

Redes En Acción

The National Latino Cancer Research Network



**New NCI-funded initiative
addresses cancer disparities
within Latino communities**

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Over the past five years, *Redes En Acción* has formed the most extensive collaboration of organizations ever assembled to address cancer disparities in Latino populations. Now, under the National Cancer Institute's new Community Networks Program initiative, *Redes En Acción* (Networks in Action) will receive funding to expand its efforts to fight cancer in Latino communities throughout the United States.

Supported by a new five-year, \$7.2 million National Cancer Institute (NCI) grant, *Redes En Acción*: The National Latino Cancer Research Network is coordinated within the Chronic Disease Prevention and Control Research Center (CDPCRC) at Baylor College of Medicine and directed by Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH, Professor of Medicine. Dr. Ramirez is Director of the Baylor Cancer Center Office of Outreach and Health Disparities Research and Deputy Director of the CDPCRC.

"This new Community Networks initiative affirms the achievements of *Redes En Acción* over the past five years in advancing cancer research, training and public education for this country's 38 million Latinos," said Dr. Ramirez. "It is extremely important that we maintain our momentum in these vital areas and continue and expand our efforts to apply what we've learned about cancer prevention and control in the community."

The \$95 million NCI Community Networks Program (CNP) initiative is aimed at reducing cancer deaths among minority and underserved populations through community-based cancer prevention and control activities in geographically and culturally diverse areas of the country. *Redes En Acción* is one of up to 25 projects to be funded by the initiative targeting cancer disparities in Hispanics/Latinos, African Americans, American Indians and Alaska Natives, Asians, Hawaiian Natives and other Pacific Islanders, and the rural poor.

Of the CNP programs funded, *Redes En Acción* is one of only six with a nationwide focus. Other funded programs will have either a local or regional scope of activities.

Since 2000, under the NCI's Special Populations Networks (SPN) initiative, *Redes En Acción* has created a national and regional infrastructure for collaboration among grassroots leaders, local communities, researchers and public health professionals to stimulate cancer control research, training and awareness. Through network activities, the program established training and research opportunities for Latino students and researchers, generating research projects on key cancer issues impacting Latinos and supporting cancer awareness activities.

As a result of these efforts, the program has addressed Latino cancer disparities on several fronts. For example, from 2000 to 2005, 16 pilot cancer research projects were funded by NCI through *Redes En Acción* with grants totaling \$800,000. In all, *Redes*-related cancer research projects at both the national and regional levels surpassed \$32 million in leveraged funding from public and private sources. In the program's training component, 131 young Latinos throughout the U.S. were provided opportunities to train with cancer researchers and receive invaluable mentorship. In addition, regional network staffs raised cancer awareness in the public through hundreds of community events conducted across the country.

"This outstanding program is an excellent example of Baylor College of Medicine's commitment to the community as we strive to improve public health through our diversified endeavors," said Peter G. Traber, MD, Baylor College of Medicine President and CEO. "The program's public service emphasis bears significance nationwide, and is particularly relevant in the community."

Under the new CNP initiative, *Redes En Acción* will maintain the infrastructure developed under the SPN initiative and expand its network activities as part of NCI's ongoing efforts to understand why some population groups – often minorities and the poor – have higher cancer rates than others, and to eliminate disparities by involving local communities in education, research and training.

"To win the war against cancer we need to better understand the areas where we know that people are dying at higher rates, and we need to find ways to target these communities with culturally relevant approaches," said Harold Freeman, MD, director of NCI's Center to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities, which oversees the Community Networks Program.

Regional activities of *Redes En Acción* under the CNP initiative will be coordinated by five program Co-Principal Investigators:

- Eliseo J. Pérez-Stable, MD, **Northwest RNC** (Regional Network Center), University of California, San Francisco (San Francisco, California)
- Gregory A. Talavera, MD, MPH, **Southwest RNC**, Graduate School of Public Health, San Diego State University (San Diego, California)
- María E. Fernández, PhD, **Central RNC**, The University of Texas-Houston Health Science Center, School of Public Health (Houston, Texas)
- J. Emilio Carrillo, MD, MPH, **Northeast RNC**, Weill Medical College of Cornell University, New York Presbyterian Hospital (New York, New York)
- Frank J. Penedo, PhD, **Southeast RNC**, Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center, University of Miami (Miami, Florida)

Also participating as a partner in the program is the National Hispanic Medical Association, directed by Elena Rios, MD.

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For more information about *Redes En Acción*, please visit

www.redesenaccion.org.

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