En Acción*: How Collaborations Take Shape  
 Panel Discussion  
 Moderator: Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH  
 Jeannette Noltenius, PhD, Executive Director, Latino Council on Alcohol and Tobacco  
 Jo Ann Ward, MPIT, Project Director, NCI Cancer Information Service  
 Jose Marti, MD, Co-Principal Investigator, *Redes* Northeast Regional Network Center  
 Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH, Chair, *Redes En Acción*: National Latino Genetic Community Consultation  
 3:00 to 3:15 p.m. Break  
 3:15 to 4:45 p.m. Research: Pilot Project Process Overview, Concept Paper Review  
 Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH  
 4:45 to 5:00 p.m. Public Education: The *Redes* Role in Latino Cancer Awareness  
 Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH  
 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. Reception & Dinner  
 Joining Forces to Raise Latino Cancer Awareness  
 Texas Representative Irma Rangel  
**Special Event** – National Premiere of the *Redes* Media PSA Campaign: Promoting Latino Participation in Cancer Clinical Trials  
 Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH

#### Friday, August 17, 2001

7:45 to 8:30 a.m. Continental Breakfast  
 8:30 to 9:00 a.m. The National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities: An Overview of the Center and Opportunities for Latino Research Collaborations with *Redes*  
 John Ruffin, PhD, Director, National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities  
 Developing Future Researchers  
 Panel Discussion  
 Moderator: Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH  
 Gregory A. Talavera, MD, MPH, Co-Principal Investigator, *Redes* Southwest Regional Network Center  
 Ernest Marquez, PhD, Chief, MBRS Branch, National Institute of General Medical Sciences  
 Martha A. Medrano, MD, MPH, *Redes* South Central Regional Network Center  
 Isabel C. Scarinci, PhD, MPH, Assistant Professor, The University of Memphis (From the perspective of a Latina breaking into the research field)  
 10:00 to 10:30 a.m. Recruiting and Retaining Latino Cancer Professionals  
 Francisco G. Cigarroa, MD, President, UT Health Science Center at San Antonio  
 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. *Redes* Town Hall Meeting: Thinking Outside the Box in Developing Latino Cancer Awareness, Research and Training Activities  
 Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH  
 11:30 a.m. Adjourn



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## *Charting a Course for the Future*



**A**fter two days of vigorous discourse, members of the National Steering Committee left their 2nd annual meeting with a new perspective on the objectives and strategies of *Redes En Acción*.

Over the course of the meeting, the **expectations for success** as viewed by the National Cancer Institute appeared to be altered somewhat, leaving room

for *Redes En Acción* to pursue not only the funding of high-level research grants, but also to focus on strategies to increase awareness in Latino communities nationwide and “fill the pipeline” of Latino cancer researchers. The initiative’s NCI liaison, Dr. Ken Chu, was on hand to help explain and explore these issues.

*Redes En Acción*’s focus on “filling the pipeline” with new investigators was emphasized by Dr. John Ruffin, director of the National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities at the National Institutes of Health, who warned that “the gap in the number of minority students graduating from institutions of higher education is widening – and that to me is unacceptable.”

*Redes En Acción* steering committee members explored new suggestions for mentoring less-experienced candidates in writing grants or research proposals to satisfy the formal goals of the five-year NCI Special Populations Network (SPN) initiative.

With one pilot project accepted from *Redes En Acción* by NCI for funding during the SPN initial cycle, the suggestions for new stewardship were welcome, since 10 new research proposals were under review by the NSC for the next funding cycle. The NSC conducted an initial review of these pilot project proposals at the meeting.

Preliminary results of another *Redes En Acción* research activity, a nationwide survey of key opinion leaders about cancer issues particularly pertinent to the Latino population, were presented during the meeting. Respondents, numbering more than 600, identified access to cancer screening and care as the primary cancer issue facing Latinos and ranked breast cancer as the number one cancer site of concern. The majority of those surveyed work with Latinos in cancer-related fields.

On the cancer awareness front, NSC members were introduced to two new tools – the public service announcement (PSA) campaign that has now been launched on both English- and Spanish-language television and radio stations and in newspapers nationwide, and the new *Redes En Acción* web site ([www.redesenaccion.org](http://www.redesenaccion.org)) that provides for internal organizational communication as well as a source of public information about *Redes En Acción* cancer awareness, research and training activities.

The PSA campaign, promoting Latino participation in cancer clinical trials, was unveiled at a premiere dinner, and Texas Rep. Irma Rangel provided the keynote address. Rep. Rangel, who is a breast and ovarian cancer survivor, underscored the need for increased public education efforts with regard to cancer in general – and cancer studies in particular – aimed at Latinos. TV spots shown during the Special Event Dinner have since been distributed to about 300 English- and Spanish-language television stations around the country.

As for the “training” aspect of *Redes En Acción*, Dr. Francisco Cigarroa, President of the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, provided a strong case for promoting efforts to increase the numbers of Latinos in all health and research professions. Dr. Cigarroa is the first Latino to head a health science center in the United States.

In addition, a panel discussion titled “Developing Future Researchers” offered still more evidence of the gaps in research participation and funding levels that exist between Latino and non-Hispanic white scientists, and the strong need to focus attention on every stage of the cancer research training pipeline.

NSC members also were introduced to Isabel C. Scarinci, PhD, University of Memphis Assistant Professor, who received the

inaugural *Ciro D. Rodriguez Cancer Career Development Award*. Dr. Scarinci spent three months working in San Antonio with *Redes En Acción* during a mini-sabbatical from her University of Memphis faculty post. *Redes En Acción* will continue to present the award to deserving junior faculty cancer researchers in the future.

A major emphasis of *Redes En Acción* is the development of new working relationships and coalitions, and a pair of panels addressed collaboration issues. The first, “Opportunities for Collaborations with Non-Profit Organizations,” included representatives from the American Cancer Society, Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation and Grantmakers in Health. The second, “Links with *Redes En Acción*: How Collaborations Take Shape,” provided examples of existing ongoing relationships with various organizations, including the NCI Cancer Information Service and Latino Council on Alcohol and Tobacco.

The two-day meeting adjourned with a “Town Hall Meeting: Thinking Outside the Box in Developing Latino Cancer Awareness, Research and Training Activities.” The purpose of the session – and the meeting as a whole – was to encourage and energize NSC members to explore creative avenues in furthering *Redes En Acción* goals.

**Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH**  
Principal Investigator,  
*Redes En Acción*

**PLEASE MARK  
YOUR CALENDARS**  
Next year's *Redes En Acción*  
National Steering Committee  
meeting is scheduled  
August 21-23, 2002  
in San Antonio.



# WASHINGTON PERSPECTIVE

## Rep. Rodriguez: 'Hispanics lag behind...'

As head of the Hispanic Congressional Caucus health care task force, U.S. Congressman **Ciro D. Rodriguez** stands at the forefront of the political battles that impact Latino health care.

When U.S. Rep. **Ciro Rodriguez** of San Antonio first came to the Capitol four years ago, he was surprised to learn that Congress had no committee devoted to health care. After all, even the Texas Legislature, where he had begun his political service, had a health committee.

Ever since, in his role as head of a Hispanic Congressional Caucus task force, the Congressman has fought to create a specific committee on health and focus greater attention on health issues.

He acknowledges some progress, due in large measure to the activities of organizations such as *Redes En Acción* – from large-scale successes such as increased funding for the Special Populations Networks under the NCI to small projects, such as free mammograms for women in San Antonio. But the unmet needs are still all too apparent, he says.

"Hispanics lag behind in almost every aspect of health care," Rep. Rodriguez told NSC members. "Among Hispanic adults,



cancer is the second-leading cause of death next to heart disease.

"Hispanic children are more likely to get sick. Hispanic young people are more likely to get AIDS."

Among other unmet needs, he noted, are environmental pollution and the resulting illness along the U.S.-Mexico border, a problem the Congressman discussed in a recent meeting with Mexico President Vicente Fox. Yet the recent tax cut has left Congress with few resources, he said.

Another problem is the need to emphasize clear communication between physicians and patients with limited English-speaking ability. Rep. Rodriguez told an anecdote of a woman who took an HIV test and, when told the results were "positive," she thought that meant she was all right. "Then she had a baby."

To counter the health issues faced by Latinos, he noted the importance of continued advocacy from grassroots organizations. And he emphasized the role initiatives such as *Redes En Acción* play in helping Latinos reduce existing disparities in health research and care.

## Dr. Ruffin: Helping bridge disparities

**John Ruffin, PhD**, was named Director of the newly created National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities.

To effect change, get out of the office and into the field, Dr. John Ruffin advised members of *Redes En Acción's* National Steering Committee.

The Director of NIH's National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities said change can best be achieved not by the usual approach of "bringing in a consultant" with a one-size-fits-all solution, but rather by eyeball-to-eyeball collaborations and networks, such as the initiative represented by *Redes En Acción*.

With a primary mission of helping bridge health disparities, Dr. Ruffin was scheduled to visit South Texas and the Mexican border area for a firsthand view of environmental health problems. "But I spent some time walking around San Antonio (during the conference), and you don't have to go to the border to find health disparities," he told the steering committee.

"Field work" also means ensuring accountability on the part of institutions and universities that accept grant money, he noted. "We must visit the institutions and make sure the money is being used as it's supposed to be."

Dr. Ruffin said one of his challenges is persuading Latinos

who have succeeded as researchers, faculty members or professionals to take the time to help young students develop their research interests. This is critical for recruiting more Latinos and other minorities into health science fields, he emphasized.

With the Center's new powers bestowed by Congress, Dr. Ruffin said he now has more to offer in the effort to increase the number of minority researchers. Most important are grant-making power and the authority to offer loan forgiveness for post-doctoral researchers willing to work on minority research projects. The center can also offer consultants to help grant writers polish their writing skills, he added.

With new demands on the national budget, however, "the struggle over minority health" will be hard fought, Dr. Ruffin warned. "We need to amass evidence to convince people that disparity is real," he said. "I know when things get tough that I'm going to need you with me in the trenches."





# WASHINGTON PERSPECTIVE

## Dr. Chu: 'New generation of researchers'

*In his role overseeing Redes En Acción, Ken Chu, PhD, of the NCI provides liaison and guidance for the initiative.*

Dr. Ken Chu praised the organization for pursuing a multi-track agenda, seeking to find more Latino candidates for advanced cancer research while also advocating an increased level of cancer awareness in the nation's Latino communities.

"Pilot projects need to be community-based research that has an immediate impact on the population," Dr. Chu told the National Steering Committee (NSC).

But, while emphasizing the importance of developing major grants, he allowed that the number of RO1 grants approved was not the only criterion for judging success in this five-year Special Populations Network initiative.

"I'm totally supportive of your notion of continuing to do what you want to do to create a new generation of researchers," he told NSC members. "What we need to have are Hispanic investigators that are moving into the cancer research process."

Thanks in large part to expanded NIH focus on research addressing health disparities, the NCI has made a major

commitment to the country's special populations, said Dr. Chu. This is evidenced by the SPN funding, which is "well over \$60 million," he noted. In addition, up to \$2 million a year is being allocated to funding pilot projects generated by the SPNs.

"There is a commitment on the part of the NCI to try to move forward in the area of special populations," Dr. Chu emphasized.

That led steering committee members to a discussion of the need for a network of mentors and programs that could help institutions teach polished grant writing. "NCI is willing to bring in any kind of consultant" to help that process, Dr. Chu said. "That should make these proposals competitive after they have had those kinds of reviews."

He acknowledged the need for creating more support and mentoring programs available to minority researchers, and agreed that should be one of the Redes En Acción goals.



## Dr. Weinberg: *Redes* blazing new trails



**Armin D. Weinberg, PhD, is a Baylor College of Medicine professor and Director of the Chronic Disease Prevention and Control Research Center.**

If timing is everything, as the saying goes, then *Redes En Acción* has an excellent opportunity to accomplish its goals, Dr. Armin Weinberg told fellow NSC members.

In coming months, national events should focus attention and funding on cancer research, leaving *Redes En Acción* – whose members Dr. Weinberg describes as "frontiersmen" blazing new trails of strategic action – poised to become a recognized name in the field.

Beginning this past fall, a confederation of cancer-fighting organizations led by former First Lady Barbara Bush and Sen. Diane Feinstein was to begin exerting "pressure on state governments to put in place delivery systems" intended to reduce treatment disparities.

The confederation, known as the National Dialogue on Cancer, includes some of America's most prominent individuals and organizations. From the institutional sector come the American Cancer Society and NCI's Advisory Committee, while television/radio interviewer Larry King is

advising on the media end.

The National Dialogue began two years ago with an initial meeting of 70 leaders at the Bush Presidential Library at Texas A&M University.

"Larry King (a cancer survivor) described it as the best kept secret" in America's health care industry, said Dr. Weinberg. "As a part of the National Dialogue's effort, they have clearly recognized the issue of disparities," and this, he notes, is a major opportunity for *Redes En Acción*.

The "Dialogue" has identified three major areas of disparities – economic, racial/ethnic and geographic – and assigned teams to tackle each. Dr. Weinberg heads the team focusing on access to quality cancer care. Its goal is "to reduce by two-thirds those currently not receiving quality cancer care."

Another goal is to support the area of cancer surveillance, he said, noting that "you can't fight it" if you don't know its prime locations. "We can't find one source within our government who can give us an answer."

A source of assistance in bridging disparities, he added, comes from the business community – companies such as Johnson & Johnson and the brokerage house of Pierce Fenner & Smith.

"The cost of human training is very high," Dr. Weinberg said, "specifically, an increase in the number of people in the minority community to be brought into research. This is a growing opportunity to help chart those waters."



# AWARENESS

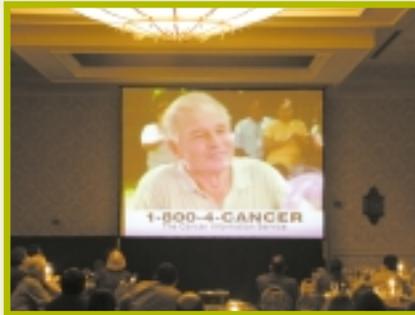
## Latino cancer research PSA campaign unveiled

Following a national premiere at the National Steering Committee meeting, **Redes En Acción** launched a major public awareness initiative with a new nationwide media campaign informing Latinos about the availability of cancer studies and benefits of participation in clinical trials.

NSC members were the first to view the television public service announcements (PSAs), which were produced in both English and Spanish, and later distributed to media outlets across the country. All of the PSAs can be accessed on the **Redes En Acción** web site – [www.redesenaccion.org](http://www.redesenaccion.org).

Although Latinos comprise 12.5 percent of the U.S. population and are the nation’s fastest-growing minority group, in cancer research participation, the percentage of Latinos falls dramatically below non-Hispanic whites. In National Cancer Institute cancer clinical trials, the proportion of Latino participants is less than 6 percent, as compared to 85 percent representation by non-Hispanic whites.

“Many Latinos are unaware of the opportunities available to take part in cutting-edge cancer research,” noted Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH, **Redes En Acción** Principal Investigator. “This



means that ongoing cancer research does not adequately reflect the needs of Latinos, and that many Latino cancer patients are missing out on opportunities to receive the latest cancer treatments.”

Through the new national public service campaign, **Redes En Acción**, in partnership with the Cancer Information Service (CIS), is addressing the under-representation of Latinos in cancer studies. Through a series of video, audio and print PSAs, the campaign encourages Latinos to learn

more about participating in clinical trials.

The PSAs have been distributed to more than 500 television, radio, newspaper and magazine media in cities across the country. Developed by **Redes En Acción**, the PSAs provide the toll-free CIS telephone number (1-800-4-CANCER) and urge Latinos to call for information about cancer research in general and, in particular, studies taking place in their area.

The current PSA campaign, which is part of ongoing cancer awareness efforts of **Redes En Acción**, is the first of multiple mass media endeavors designed to address cancer issues of concern to Latinos that are scheduled over the course of the **Redes** initiative.

## Rep. Rangel: ‘We must inform our people...’

*Texas Representative **Irma Rangel**, a survivor of breast and ovarian cancer, is a long-time Legislator and represents a largely Hispanic district in South Texas.*

When Texas Representative Irma Rangel discusses cancer – and the need for cancer education and screening programs – her colleagues in the state Capitol listen. That’s because, as a cancer survivor, she knows firsthand the toll of this devastating disease.

Not surprisingly, Latino cancer awareness is high on her agenda.

“We must inform our people that there are tests available to detect cancer early,” she told a dinner audience at the National Steering Committee premiere of the **Redes En Acción** national PSA campaign.

When it comes to the subject of cancer, she noted, there is great fear among Latinos – fear of the expense, fear of being uninsured, fear of dying. To counter these fears, action is needed.

“The state of Texas has to assume responsibility for the care of its people,” the Legislator emphasized. “The expense of prevention is far less than the cost of treatment.”

Rep. Rangel described her personal battle with cancer,

noting how her own education in the disease didn’t begin until she was diagnosed.

“I didn’t know anything about cancer or programs available until I had the disease,” she said. “Once you’re diagnosed...you’re in a fight for your life.”

She received treatment from doctors at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio.

“Today I feel wonderful and I’m getting better and better.”

And the experience has left her a strong advocate for public cancer education and screening programs for underserved families. These families must receive special attention.

“It cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to cure me,” said Rep. Rangel. “But not all of us are so fortunate.”



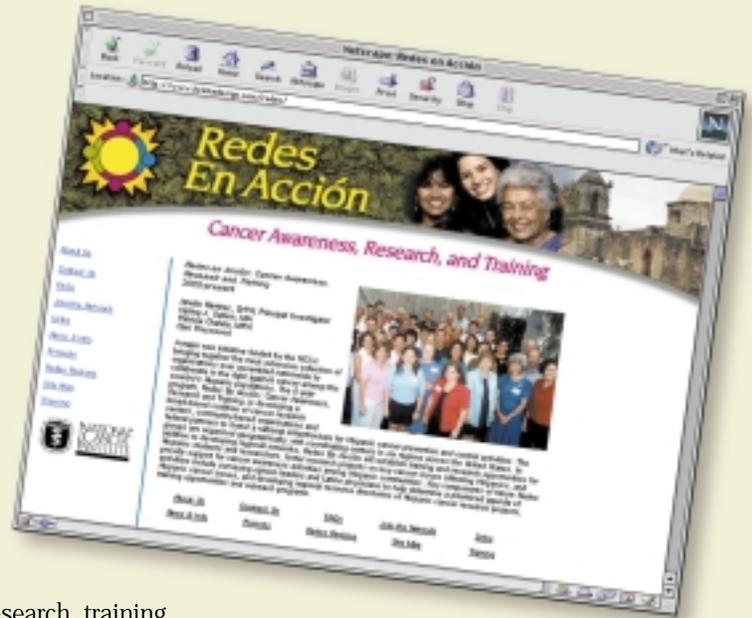
## New *Redes* web site online

The *Redes En Acción* web site, which can be found at <http://redesenaccion.org>, is a work-in-progress. While the site continues to grow and evolve, several components and resources are available now.

The web site currently contains information about the *Redes En Acción* program activities, mission, objectives and timeline. Included are a map of the program's six nationwide regions and files of *Redes En Acción* newsletters and other publications.

The site also includes FAQs (frequently asked questions), information about Latino cancer training opportunities and *Redes En Acción* pilot research project guidelines, descriptions of the *Redes* initiative's various Latino cancer awareness activities including the new PSAs, and a host of helpful links to relevant online resources.

In future developments, the web site will enable members of the National Steering Committee, colleagues and consultants, Regional Network Center personnel, and members of the media to communicate with the National Network Center and with one another. The site will also provide an online means for anyone engaged in Latino cancer research, training or public education to join the *Redes En Acción* network.



## Newsletters focus on Latino cancer issues

To disseminate helpful Latino cancer information to its partners, *Redes En Acción* has produced a quarterly newsletter, the *Redes Report*, since August 2000. About 90,000 newsletters have been distributed nationally since that time.

The six-page, four-color newsletter includes information supplied by the National Network Center, Regional Network Centers, Cancer Information Service (CIS), National Hispanic Medical Association (NHMA) and other sources.

Editorial content highlights *Redes En Acción* activities and plans; provides information about new and relevant Latino cancer-related web sites, helplines, reports, articles and scheduled events; describes CIS and NHMA activities involving Latinos and cancer; and profiles Latino "role models" who are engaged in cancer research, training and awareness activities for the Latino population.

The audience for the *Redes Report* includes network members, research centers, health care organizations, Regional Center Advisory Committee representatives and their organizations, community groups, affiliated CIS offices, NHMA membership, and cancer-oriented organizations and their constituents.



## Mass media spotlight *Redes* activities

In addition to the current national PSA campaign promoting clinical trial awareness, *Redes En Acción* goals and activities are promoted through the mass media as a result of press releases and media interviews with *Redes En Acción* investigators.

Press releases are translated into Spanish and distributed to both Spanish- and English-language media. Interviews have been conducted with the Principal Investigator and various Co-PIs for a wide variety of the mainstream press, including television, radio, daily and weekly newspapers, and magazines.

Media attention also has come from specialized avenues such as newsletters, Hispanic media, business publications, campus media and “e-zines” (Web magazines).



*Redes En Acción* investigators, such as Dr. Amelie Ramirez (shown here), are regularly interviewed about the initiative's various cancer awareness, research and training activities.

## Presentations, events raise awareness

Avenues for raising Latino cancer awareness and promoting *Redes En Acción* goals and activities include professional presentations, conferences and a wide range of community events.

In the initiative's first year, the *Redes En Acción* PI and Co-PIs made more than 30 presentations promoting the program at national, regional and area conferences and meetings. These conferences included the American Public Health Association, Y-Me National Bilingual Conference on Breast Cancer, Intercultural Cancer Council 7th Biennial Symposium, National Network of Latin American Medical Students Leadership, and Hispanic-Serving Health Professions Schools, Inc. Faculty Research Symposium.

In addition, *Redes En Acción* Regional Network Centers (RNC) around the country are promoting the program and its



Participating in a health fair as student ambassadors are, left to right, Ana Maria Rojas, Manuel Ybarra and Marissa Hernandez, all fourth-year medical students at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio.

objectives, particularly in the area of Latino cancer education, in a variety of regional and local community events. These events include health fairs, children's anti-smoking campaigns, breast cancer awareness efforts, and participation at neighborhood health centers and school events. At some events RNC staff give informal talks and presentations, typically in small-group sessions with children, parents and other interested audiences.

One particularly innovative cancer awareness program was developed by the South Central RNC, where 4th year medical students at the University of Texas

Health Science Center at San Antonio are being recruited to serve as cancer “ambassadors.” Students in the program offer a new cancer education resource for the community, including the media, Latino cancer patients and families, and the general public.

# Key Opinion Leader Survey

## *Latino cancer issues ranked*

A national *Redes En Acción* survey of key opinion leaders identified access to cancer screening and care as the number one cancer issue facing Latinos. Preliminary results of the survey were presented at the National Steering Committee Meeting.

Of more than 600 respondents, the majority work with Latinos in cancer-related fields, primarily representing community-based organizations, academic institutions and cancer centers around the country. Individuals surveyed included researchers, educators, health professionals and Latino health advocates.

The top five cancer issues affecting Latinos, after access to cancer screening and care, were tobacco, patient/doctor communication, nutrition and risk communication, according to the survey. The key opinion leaders ranked the most important cancer sites with regard to Latinos as breast, cervical and lung,

followed by colorectal, prostate, liver and stomach cancers.

With regard to access to cancer screening and care, survey respondents made the following recommendations:

- ▶ **Research:** Study differences in quality of physician care in different settings, such as HMOs , comparing Latinos to other race/ethnic groups.
- ▶ **Health professions education:** Increase the number and proficiency of Spanish-speaking health professionals who conduct screening.
- ▶ **Public education:** Develop partnerships with Latino-oriented community-based organizations regarding treatment and prevention.

Results of the survey, still undergoing analysis, will be developed into a report on Latino cancer in the United States and released at a later date.

### Survey Demographics (n=622)

**Ethnicity** 62% Latino  
29% Non-Hispanic White

**Hispanics** 25% Mexican American  
10.6% Puerto Rican  
9% South American  
6% Cuban

**Gender** 2/3 Female

**Age** 62% 40+

**Expertise** Research/Training: Professional Education, Advocacy, Behavioral & Social Awareness: Education, Community Outreach, Advocacy

### Most Important Cancer Issues

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 Access to Cancer Screening and Care     | 8 Sexual Practices                               |
| 2 Tobacco                                 | 9 Occupation & Environment                       |
| 3 Patient/Doctor Communication            | 10 Quality of Life                               |
| 4 Nutrition                               | 11 Infectious Agents                             |
| 5 Risk Communication                      | 12 Clinical Trial or Medical Study Participation |
| 6 Physical Activity and Weight Management | 13 Cancer Survivorship                           |
| 7 Alcohol                                 | 14 Genetic Testing & Education                   |

### Most Important Cancer Sites

- 1 Breast Cancer
- 2 Cervical Cancer
- 3 Lung Cancer
- 4 Colorectal Cancer
- 5 Prostate Cancer
- 6 Liver Cancer
- 7 Stomach Cancer



# Pilot Projects

## NSC reviews pilot research concepts

The National Steering Committee reviewed concept papers for proposed cancer-related pilot research projects for submission in the latest funding cycle.

**Redes En Acción** serves as an avenue for National Cancer Institute funding for pilot research involving cancer issues related to Latinos. Maximum funding, including direct and indirect costs, is \$50,000 per project.

Applications for pilot projects are accepted twice a year – in spring and fall. The deadlines for concept paper submission for the two funding periods are November 14 and July 15.

To be eligible, an applicant must have a doctoral degree and affiliation with an academic institution, and have never received R01 funding in the past. Community-based organizations also can apply as long as they have Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval.

Proposed projects must have the potential to produce results that can be leveraged into subsequent peer-reviewed funding, such as an R01 NIH-type proposal. In addition, projects must address one or more of the following cancer sites: breast, cervical, lung, colorectal or prostate.

A principal indicator of success for the pilot projects is the research career development of Latino investigators as measured by publication of the results and subsequent grant applications and funding. Funded investigators will be assisted in developing and submitting an independent research proposal based on data collected from the pilot studies.

As part of the research experience, Latino investigators will have the opportunity to interact with investigators on the **Redes En Acción** parent grant and enhance their research skills and knowledge of cancer prevention and control among Latino populations.

Investigators wishing to apply may obtain guidelines, application forms and other information at the **Redes En Acción** web site ([www.redesenaccion.org](http://www.redesenaccion.org)).

Activities	Dates April 1 Deadline	Dates December 1 Deadline
Call for concept papers	10/19	6/14
Concept papers due	11/14	7/15
Review and request for full proposals	11/15 – 12/13	7/16 – 8/13
Feedback given to applicants	12/14	8/14
Deadline for full proposals	1/14	9/13
Review for full proposals	1/21	9/20
Revisions sent to RNCs	2/1	10/1
Revisions sent to applicants	2/4	10/4
Revised proposals deadline	2/27	10/28
BCM receives all proposals	3/1	11/1
NCI receives all proposals	4/1	12/1

## First pilot project approved by NCI

The first cancer pilot study application submitted through **Redes En Acción** has received approval for funding by the National Cancer Institute. The one-year project, titled South Carolina Partnership for Cancer Prevention, will be directed by Principal Investigator Deborah Parra-Medina, PhD, Assistant Professor in the School of Public Health, University of South Carolina.

With an emphasis on cervical cancer prevention among Latinas, the project will cultivate development of a community-based partnership for cancer prevention as part of the South Carolina Hispanic Health Coalition.

Dr. Parra-Medina is a **Redes En Acción** Southeast Regional Network Center partner and formerly trained in San Diego, where she worked with the National Hispanic Leadership Initiative on Cancer: **En Acción**.

## TEN NEW PILOT PROJECT CONCEPTS UNDER REVIEW AT NSC MEETING

At the National Steering Committee meeting, NSC members took the following new pilot project concepts under initial review:

Title: Determine the causes for under-utilization of Pap smear and breast cancer screening among Latinas in Los Angeles and develop current baseline data on stage of disease at presentation in Latina patients with breast and cervical cancer

PI: Theresa Loya, MD, MPH, FCAP

Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science  
Region: Los Angeles, CA – Southwest Regional Network Center

Title: Ethnicity and Cancer Care

PI: Ana Maria Lopez, MD, MPH, FACP

University of Arizona  
Region: Tucson, AZ – Southwest Regional Network Center

Title: Investigating Clinical Trial Recruitment and Physician Barriers in Puerto Rico

PI: Edna Mora, MD, University of Puerto Rico

Region: San Juan, Puerto Rico – Southeast Regional Network Center

Title: Breast Cancer Screening in Hispanic Women: An Assessment Tool

PI: Isabel C. Scarinci, PhD, MPH, University of Memphis

Region: Memphis, TN – Southeast Regional Network Center

Title: Primary Prevention of Cervical Cancer among Hispanic Women: The HPV Connection

PI: Isabel C. Scarinci, PhD, MPH, University of Memphis

Region: Memphis, TN – Southeast Regional Network Center

Title: A Community Intervention to Improve Prostate and Colorectal Cancer Screening among Latino Men

PI: Ana Natale-Pereira, MD, UMDNJ – New Jersey Medical School

Region: New Jersey – Northeast Regional Network Center

Title: Latina Breast Cancer Treatment Decision Making Study

PI: Dora Gutierrez, MD, Latin American Health Institute, Boston

Region: Boston, MA – Northeast Regional Network Center

Title: Evaluation of Home Remedies Used by Latina Women as Feminine Hygiene Agents and Could Impact on Cervical Inflammation

PI: Norma I. Villanueva, MD

Region: Brooklyn, NY – Northeast Regional Network Center

Title: Cancer Trajectory, Quality of Life and Social Networks among Latinas with Breast Cancer

PI: Patricia M. Canessa, PhD, University of Illinois, Chicago

Region: Chicago, IL – North Central Regional Network Center

Title: Pilot Study of a Decision Aid and Informed Consent in Breast Cancer Chemoprevention with Tamoxifen

PI: David Gustin, MD, University of Illinois

Region: Chicago, IL – North Central Regional Network Center



# TRAINING

## Dr. Cigarroa: ‘...Ignite a spark in somebody’s life’

**Francisco G. Cigarroa, MD**, a noted transplant surgeon and President of the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, is the first Latino to head a Health Science Center in the United States.



Addressing the National Steering Committee, Dr. Francisco Cigarroa issued a warning about the shortage of Latinos in our nation’s medical institutions. “We cannot tolerate the current situation,” he said bluntly.

He informed the steering committee that the gap in the number of minority students graduating from institutions of higher education compared to non-Hispanic whites is widening.

His challenge to the NSC? “Let us all commit some time to ignite a spark in somebody’s life.”

Dr. Cigarroa’s credentials – both academic and in the community – are strong. While at UTHSC, he became the first surgeon to successfully split a donor liver for transplant. Born

in the Texas border city of Laredo, he also shares a keen knowledge of the Hispanic culture of South Texas.

Laredo and its Mexico sister city, Nuevo Laredo, provide object lessons in the disparities of health care on both sides of the border. Older U.S. residents venture across the border to buy cheaper pharmaceutical products and obtain dental work, while unemployed Mexican laborers waiting for a chance to cross the border cannot afford even the cheaper prices in their country.

Noting that one of his chief goals is to “attract more Latinos into the medical community,” Dr. Cigarroa encouraged NSC members to promote mentoring efforts. He also advocates increasing the number of scholarships for minority students. There should be “no closed doors to those with ideas and talent,” he said.

He added that institutions of higher learning need more programs to help younger students “explore health professions.” As examples, he noted two programs in South Texas – one at a high school and the other at an undergraduate institution – that focus students on pre-med education.

“Many of our young people have never witnessed a science laboratory,” Dr. Cigarroa said. “We need to provide students programs to explore health professions at the start.”

## Panelists: ‘Keeping the pipeline full’

The panel generally addressed the shortage of Latinos in research and health fields, suggested courses of action to correct deficiencies, and described innovative existing programs that could serve as models for success in “filling the pipeline” – from exposing students to science early in their education to placing more Latinos with advanced degrees in the field.

**Dr. Marquez:** In terms of the number of Latino researchers with RO1 grants, “what you see is a pretty dismal picture. We’ve raised the bar (of difficulty).” The task becomes “helping people learn how to get over it.”

**Dr. Medrano:** “We need to create databases on all Hispanics doing research within institutions, and researchers who have been successful at getting foundation grants.” With regard to efforts to help train and retain Latino students in the medical professions and cancer research, she points to an innovative program she heads at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio that recruits and trains 4th year Latino medical students to become “community cancer ambassadors.” The students work with the media, community, patients and the public to provide cancer education.

**Dr. Talavera:** “Some of us need to look deeper into the pipeline...(and) target pre-college students.” He advocated initiating science enrichment programs for high school students. In addition, he said, *Redes En Acción* needs to promote Latinos not only in basic research careers, but also in the behavioral sciences.

**Dr. Scarinci:** As a junior faculty Latina working to build a cancer research career, she offered personal testimony about the value of mentoring for newly graduated Hispanic researchers. Working with *Redes En Acción* investigators, she benefited from a mini-sabbatical with the *Redes* National Network Center in San Antonio.

**Panel Title:** Developing Future Researchers

**Moderator:** Amelie Ramirez, DrPH

**Panel members:**

- ▶ **Ernest Marquez, PhD**, Chief, MBRS Branch, National Institute of General Medical Sciences
- ▶ **Martha Medrano, MD, MPH, Co-PI**, *Redes En Acción* South Central Regional Network Center
- ▶ **Gregory Talavera, MD, MPH, Co-PI**, *Redes En Acción* Southwest Regional Network Center
- ▶ **Isabel Scarinci, PhD, MPH**, Assistant Professor, University of Memphis





# TRAINING

## Young researchers must 'learn to fly'

**D**r. Isabel Scarinci, the recipient of the inaugural *Redes En Acción* junior faculty Career Development Award, compared the experience of leaving graduate school to make your way in the research world to that of a young bird leaving the nest.

"As a graduate student, you're protected from the outside world by your professor," said Dr. Scarinci, a native of Brazil and University of Memphis faculty member. "Then you have to learn to fly by yourself."

"I didn't know where to go with my career, but working 12 hours a day on somebody else's agenda was not what I wanted to do."

What she did want to do was work within the community of 100,000 Latinos who live in Memphis. But even with that large number of Latinos, the medical community lacked a network of Latino activists working together.

Then she learned about the training opportunities afforded by *Redes En Acción*.

She was the first post-doctoral researcher chosen by *Redes En Acción* to take advantage of a three-month internship in San Antonio.



Dr. Isabel Scarinci, the recipient of the inaugural *Redes En Acción* junior faculty career development award, greets Congressman D. Rodriguez. To honor the Congressman's record of commitment to Latino health and education, the award was named the D. Rodriguez Cancer Career Development Award.

## Training opportunities available

To further the *Redes En Acción* goals of recruiting and training young Latino cancer researchers and professionals, opportunities exist for student summer interns, pre- and post-doctoral individuals, and junior faculty.

**Student Summer Intern.** To provide undergraduate and recent Latino college graduates with experience in cancer research, each of the six *Redes En Acción* Regional Network Centers (RNC) is able to recruit a summer intern for a 10-week period. The RNCs provide financial support, mentoring and guidance in preparation for application for post-graduate education in medicine and/or public health.

Intern responsibilities may include assistance to pilot project leaders and others in literature reviews, data collection and other research tasks. The participating interns will be tracked for the duration of the program to establish where they are eventually placed for graduate/medical school.

**Pre- and Post-Doctoral Trainees.** The goal is to pair pre- and post-doctoral individuals of Latino heritage with ongoing research projects targeting cancer in Latino populations. Trainees

are expected to secure their own funding through an individual grant or ongoing research project. *Redes En Acción* offers assistance in linking potential trainees with projects through its regional Cancer Control Partners Directory database.

**Junior Faculty.** Through NCI-funded pilot projects, *Redes En Acción* is providing Latino junior faculty with opportunities for supported 10-week mini-sabbatical cancer research in Latino populations. To be eligible, the faculty member should have completed doctoral training within the previous four years. The research must be conducted in conjunction with a pilot project, either by utilizing data from the project, helping develop the project, or serving as a project investigator. Junior faculty are evaluated on quality and completion of their projects, and on the potential for developing pilot projects into full, competing grant applications.

## Uniting to promote the Latino cancer agenda

New challenges in delivering health care can be met by borrowing strategies from programs already in use, NSC members were told by the panel, which took a closer look at some of the collaborations taking place between *Redes En Acción* and various organizations. The panel discussed collaborations already in existence, such as one with the Latino Council on Alcohol and Tobacco (LCAT), and others being developed, such as the proposed Latino Genetic Community Consultation project.

**Dr. Martí:** The *Redes En Acción* Northeast Regional Network Center has partnered with the American Cancer Society on a new resource center that gives cancer patients and their families in Brooklyn, NY, access to electronic, print and video information on the latest treatment, prevention, research and services. The ACS Navigator Project is the first to use a computerized system “to track survivorship from the initial diagnosis through bereavement.”

**Dr. Noltenius:** LCAT is teaming with *Redes En Acción* and other organizations in a campaign aimed at creating a national network of experts, researchers and community-based organizations working on tobacco prevention and control. The National Hispanic/Latino Tobacco Prevention and Control Network (NHLTPAC) is responsible for expanding leadership training, enhancing current networks with tobacco control and fortifying existing tobacco prevention and control efforts targeting diverse Latino subgroups across the country.

“When the time came to get the troops, I called Amelie (Ramirez),” Dr. Noltenius said. A training program working with *Redes En Acción* was quickly up and running. The NHLTPAC Network efforts have paid off, she added. “In one year, we trained 370 people in tobacco control efforts.”

**Dr. Ramirez:** Experts from around the country are collaborating on development of a proposed Latino Genetic Community Consultation (LGCC) project. If approved, the NLGCC would pilot a program promoting community input in identifying important genetics issues, particularly those issues of specific relevance to Latinos.

“The focus of the LGCC initiative would be developing a two-way communication process in terms of obtaining advice and information from the Latino community,” said Dr. Ramirez. “The role of the LGCC will be to listen to issues and needs, and determine how it can partner with the community to achieve its goals.”

The underlying premise of “community consultation” emphasizes the importance of community participation and involvement. Through this process, communities, planners and funding agencies enter into a dialogue and identify priorities to

**Panel Title:** How Collaborations Take Shape

**Moderator:** Amelie Ramirez, DrPH

**Panel members:**

- ▶ **Jose Marti, MD, Co-PI, *Redes En Acción* Northeast Regional Network Center**
- ▶ **Jeannette Noltenius, PhD, Executive Director, Latino Council on Alcohol and Tobacco**
- ▶ **Amelie Ramirez, DrPH, *Redes En Acción* Principal Investigator**
- ▶ **Jo Ann Ward, MPIT, Project Director, NCI Cancer Information Service**



help shape future projects. “In this initiative, the focus is on what we want to accomplish in terms of genetics, genetics research, education and outreach,” Dr. Ramirez said.

**Jo Ann Ward:** “I want to pay special thanks to Amelie and all of the Co-PI’s who, when they saw the (NCI Special Populations Networks) RFA, encouraged involvement of their local Cancer Information Services in the RFA application. The result is that four CIS offices are actually funded to work in this project. A group of others are working to support the project.”

The Cancer Information Service (CIS) collaborates with *Redes En Acción* in several ways: partnership development, network promotion, media campaign support, CIS-based research, survey support and pilot project promotion.

## Exploring ways to form working relationships

**Panel Title:** Opportunities for Collaborations with Non-Profit Organizations

**Moderator:** Amelie Ramirez, DrPH

**Panel members:**

- ▶ **Jennifer Reseck-Segall**, MPH, Education Division, Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation
- ▶ **Diana D. Vaca**, MPA, Diversity Project Manager, American Cancer Society
- ▶ **Malcolm Williams**, MPP, Senior Program Associate, Grantmakers in Health

Panel members discussed the policies and perspectives of their organizations and other grant-making foundations with regard to collaborations with groups. Also examined were issues of diversity within their organizations and in their approach to the fight against cancer.

**Diana Vaca:** The American Cancer Society has “ambitious goals to reduce the cancer incidence and cancer mortality by 50% and 25%, respectively, and to have overall quality of life improvement. Obviously, this is an extremely ambitious goal that we are hoping to achieve by 2015, which is not very far away. Certainly, we recognize that we cannot do it by ourselves – not one organization, not one person.”

It is important “for you to make the American Cancer Society accountable to you and your respective communities...that is where the collaboration may come into play, because we are your American Cancer Society.” While Latinos are still under-represented on ACS boards, “we can begin to infuse your perspective into our boards, and hopefully we can bring

something to the table as we look at some of the research agendas that you have before you.”

**Jennifer Reseck-Segall:** The Komen Foundation’s most notable collaboration effort is its research program, which has funded 583 grants totaling more than \$68 million. In 2000, 113 grants were funded, totaling about \$19 million. Of that amount, \$1.7 million went to population-specific research, which focused on the disparities among breast cancer morbidity and mortality among specific populations, including Latinas.

“In addition to research, Komen affiliates fund non-duplicative, communicative-based breast health, education, screening and treatment within their communities. To date, the Komen Foundation, at the affiliate level, has awarded more than 2,000 grants. In the past two years, we awarded approximately 185 grants focusing on breast cancer among the Hispanic-Latino community.”

**Malcolm Williams:** Grantmakers in Health provides services to foundations that offer health-related funding. Its activities include tracking developments in the health system, providing information on health issues, enhancing foundation access to emerging health policy issues, and assisting organizations in finding ways to work more effectively.

“The major challenge to working with grant makers...is understanding that the field is really diverse...There are a number of ways that foundations differ that make it important to think about how you approach (them) differently.” This diversity provides “a sense that it’s hard to collaborate with foundations, and in some ways it is, but it becomes easier when you learn each thing about these individual foundations. What’s truly important is to think about the different ways that foundations have collaborated successfully.”





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Grantmakers in Health

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Centers for Disease Control  
& Prevention

See you at the  
3rd Annual  
*Redes En Acción*  
National Steering Committee  
Meeting, scheduled  
August 21-23, 2002  
in San Antonio.