



REDES REPORT

The National Latino Cancer Research Network

www.redesenaccion.org

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National research groups feature *Redes* products

Public service announcements (PSAs) promoting Latino cancer clinical trials participation and a book spotlighting Latina breast cancer survivors – all produced by *Redes En Acción* researchers – have been incorporated into new Hispanic/Latino cancer research and awareness efforts across the country.

The broadcast and print PSAs, produced by the *Redes* initiative in 2001, are being exposed to a new audience through the North Central Cancer Treatment Group (NCCTG), which is research-based at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota. And photos and bilingual materials from *Nuestras Historias: Mujeres Hispánicas Sobreviviendo el Cáncer del Seno* (Our Stories: Hispanic Women Surviving Breast Cancer) are showcased on a new Spanish-language Web site produced by the University of Wisconsin (UW)-Madison.

“We’re excited about the opportunity to partner with other research groups to reach Latinas throughout the country,” said Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez, *Redes En Acción* Principal Investigator. “I’m extremely pleased that our products are not only being seen and highly valued by other researchers but are playing a role in their research efforts as well.”

PSA Campaign

In a nationwide media campaign over the past five years, *Redes En Acción* has focused attention on the underrepresentation of Latinos in national clinical trials. Through a series of video, audio and print PSAs, the campaign has encouraged Latinos to learn more about the availability of cancer studies and the benefits of participation.

The PSAs, produced in both Spanish and English, were distributed to television and radio stations and newspapers around the country, providing a toll-free NCI Cancer Information Service telephone number and urging Latinos to call for information about cancer research in general and, in particular, studies taking place in their area.

Recently, the North Central Cancer Treatment Group Latino Project has used the PSAs in an effort to educate the Hispanic/Latino population and solicit interest in clinical trial options available through the NCCTG, a national clinical research group sponsored by the National Cancer Institute. NCCTG



consists of a network of cancer specialists at community clinics, hospitals and medical centers in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

The print PSA developed by *Redes En Acción* was adapted and tailored by the NCCTG Latino Project and displayed at Latino health fairs, community churches, a migrant health clinic and Salvation Army Medical Clinic, and distributed in a Minneapolis/St. Paul area Spanish-language newspaper. In addition, the print piece was included in a display the Mayo Clinic Cancer Education Program uses at community outreach events, and broadcast PSAs have been aired by the Clear Channel Radio Station.

Dr. Judith S. Kaur, Associate Professor of Oncology at Mayo Clinic College of Medicine, oversees the Health Disparities Committee for the NCCTG, which is sponsoring the Latino Project.

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Redes En Acción: The National Latino Cancer Research Network is a major Community Networks Program initiative supported by the National Cancer Institute.

The primary purpose is to create 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, *Redes En Acción* is establishing training and research opportunities for Latino students and researchers, generating research projects on key cancer issues impacting Latinos and supporting cancer awareness activities.

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AWARENESS

Michelle Quinones, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Putting patients first

Elizabeth “Michelle” Quinones, Patient Access Coordinator /Medical Assistant at Albert Einstein Medical Center (AEMC) in Philadelphia, works to raise the level of cancer awareness among Latinos – one patient at a time.

A certified translator by the AEMC Language Bank, her ability to communicate with Spanish-speaking patients is only part of what Michelle brings to her position each day. Helping patients navigate the cumbersome managed care system, she assists them with the referral process, addressing difficult questions about medical coverage, instructions for medications, procedures and treatment. And she participates in clinical team meetings and process improvement groups.

“The relationship that I try to establish with the Latino cancer patients is to make them feel that they are also part of



my family,” says Michelle, who has been working at the AEMC community cancer center for the past five years. “I want them to feel that I am here to assist them in every way possible and that they are not alone...I want them to feel that we care very much for them.”

What is most fulfilling is “a sense that I have given them a small amount of hope. I take my job very seriously, and I am there to make it a little easier for them. Throughout their treatment plan and visits to the office, the gratitude that is extended to me from the patients is one that at times is very overwhelming.”

The motto of the AEMC health care network is “Put Patients First.” For Michelle Quinones it’s not a motto – it’s a personal mission.

NEW PROJECTS /
NUEVOS PROYECTOS

Colorectal Cancer Screening

A new project led by *Redes En Acción* researchers in the Southwest Region is investigating colorectal cancer screening among Latinos, addressing social, cultural and system barriers.

The two-year study, called Project *Pregunte sobre Poli*: Colorectal Cancer Screening in Primary Care Practice, is led by Drs. Gregory Talavera, Monica Yepes-Rios, Linda Gallo and Ming Ji, and funded by the National Institutes of Health. The study builds on findings from a pilot project supported by the National Cancer Institute through *Redes En Acción*.

One of the primary aims of the study is to develop a culturally sensitive intervention that will increase knowledge, modify culture-bound beliefs and empower patients with the decision-making ability to participate in an accepted screening strategy for colorectal cancer.

RESEARCH

Ricardo F. Muñoz, PhD, San Francisco, California

Smoking & the Web

Over the past several years, Dr. Ricardo Muñoz has demonstrated the positive role the Internet can play in helping people kick the smoking habit. Now he’s hoping to expand the audience and underscore the Web’s potential as a behavior-altering tool.



Dr. Muñoz, Professor of Psychology at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), is Principal Investigator of a three-year study funded by the Tobacco-Related Disease Research Program titled Internet Health Research Center: Smoking, Latinos and the Web. He and his

colleagues want to recruit 20,000 Latinos worldwide.

In the first phase of the cutting-edge Internet-based smoking project, the team created a bilingual Web site (www.stopsmoking.ucsf.edu and www.dejardefumar.ucsf.edu) that reached more than 4,500 smokers, including 1,000 Latinos. The study showed abstinence rates of 20% to 26% at six months.

“These rates are similar to those obtained using the nicotine patch or live stop-smoking groups,” Dr. Muñoz says. “If we can demonstrate that we can do this again, we will work toward making stop-smoking Web interventions more available to more smokers. We will also begin to develop Web-based interventions for other health problems that are amenable to behavior change interventions that can be provided via the Internet.”

Born in Peru, Dr. Muñoz is also Chief Psychologist at San Francisco General Hospital (SFGH) and Director of the UCSF/SFGH Latino Mental Health Research Program. He specializes in the prevention and treatment of major depression, and the effect of depression on other health problems, including smoking.

Health history tool available in Spanish

Calling on all Spanish-speaking Americans to “know their family history,” U.S. Surgeon General Richard H. Carmona is urging the use of a free computerized tool designed to help Spanish-speaking families gather their health information.

A recent survey found that 96 percent of Americans believe that knowing family health history is important. However, the same survey found that less than one-third of Americans have ever tried to collect their family’s health history.

Because family health history is such a powerful screening tool, the Surgeon General has created a computerized aid to make it fun and easy for people to maintain a sophisticated portrait of their family’s health. The tool, called “My Family Health Portrait,” will help organize and display a person’s family tree by creating and printing a record of their family’s health history. This record can be used to share with other family members and health care providers to help identify common diseases that may run in families.

“My Family Health Portrait” is available free in either English or Spanish at www.hhs.gov/familyhistory. For a print version, call 1-888-ASK-HRSA.

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Web site

Meanwhile, a comprehensive Web site for Spanish-speaking breast cancer patients and their families is featuring the stories and photos of Latina survivors from *Nuestras Historias*, which was published by *Redes En Acción* in October 2004.

The new Spanish-language site, called *Conviviendo con el Cáncer de Seno* (Living with Breast Cancer), is produced by the UW-Madison Center of Excellence in Cancer Communications Research and funded by the National Cancer Institute. It can be accessed at <http://chess.chsra.wisc.edu/espanol>.

The *Nuestras Historias* book relates the influence of the Hispanic culture on the breast cancer experience and on the coping skills used by many Latina women in battling the disease. For both the book and the new Web site, profiles of the Latina women are presented in both Spanish and English.

“The book focuses on hope and resilience,” notes Dr. Ramirez, “and this collaboration combines state-of-the-art Web technology with proven social science theory to disseminate that message to an extensive audience of Latina women who need to hear it.”

Conviviendo con el Cáncer de Seno is a cultural and linguistic translation of an existing online resource called the Comprehensive Health Enhancement Support System (CHESS) “Living with Breast Cancer” program developed by UW-Madison.

TRAINING

Hosanna Soler-Vilá, PhD, Miami, Florida

Early-career help

Anyone questioning the value of mentorship should talk to Dr. Hosanna Soler-Vilá. An Assistant Professor at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, she has taken full advantage of *Redes En Acción’s* Junior Faculty Training Program.



“Having access to a *Redes En Acción* mentor (*Redes* Co-Principal Investigator Dr. Frank Penedo) is extremely beneficial,” says Dr. Soler-Vilá, who is a Department of Epidemiology and Public Health faculty member.

With Dr. Penedo’s guidance, she is preparing a manuscript titled *Psychosocial Aspects of the Cancer*

Experience among Hispanic/Latino Patients: A Literature Review for submission to a major peer-reviewed journal. In turn, the review will guide the design of a pilot study to be submitted to the National Cancer Institute through *Redes En Acción*.

Dr. Soler-Vilá notes that *Redes En Acción* will also facilitate access to community leaders in cancer issues important to the Latino community, which will contribute significantly to development of the pilot project – and to future research. “When this pilot project is funded, the preliminary data will substantially inform the design of a larger project and greatly increase the chances of securing R01 funding to carry it out.”

Born and raised in Madrid, Spain, Dr. Soler-Vilá obtained her PhD at Florida State University before accepting a National Institute of Mental Health Post-Doctoral Research Fellowship at Yale University School of Medicine. Already, she has experienced firsthand the difficulty young Latino scientists face establishing a research career. This is where programs such as *Redes En Acción* are vital, she emphasizes, in “filling the gap in mentorship and training.”

NOTICIAS: AROUND REDES

• **Northwest Region**

Caring Hands Project Training

Marynieves Diaz-Mendez, Outreach Coordinator for the *Redes En Acción* Northwest Regional Network Center (RNC), has collaborated in two 4-hour workshops as part of the Caring Hands Workers' Association and Economic Development Project for the second year in a row. Caring Hands is a program of United and Active Women, a grassroots community organization, designed to help low-income Latina immigrants achieve better jobs and economic security as home health care providers. The 2006 training workshops were conducted February 4 and 7 to an audience of 24 Latinas.

Health Disparities in Clinical Research

Dr. Eliseo J. Pérez-Stable, Northwest RNC Co-Principal Investigator, delivered a presentation titled Addressing Health Disparities in Cancer Clinical Research at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) Mt. Zion Medical Center to an audience of 50 research coordinators from the UCSF Comprehensive Cancer Center.

• **Southwest Region**

Special Recognition



Dr. Gregory Talavera, Southwest RNC Co-PI, was awarded a County of San Diego Special Commendation Certificate of Appreciation by the San Diego County Board of Supervisors. The honor recognized Dr. Talavera's "outstanding service to the San Diego County Childhood Obesity Action Plan Steering Committee and to benefit the region's youth."

Dr. Talavera has also been invited to serve as a board member on the Medical Advisory Board of the George E. Glenner Alzheimer's Family Centers, Inc.

**PUBLICATIONS /
PUBLICACIONES**

Kaplan CP, Haas JS, Pérez-Stable EJ, Gregorich S, Somkin C, Des Jarlais G, Kerlikowske K. Breast Cancer Risk Reduction Options: Awareness, Discussion, and Use among Women from Four Ethnic Groups. *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers and Prevention*. 2006;15:162-166

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Yepes-Rios M, Reimann JOF, Talavera AC, Ruiz de Esparza A, Talavera GA. Colorectal Cancer Screening Among Mexican Americans at a Community Clinic. *Am J Prev Med*. 2006;30(3):204-210

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National Network Center

Principal Investigator
Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH
Baylor College of Medicine
8207 Callaghan Rd. Ste. 110
San Antonio, Texas 78230
Phone: 210-348-0255
Fax: 210-348-0554
E-mail: aramirez@bcm.tmc.edu

Regional Network Centers

Northeast RNC
J. Emilio Carrillo, MD, MPH
Co-Principal Investigator
Weill Medical College,
Cornell University
New York, New York
Phone: 718-250-8394

Southeast RNC

Frank J. Penedo, PhD
Co-Principal Investigator
Sylvester Comprehensive
Cancer Center
University of Miami, Florida
Phone: 305-243-3981

Central RNC

María Fernández, PhD
School of Public Health
University of Texas
Health Science Center
at Houston
Houston, Texas
Phone: 713-500-9626

Northwest RNC

Eliseo J. Pérez-Stable, MD
Co-Principal Investigator
University of California,
San Francisco
San Francisco, California
Phone: 415-476-9933

Southwest RNC

Gregory A. Talavera, MD, MPH
Co-Principal Investigator
Graduate School of Public Health
San Diego State University
San Diego, California
Phone: 619-594-2362

National Hispanic Medical Association

Elena Rios, MD, MSPH
Washington, DC

Program Consultants

Alfred L. McAlister, PhD
Lucina Suarez, PhD

*We welcome your news items,
story ideas and suggestions.*

Please send them to:

RedesEnAccion@bcm.edu

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