

## Redes En Acción cancer efforts expand in Year 2

After an inaugural year of infrastructure development and ground cultivation to pursue its planned cancer awareness, research and training objectives, *Redes En Acción* initiated or expanded a wide range of activities in its second year. As the year draws to a close and we move into Year 3 of the initiative, this is an opportunity to examine our annual progress report and look forward to future objectives.

### Infrastructure expansion.

In Year 2, the six Regional Network Centers (RNCs) across the country (located in San Francisco, San Diego, Chicago, San Antonio, New York City and Miami) continued to expand their service areas into additional states, recruit new partners, conduct Regional Community Advisory Committee meetings, perform public and professional communication activities, and promote Latino cancer research and training efforts.

At the national level, *Redes En Acción* continued to diversify its 40-member National Steering Committee, with membership representation from academic institutions, federal and private entities, and a variety of community-based organizations. The National Network Center (NNC) hosted the 2nd Annual National Steering Committee Meeting in San Antonio August 15-17, 2001, and

### New Pilot Project Dates

The deadlines for submission of pilot project proposals for the fall funding cycle have been rescheduled. Effective immediately, final proposals must be submitted to NCI no later than October 1. The new deadline means concept papers are due May 15. For a full submission schedule for both the fall and spring funding cycles and other information, see the pilot project guidelines online ([www.redesenaccion.org](http://www.redesenaccion.org)).

developed a 16-page report of the proceedings, which is available online ([www.redesenaccion.org](http://www.redesenaccion.org)).

**Collaborative links.** Year 2 saw further development of active partnerships with the Cancer Information Service (CIS) in regions throughout the nation, as well as alliances with the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, NCI Cancer Genetics Network, National Hispanic Medical Association, Latino Council on Alcohol and Tobacco and other organizations through research, training and awareness collaborations. *Redes En Acción* partners played different roles: assisting in the design of programs and surveys, providing input on community health agenda settings, receiving critical cancer control education programs, and conducting seminars and presentations.

### Awareness (public education)

**Media campaign.** A bilingual mass media campaign was launched in November 2001 to promote Latino awareness and participation in cancer clinical studies. PSAs (public service announcements) produced by *Redes En Acción* were distributed to over 550 TV, radio and

## Inside



The second year of the *Redes En Acción* initiative is drawing to a close, and we're looking back on what has been a particularly busy — and productive —

period. Thanks to the combined efforts of our National and Regional Network Center staffs and our many partners around the country, the program has made great strides.

We've expanded our regional cancer resource database to include hundreds of new "partners," developed new collaborative relationships with national and regional organizations, established an online communication presence, and expanded our Latino cancer awareness, research and training activities. For our lead story in this issue, we've summarized these activities in a brief progress report.

Among the good news we're able to report is the fact that, so far, three Latino investigators have been funded by the National Cancer Institute for pilot research projects through *Redes En Acción*. In addition, more proposals are in various stages of the review process. The story is on page 6.

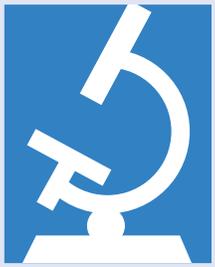
On a sad note, a member of the *Redes En Acción* "family" — Dr. Miguel Medina — passed away recently. Miguel was a member of the National Steering Committee, a personal friend to many of us and a shining light in our midst. He will be greatly missed. Our tribute to Miguel is on page 4.

As we do in each issue of the *Redes Report*, once again we bring you the stories of outstanding individuals engaged in Latino cancer awareness, research and training. In this edition, we have a radio show host, an investigator interested in primary prevention and a recent medical school graduate who has benefited from extensive mentorship. Their stories are inside.

**Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH**

Principal Investigator  
*Redes En Acción*

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# RESEARCH

## Primary Prevention

project will be carried out in collaboration with community and faith-based organizations as well as SAVE Men and Women, a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) program that offers cancer screening and diagnostic workup to medically underserved populations.

Dr. Natale-Pereira loves the challenge of research, but also recognizes the importance of mentorship and support. "I have been very fortunate to be surrounded by dedicated professors and very supportive colleagues," she says.

### Dr. Ana Natale-Pereira

*New Brunswick, New Jersey*



She may just be starting her research career, but Ana Natale-Pereira, MD, a native of Uruguay, is very much in tune with cancer issues among Latinos.

"Screening rates are poor nationwide, and worse among Latinos," she says. "We are being diagnosed at later stages due to lack of knowledge about the benefits of screening and lack of resources." Her research interest is primary prevention among Latinos, particularly educating Latinos about cancer screening and diabetes.

"My current research aims to increase knowledge and screening rates of colorectal cancer among Latinos in the urban community," notes Dr. Natale-Pereira, an Assistant Professor of Medicine at the University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey – New Jersey Medical School. This research will be conducted through a multi-component education model tailored to the Latino community. The

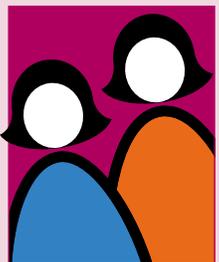
Based on her personal experiences, she likes to take time to mentor students during their clinical rotations. Her advice to those hoping to become involved in research? "Never work in isolation, join forces with colleagues with similar interests, and seek mentorship. There is a lot of work to be done in the field of Latino health."

Dr. Natale-Pereira considers herself fortunate to be able to practice internal medicine and conduct research. Through clinical practice, she becomes a first-hand observer of the barriers to

healthcare that her Latino patients face.

"Participating in health services research provides me with the opportunity to reach the community with new information and learn about areas where they need assistance," she says. "My hope is to develop projects that bring resources to the community that eventually become common practice."

Contributed by: **Katherine Josa**  
Partnership Program Coordinator – *Redes En Acción*  
Cancer Information Service of New York



# TRAINING

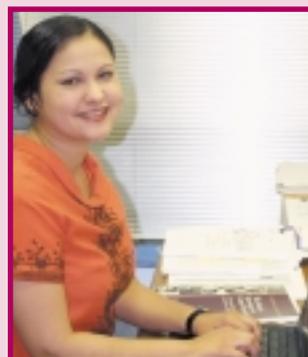
## Value of Mentorship

Texas Medical Branch in Galveston.

Dr. Chapa's work in cancer research began before entering medical school, as a research assistant at the Cancer Therapy and Research Center's Institute for Drug Development in San Antonio. "I investigated and tested the efficacy of anticancer agents and discovered the enjoyment of working in a laboratory environment," she recalls. "I particularly liked the close one-on-one instruction and training given by the researcher I worked with, Dr. Shih Fong Chen."

### Dr. Maria Chapa

*San Antonio, Texas*



Maria D. Chapa, MD, a recent medical school graduate, values the numerous training opportunities that have introduced her to mentors who have provided support and guidance throughout her pursuit of medicine and cancer research.

"Mentors have illuminated my long and arduous path to becoming a physician," she says. "I have been fortunate to experience research training opportunities at various stages of my medical training."

After receiving an undergraduate degree from Columbia University in New York, she earned her medical degree from the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio (UTHSCSA). Dr. Chapa is currently a Post-Doctoral Associate at the Chronic Disease Prevention and Control Research Center at Baylor College of Medicine. This summer she will begin a residency in Internal Medicine and Pediatrics at the University of

Upon acceptance to medical school, Dr. Chapa received further training as a summer researcher with the UTHSCSA Medical Hispanic Center of Excellence (MHCOE). She became familiar with social research, data collection and analysis at the South Texas AIDS Center for Children and Their Families. Later, as a fourth year medical student, she selected a research rotation with the MHCOE, where she was introduced to new medical and public health research areas.

"As a medical student, you're so focused on clinical medicine and don't get exposed to other areas of medicine such as public health," says Dr.

Chapa. "Dr. Martha Medrano (MHCOE Director) introduced me to this field and emphasized the importance of promoting cancer prevention and control among Latinos. Working with Dr. Medrano, I realized that becoming a Latina researcher is possible and also attainable."

After graduation from medical school, Dr. Chapa deferred applying for residency, in part to pursue exposure to public health

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# AWARENESS

## Broadcasting Awareness

announcements during his program, promoting Latino awareness and participation in cancer clinical studies.

“My unique position in radio and in the community allows me to provide important information about healthcare and access to social services that is urgently needed in the Hispanic community in Miami,” he says.

A native Miamian of Cuban parents, Alexander is active in various community healthcare and social service committees. He is a member of the *Redes En Acción* Southeast Regional Community Advisory Committee, Genesis House Fundraising Committee, Florida Coalition on Aging, and serves as Secretary of the Miami-Dade Coalition.

Through his extensive contacts within the community, Alexander recognizes the special needs of Latinos. “There is a large Hispanic community of middle-class workers, retirees and undocumented immigrants who are not eligible for services, mainly due to a streamline of monies and services that are mainly available for people at the poverty level,” he notes. “However, in my experience, there is a larger group of elderly in need of help but don’t qualify and are denied services.”

Alexander believes strongly in collaboration. “Partnering is essential and required to be more effective in promoting awareness and social services in the Hispanic community,” he emphasizes. “This is why I am committed to supporting the *Redes En Acción* program, because there is an urgent need to establish a network and promote organizations that will identify issues and increase representation for Hispanics.”

Contributed by: **Angel Loor, MA**  
*Redes En Acción* Coordinator  
Miami, Florida

### Alexander Fiuza, MPM, MSM Miami, Florida

Alexander Fiuza uses his weekly radio show, *Hablando de Salud En Vivo*, to raise awareness about cancer and a variety of other health-related issues such as AIDS and aging.

“A significant portion of our audience is older Hispanics, and cancer is a huge issue because it impacts their lives to a much greater extent than younger individuals,” says Alexander, who is Community Liaison for Catholic Hospice, a cooperative service of the Archdiocese of Miami, Mercy Hospital and St. Francis Medical and Healthcare Services. “There’s probably no one in the older population who hasn’t been touched by cancer – if not themselves, then a loved one or a friend.”

During his show, which airs every Friday morning on Miami radio 830AM WACC – Radio Paz, Alexander invites physicians, social workers, clergy, program leaders and other guests to speak about community-based health programs and related issues. Featured topics have included the *Redes En Acción* initiative, cancer psychosocial issues and participation in cancer clinical research. In addition, Alexander broadcasts *Redes En Acción* public service



## CIS – Redes: A model for collaboration

As *Redes En Acción* has evolved over the past two years, the initiative and the Cancer Information Service (CIS) have formed a strong collaborative partnership. The CIS and *Redes En Acción* share common goals of raising awareness, providing research opportunities and educating Latinos around the country about cancer. The relationship is an excellent example of CIS efforts to bring education about cancer control to partner organizations that serve minority and medically underserved communities.

The CIS-*Redes* partnership is based on collaboration and reciprocity. CIS resources focus on promotion, capacity-building and technical assistance for Latino organizations and individuals such as cancer researchers. *Redes En Acción*, in turn, provides the CIS with a strong professional base of Latino researchers and promotes CIS services for the Latino community, including access to cancer information in Spanish through the 1-800-4-CANCER phone line and through Spanish-language publications.

Since its inception, the CIS-*Redes* partnership has resulted in several joint activities, including the following:



A PROGRAM OF THE NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE  
YOUR LINK TO CANCER INFORMATION

- A public service announcement (PSA) campaign developed and funded by *Redes En Acción*. The CIS 1-800-4-CANCER phone line is used as a call to action for the public to find out more information about clinical trials. For the next two years, the CIS will be collecting specific demographic data from callers who respond to the *Redes En Acción* PSAs.

- Identification of community groups, institutions, researchers and other individuals for participation in the *Redes En Acción* project and inclusion in the initiative’s regional resource directories. These identified organizations will be surveyed to identify additional Latinos from within the national cancer community.
- Formulation of strategies to reach health professionals and Latino communities using the National Cancer Institute’s Cancer Clinical Trials Education Series (CTES).

The CIS hopes to build upon the synergy developed so far and continue a productive CIS-*Redes* collaboration in 2002 and beyond.

# IN MEMORIAM: Dr. Miguel Medina

The Latino medical science community and *Redes En Acción* lost a tireless advocate, mentor and role model with the recent death of Miguel A. Medina, PhD.

Dr. Medina, 69, served on the *Redes En Acción* National Steering Committee since the initiative's development two years ago. He was professor emeritus and retired associate dean of biomedical sciences at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, where he retired in 1996 after 25 years at the institution.

Although he chose a research career rather than medicine, Dr. Medina will likely be remembered most for helping young Latinos – many disadvantaged – seek and navigate medical school. Thanks to his one-on-one assistance as well as his institutional efforts to develop med prep

and scholarship programs, he helped hundreds of young people find careers in medicine.

In recognition of his efforts, the Mexican American Physician Association (MAPA) named the Miguel A. Medina Scholarship in his honor.

“Developing programs and obtaining grants for (young minority students) to go to medical school was his crowning glory,” his wife, Johnnie Word Medina, was quoted in a San Antonio *Express-News* story.

Miguel Medina will be missed by all whose lives he touched.



Two views of Dr. Miguel Medina: With his wife, Johnnie Word Medina, and with the students at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio.

## Spanish-language cancer fact sheets available

Among the National Cancer Institute's Spanish-language cancer fact sheets, several that are new or have been updated in recent months are listed on the NCI web site. These include:

- ▶ *Ayuda financiera para el cuidado del cáncer / Financial help for cancer care*
- ▶ *El cáncer de testículo: preguntas y respuestas / Testicular cancer: Q&A*
- ▶ *Organizaciones nacionales que brindan servicios a las personas con cáncer y a sus familias / National organizations that offer services to people with cancer and their families*
- ▶ *El cáncer de hígado: preguntas y respuestas / Liver cancer: Q&A*
- ▶ *Cáncer de seno: ¿quién tiene el riesgo? / Breast cancer: Who is at risk?*
- ▶ *Preguntas y respuestas acerca de los exámenes selectivo de detección, la detección temprana y el tratamiento para el cáncer colorrectal / About screening, early detection and treatment for colorectal cancer*

These and other fact sheets are available online by going to <http://cis.nci.nih.gov/fact> and accessing the “Spanish” link.

## Article focuses on Latino smoking

A survey conducted in sites across the country found that older, U.S.-born and more educated Latinos were less likely to be current smokers.

The survey of 8,882 Latinos representing diverse population groups was administered as part of the National Hispanic Leadership Initiative on Cancer (NHLIC): *En Acción*. Findings of the study included:

- About twice as many Latino men as women smoke.
- Smoking rates were not significantly different by national origin among men.
- Puerto Rican women had higher rates than other Latinas.
- Central American men and women had the lowest rates.
- Foreign-born respondents were less likely to be smokers.
- Respondents with 12 years or less education had increased odds of smoking.
- High acculturation was associated with more smoking in women and less smoking in men.
- Puerto Rican and Cuban respondents were more likely to be current smokers and to smoke more cigarettes each day.

The study was described in “Cigarette Smoking Behavior among U.S. Latino Men and Women from Different Countries of Origin” in the September 2001 *American Journal of Public Health*. Principal author was Eliseo J. Pérez-Stable, MD, *Redes En Acción* Co-Principal Investigator for the Northwest Region.

## TRAINING: Value of Mentorship

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research with Dr. Amelie Ramirez, *Redes En Acción* Principal Investigator.

“Working with Dr. Ramirez in cancer prevention, I have increased my knowledge in cancer prevention and control research,” says Dr. Chapa. “We know that cancer incidence rates for some cancers, such as cervical cancer, nationwide are greater among Hispanics compared to Whites and African Americans,

but overall incidence rates are lower among Hispanics. We need to understand why. In addition, there is a need to make Latinos more aware of cancer prevention and screening services.”

Contributed by: **Sylvia Castillo**  
*Redes En Acción* Coordinator  
San Antonio, Texas

# Redes efforts expand in Year 2

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newspaper media across the country. Through the national campaign *Redes En Acción*, in partnership with the CIS, is addressing the under-representation of Latinos in cancer studies. The PSAs provide a toll-free CIS telephone number and urge Latinos to call for information about cancer research and, in particular, studies taking place in their area.

**Web site.** The *Redes En Acción* web site ([www.redesenaccion.org](http://www.redesenaccion.org)) is now operational and offers features that promote interaction and support among the regional centers, researchers, students, community-based organizations and the public. The site includes current guidelines for individuals interested in the *Redes En Acción* pilot research project and training programs, audio and video PSAs, the newsletters and other publications, as well as information on other cancer research, training and awareness activities. Since its launch in June 2001, the web site has averaged 134 hits per day.

**Newsletters.** This year *Redes En Acción* has produced and distributed about 90,000 copies of the initiative's newsletter, the *Redes Report*. The newsletter, which is produced quarterly, disseminates information about Latino cancer issues and the various *Redes En Acción* activities addressing those issues. In addition, stories spotlight "role models" engaged in Latino cancer awareness, research and training efforts around the country.

**Events and media.** During Year 2, *Redes En Acción* was involved in more than 100 community events, including health fairs, children's anti-smoking campaigns, breast cancer awareness efforts, community meetings and coalitions, and participation at neighborhood health centers and school events. In addition, the initiative's principal investigators gave more than 30 presentations promoting the program at national, regional, and area conferences and meetings. *Redes En Acción* goals and activities also were promoted through the mass media as a result of press releases and media interviews.

## Research

**Surveys.** The *Redes En Acción* Key Opinion Leader Survey was administered to more than 600 stakeholders in Latino cancer control issues across the United States. The results are forming the basis for a national agenda of cancer control issues affecting Latinos. These data have the potential to provide significant background information for future public health policy planners and research decision makers at state and federal levels.

A second survey, the National Physicians Survey, was also developed and administered during Year 2. Its purpose is to compare knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding cancer education, screening and care between Hispanic and non-Hispanic physicians. This survey and a follow-up in two years will identify specific cancer issues that will contribute to future directions with regard to physician education materials and programs, as well as measure changes in physician approaches to these issues over time.

**Pilot projects.** Over the past year, three pilot project proposals submitted to *Redes En Acción* have been approved for funding by the NCI. One was submitted in the second funding

cycle of Year 1, and the other two resulted from the first funding cycle of Year 2. Submissions received for the second funding cycle of Year 2 are still under review. In all, 17 pilot project proposals were submitted during the second year. The guidelines and review process information for pilot projects, which must focus on Latino cancer issues, can be found on the *Redes En Acción* web site.

**Breast cancer study.** The Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation recently funded the first phase of a new project aimed at researching, designing and disseminating tailored breast cancer genetic educational materials for Latinos and other special populations. Collaborating on the Breast Cancer Genetics Education Materials and Programs Development Project will be the NCI Special Populations Networks (SPNs) and the NCI Cancer Genetics Network (CGN). In the first phase, the project will develop a culturally sensitive survey to assess knowledge, attitudes and behaviors regarding breast cancer genetics among Latinos, African Americans, Appalachians, Native Americans, and Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

**Other research.** During Year 2, several other research projects were submitted for review and potential funding. For one of these, *Redes En Acción*, in partnership with NIH agencies and other stakeholders in Hispanic health, proposes to conduct a series of "community consultations" to identify, discuss and report critical issues in genetics that confront Latino populations.



## Reminder

The 3rd Annual *Redes En Acción* National Steering Committee Meeting is scheduled August 21-23, 2002 in San Antonio.

## Training

**Professional education.** The education component of *Redes En Acción* promotes cancer-related training activities for pre- and post-doctoral individuals, junior faculty and student interns. During Year 2, *Redes En Acción* provided positions for seven pre-post doctoral, five junior faculty, and five student intern individuals. Guidelines and additional information about these positions can be found on the *Redes En Acción* web site.

**Other training.** Regionally, opportunities have arisen through *Redes En Acción* for training of students and individuals involved in cancer control activities. In the Latino Council on Alcohol and Tobacco (LCAT) Leadership Project, coordinated with *Redes En Acción* Regional Network Centers, more than 200 key stakeholders in Hispanic cancer control around the country engaged in leadership development and tobacco and alcohol control agenda establishment in their respective communities. In the *Redes* Southwest Region, the *Redes En Acción* and Science Enrichment Program Partnership has exposed hundreds of Latino high school students to subjects in science and cancer research. Also, in the *Redes* South Central

Region, a new program trained 10 fourth-year medical students at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio to serve as community "cancer ambassadors," providing cancer information to patients, the media and the general public.

## Training Opportunities

Remember, funded training opportunities are available through *Redes En Acción* this summer for a limited number of student interns. Also, *Redes En Acción* has positions open for junior faculty members interested in a funded three-month mini-sabbatical. For more information, visit the web site ([www.redesenaccion.org](http://www.redesenaccion.org)) or call the Regional Network Center near you (see box on page 6 for contact information).



## New *Redes* pilot projects approved by NCI

Two new pilot research projects were approved for funding by the National Cancer Institute (NCI) through the *Redes En Acción* initiative.

Isabel Scarinci-Searles, PhD, is Principal Investigator of a study titled Cervical Cancer Primary Prevention in Latina Immigrants. Dr. Scarinci-Searles is Assistant Professor in the University of Memphis Center for Community Health and served a 10-week mini-sabbatical with *Redes En Acción* last fall. She received the Ciro D. Rodriguez Cancer Career Development Award at the *Redes En Acción* 2001 National Steering Committee meeting.

Dr. Scarinci-Searles' project will explore contextual variables associated with HPV (human papillomavirus) infection and cervical cancer among Latina immigrants. Among Latinas, in comparison with White women, the cervical cancer incidence rate is more than twice as high and the mortality rate is 40 percent greater.

Principal Investigator of the second project is Gregory Talavera, MD, MPH, Assistant Professor in the Graduate School of Public Health, San Diego State University. Dr. Talavera also serves as Co-Principal Investigator of *Redes En Acción's* Southwest Regional Network Center.

His project, titled Smoking Cessation in Latinos Using Pharmacotherapy, will test two interventions to reduce the smoking rate among Latinos. Participants in the study will receive either 1) nicotine replacement therapy in patch, gum or spray plus brief behavioral therapy and self-help materials or 2) brief behavioral therapy and self-help materials alone.

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