



# Redes Report



The National Latino Cancer Research Network

[www.redesenaccion.org](http://www.redesenaccion.org)

Summer 2005 Vol. 6, No. 1

## NCI funds *Redes* CNP initiative

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 (CNP) initiative, *Redes En Acción* is receiving funding to expand its efforts to fight cancer in Latino communities throughout the United States.

Supported by a new five-year, \$7.2 million NCI grant, *Redes En Acción*: The National Latino Cancer Research Network is directed by Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH. Dr. Ramirez is Professor of Medicine, Director of the Baylor Cancer Center Office of Outreach and Health Disparities Research in Cancer, and Deputy Director of the Chronic Disease Prevention and Control Research Center (CDPCRC) at Baylor College of Medicine. *Redes En Acción* is coordinated within 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 41 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 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 25 projects funded by the initiative targeting cancer disparities in Hispanics/Latinos, African Americans,



*Redes* leaders (l-r): Drs. Frank Penedo, Eliseo Pérez-Stable, Amelie Ramirez, Greg Talavera, Emilio Carrillo and Maria Fernandez

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 have either a local or regional scope of activities.

"This new Community Networks initiative affirms the achievements of *Redes En Acción* over the past five years."

—Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH  
Principal Investigator

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 has

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.

*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.

The *Redes Report* is produced quarterly by *Redes En Acción*: The National Latino Cancer Research Network, NCI Grant No. 1 U01 CA114857-01

## Redes En Acción: New Horizons

How do you make a successful program even more effective? That's the challenge — and the goal — for the *Redes En Acción* nationwide team.

"In terms of the objectives we established for the initiative five years ago, we feel a sense of pride in what has been achieved," said Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez, Principal Investigator. "Now, over the next five years, we intend to continue and expand our cancer research, training and awareness activities to make an even stronger impact within the Latino community."

Planned research activities include

1) development of disparity-related pilot projects; 2) national, regional and local policy studies examining factors that influence disparities in access to cancer control and prevention; and 3) evaluation of an experimental intervention designed to improve the capacity of Latina women with regard to navigating community health care systems that provide cancer screening and care.

Public and professional education activities will include outreach aimed at raising awareness of disparities in cancer prevention and control and of the need for policy and organizational changes that will 1) improve access to cancer screening and treatment services and 2) increase use of beneficial interventions to reduce

disparities (including clinical trial participation).

Training activities will include mentoring and pilot research support for students and junior scientists developing careers in research aimed at understanding and reducing Latino cancer disparities.

Another objective of the initiative over the next five years will be the development — with community-based research partners — of competing independent grant applications stemming from the pilot projects and other resources to reduce cancer health disparities. The program also will provide technical assistance for community-based organizations and Latino researchers to submit successful proposals for federal or other funding.

## Building on past achievements

As is often the case in the scientific realm, current and future success is typically built upon foundations laid in the past. The new *Redes En Acción* Community Networks Program (CNP) initiative of the National Cancer Institute (NCI) serves as a prime example.

Thirteen years prior to the CNP program, the National Hispanic Leadership Initiative on Cancer (NHLIC): *En Acción* was launched by NCI in what was considered the most extensive campaign ever waged to combat cancer in Latinos. The program, funded from 1992 to 1999, developed a national infrastructure, with sites in California, Texas, New York and Florida.

NHLIC: *En Acción* was a community-based initiative, conducting the first comprehensive assessment of cancer risk factors among the major populations of Latinos: Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cuban Americans, and Central and South Americans. The research and outreach program developed and effected state-of-the-art cancer prevention and control strategies tailored to these diverse groups, impacting populations in six heavily Hispanic/Latino sites: San Francisco, San Diego, Miami, Brooklyn, San Antonio and Brownsville, Texas.

NHLIC: *En Acción* was implemented

under the leadership of Principal Investigator Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH. Today, Dr. Ramirez and two of the original NHLIC: *En Acción* Co-Principal Investigators, Drs. Eliseo Pérez-Stable and Greg Talavera, are among the current leaders of the new *Redes En Acción* CNP, which will be supported by NCI through 2010.

Joining the program as a Co-PI during the initial *Redes En Acción* Special Populations Networks (SPN) initiative was Dr. Frank Penedo. In addition, new Co-PI's for the CNP program are Drs. Emilio Carrillo and Maria Fernandez.

"For the *Redes En Acción* SPN (2000-2005), we were able to take advantage of the strong infrastructure and leadership developed years before, in the NHLIC: *En Acción* program," Dr. Ramirez said. "During the past five years, that team of researchers has expanded our network to an unprecedented level to effectively recruit and involve diverse institutions, agencies and community-based organizations in the battle against cancer disparities among our country's 41 million Latinos.

"Now, looking ahead, we'll combine the knowledge and experience gained over the past 13 years with the extensive network of collaborators developed across the United States

since 2000, and expand our efforts to make an even greater impact on cancer prevention and control in Latino communities."

For its Regional Network Centers (RNCs) across the country, *Redes En Acción* will utilize the organizational framework already in place in Miami (Southeast RNC), New York City (Northeast RNC), San Francisco (Northwest RNC) and San Diego (Southwest RNC), and establish a new Central RNC in Houston. As in the *Redes* SPN program, regional advisory groups in each of these sectors of the country will help in development of cancer awareness, research and training activities.

The National Network Center will continue to operate in San Antonio and Houston under the Chronic Disease Prevention and Control Research Center at Baylor College of Medicine.



For NHLIC: *En Acción*, community volunteers helped distribute educational materials within neighborhoods in sites across the country.



# PROGRAM LEADERS

## PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR



**Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH**  
Houston and San Antonio, Texas

Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez is Professor of Medicine in the Department of Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine

(BCM). She also serves as Director of the Office of Outreach and Health Disparities Research in Cancer at the Baylor Cancer Center and Deputy Director of the Chronic Disease Prevention and Control Research Center in the BCM Department of Medicine.

Over the past 25 years, she has directed numerous federal-, state- and privately funded research programs focusing on human and organizational communication to reduce chronic disease and cancer health disparities affecting Hispanics/Latinos and other populations. She is the recipient of state and national awards in the areas of health disparities research and the advancement of Latinos in medicine, public health and behavioral sciences professions across the United States.

She is a recognized spokesperson for cancer disparities reduction and is a member of various national and regional advisory groups and coalitions. Appointments have included membership on the National Cancer Advisory Board of the National Cancer Institute, the National Advisory Council of the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, Chair of the National Hispanic/Latino Advisory Council of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, Board of Directors for the Lance Armstrong Foundation, and the Media and Counter Marketing Panel of the American Legacy Foundation.

In Texas, she is a member of the Physician Oncology Education Program of the Texas Medical Association, the Comprehensive Cancer Control Coalition of the Texas Department of State Health Services, and the Executive Committees for the Baylor College of Medicine Cancer Center and the University of Texas Health Science Center, San Antonio Cancer Institute.

## CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS



**J. Emilio Carrillo, MD, MPH**  
Northeast Region  
New York, New York

Dr. J. Emilio Carrillo is President and Chief Medical Officer of The New York-Presbyterian

Community Health Plan (NYP-CHP) and Associate Professor of Clinical Public Health and Clinical Medicine at Weill Medical College of Cornell University. He also is an Assistant Attending Physician at New York Presbyterian Hospital.

Dr. Carrillo has received numerous honors and awards during his career. In 2002 the National Boricua Latin Health Organization's Annual Research Award was renamed the J. Emilio Carrillo Research Award.

A graduate of Columbia College and Harvard Medical School, as well as the Harvard School of Public Health, Dr. Carrillo served as President for the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation (a Municipal Corporation created by the State Legislature) from 1990 to 1992.

He then became Director of Primary Care Development/Medical Director for Boriken Neighborhood Health Center, where he developed a model program for primary care clinical systems. In 1993-94, he served as Hospitals and Health Services Advisor to then New York City Mayor-Elect Rudolf Giuliani.

In addition, Dr. Carrillo was Principal Investigator for Smoking Prevention in Hispanic Adolescents, a National Cancer Institute-funded study.



**Maria E. Fernandez, PhD**  
Central Region  
Houston, Texas

Dr. Maria E. Fernandez is an Assistant Professor of Behavioral Sciences at The

University of Texas-Houston Health Science Center, School of Public Health (UTSPH) Center for Health Promotion and Prevention Research (CHPPR).

She also serves as Director of Diversity

Programs for UTSPH and is Principal Investigator of Latinos in a Network for Cancer Control (LINCC). The focus of her research is cancer prevention and control among low-income and minority populations and the application of advanced health communication and interactive technology to health promotion.

Dr. Fernandez has extensive experience in developing health promotion programs for Latinos. As Co-Investigator for an NCI SBIR, she helped develop EMPOWER: Expert Methods for Planning and Organizing Within Everyone's Reach.

Dr. Fernandez is the PI on an NCI-funded Preventive Oncology Academic Award, Repeat Mammography Screening among Low-income and Minority Women, and Co-PI of the Community Outreach Core and Co-Investigator for the Cancer Core for the UTSPH EXPORT grant. Over the past four years she has led the development and evaluation of a CDC-funded study called *Cultivando la Salud* (Cultivating Health) — Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening among Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Women.



## Redes Highlights: 2000-2005 AWARENESS

- ▶ National media/awareness campaigns:
  - ▶ 4 PSAs produced in Spanish and English, distributed to more than 700 TV / radio stations nationwide
  - ▶ Fotonovela produced to raise breast cancer screening awareness
  - ▶ Clinical trials outreach to Latinos pilot project implemented in partnership with CIS, reaching more than 1,000 people in 60 presentations
- ▶ About 350,000 newsletters on cancer prevention and control issues printed
- ▶ More than 1,400 community and professional events conducted to raise awareness of priority Latino cancer issues
- ▶ Interactive Web site developed to raise public awareness of Redes activities
  - ▶ In 2004, more than 142,000 Web site visits and 25,000 downloads, including 1,700 of Redes Latino Cancer Report



**Frank J. Penedo, PhD**  
Southeast Region  
Miami, Florida

Dr. Frank J. Penedo, who also served as Co-PI of the Southeast Region for the *Redes*

*En Acción* SPN, is a clinical health psychologist and assistant professor at the University of Miami Department of Psychology, and the Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center.

He has extensive experience working with chronically ill older ethnic minority populations and is a member of the Geriatrics Research and Education Center at the Miami Veterans Administration Medical Center.

Dr. Penedo's research focuses on group-based cognitive behavioral stress management intervention models in older cancer survivors and older adults living with HIV/AIDS. He has been evaluating the efficacy of stress management interventions designed to improve quality of life and physical health status in these populations. He is also investigating the role of psychosocial factors on disease progression via endocrine and immune mechanisms.

Dr. Penedo is a member of various professional organizations including the Intercultural Cancer Council, American Psychological Association, American Psychosocial Oncology Society, Society of Behavioral Medicine and American Psychosomatic Society.



**Eliseo J. Pérez-Stable, MD**  
Northwest Region  
San Francisco, California

Dr. Eliseo J. Pérez-Stable has served as Co-Principal Investigator of NHLIC: *En Acción* and

the *Redes En Acción* SPN, and will again direct the Northwest Regional Network Center. He is Professor of Medicine and Chief of the Division of General Internal Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco School of Medicine.

Dr. Pérez-Stable is Co-Director of the Medical Effectiveness Research Center for Diverse Populations (MERC) and the Center for Aging in Diverse Communities (CADC), centers at UCSF dedicated to minority health and health disparities research and co-founded by Dr. Pérez-Stable.

Over the years, he has established a

strong record of mentoring young minority investigators to develop their careers. In addition, he has developed an extensive program of research addressing cancer control in Latino and other ethnically diverse populations.

Dr. Pérez-Stable has conducted several studies examining smoking issues, including one that developed a bilingual (Spanish and English) Web-based smoking cessation intervention. Others include a study of nicotine metabolism in four ethnic groups, a study to examine pediatricians' attitudes and behaviors related to the prevention of passive smoke exposure in children, and a randomized study of an innovative intervention to co-manage depressive symptoms in smokers motivated to quit.



**Gregory A. Talavera, MD, MPH**  
Southwest Region  
San Diego, California

Dr. Greg Talavera is an Associate Professor of Public Health at San Diego State University (SDSU) Graduate School of Public Health and an Associate Physician in the Department of Family and Preventive Medicine at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD).

Dr. Talavera also serves as Co-Director of the SDSU Center for Behavioral and Community Health Studies and Research Coordinator of the Hispanic Center of Excellence, UCSD School of Medicine. He

was the Southwest Region Co-PI of both NHLIC: *En Acción* and the *Redes En Acción* SPN initiative.

He has extensive experience mentoring Latino students from SDSU's MPH program, including medical students through the Hispanic Center of Excellence and PhD candidates from the joint (UCSD-SDSU) doctoral program in epidemiology.

Dr. Talavera's research and teaching focus on the needs of indigent Spanish-speaking Latinos, particularly in the areas of chronic disease prevention and control. Research activities include San Diego's Project EXPORT: Community Outreach, Research on Health Disparities and Training.

Dr. Talavera has also provided leadership in smoking research projects, such as Tobacco Cessation in Latinos Using Peer Counselors: *Proyecto Sol 1* and Smoking Cessation among Latinos Using Pharmacotherapy: *Proyecto Sol 2*.

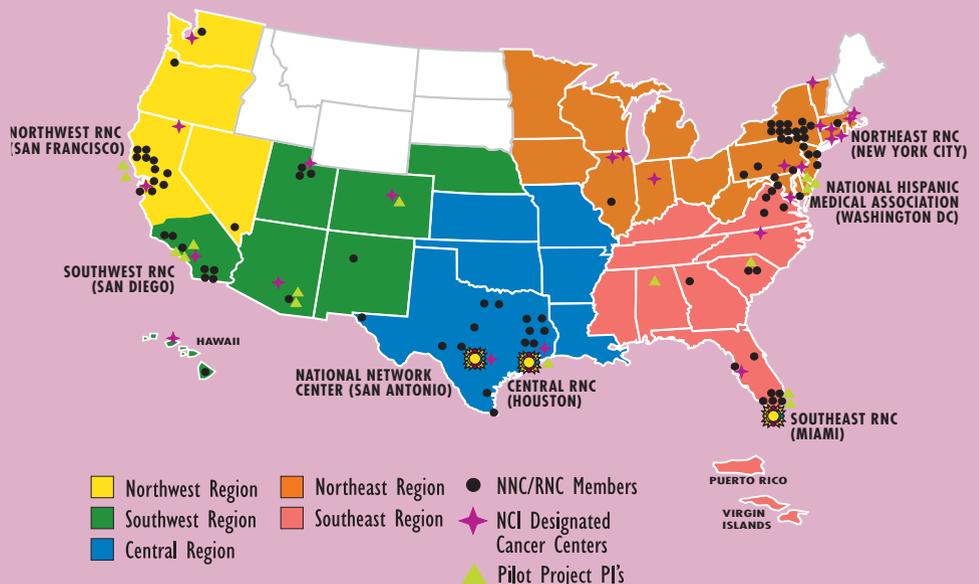


**Elena Rios, MD**  
National Hispanic Medical Association  
Washington, D.C.

Dr. Elena Rios is the President and founder of the National

Hispanic Medical Association (NHMA), which will continue to provide a training and policy advisory role in *Redes En Acción*. Organized in 1994 to address the interests and concerns of Latino

## Redes National Network and Regions





# TRAINING

Redes En Acción Training Program

Category	Funded	Unfunded	Totals
Junior Faculty	22	13	35
Pre/Post-Docs	N/A	24	24
Interns	27	27	54
Other*	N/A	18	18
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>131</b>

\* Community Cancer Ambassador Program

physicians and medical faculty teaching medical and health services research, NHMA provides policy makers and health care providers with expert information and support in strengthening health service delivery to Latino communities nationwide.

Dr. Rios also has served as Director for the Hispanic-Serving Health Professions Schools and co-chairs the Hispanic Health Coalition, which represents 30 national organizations. She has garnered numerous leadership and minority initiative awards and has served on health policy, minority health and review committees.

She founded the Chicano/Latino Medical Student Association and Supernetwork Program of California and the National Network of Latin American Medical Students. Much of her work experience involves recruitment and outreach programs that encourage and help young Latinos in becoming physicians.

During her time in the U.S. DHHS Office on Women's Health as the Advisor on Regional and Minority Women's Health, Dr. Rios developed networks with women's health advocates and policy makers, academic health centers, minority organizations and state government officials.



### PROGRAM CONSULTANTS

#### Alfred L. McAlister, PhD

Dr. Alfred L. McAlister is Professor of Behavioral Sciences at the University of Texas-Houston School of

Public Health and Director of the World Health Organization Collaborating Center. His research interests are health promotion through mass media and community organization, integrated disease and injury prevention, and international and minority health.

A longtime collaborator with the *Redes En Acción* leadership on Latino cancer research projects, Dr. McAlister served as a consultant on both the NHLIC: *En Acción* and *Redes En Acción* SPN programs. For the *Redes* CNP he will help guide proposed health policy research activities, co-direct the Evaluation and Institutionalization Work Group and serve on the National Steering Committee.

Dr. McAlister has developed several major cancer prevention and control projects focusing on the Latino population and led numerous behavioral science experimental community studies to evaluate the effect of health promotion campaigns in Texas and elsewhere in the United States, and in Finland, China and Kazakhstan.



#### Lucina Suarez, PhD

Dr. Lucina Suarez is a Senior Scientist and Director of the Epidemiology Research Services Branch at the Texas Department of State

Health Services in Austin, Texas. She is also an adjunct full professor in epidemiology and biostatistics at the Texas A&M Rural School of Public Health.

With a primary research background in cancer-related issues in Latino

populations, her expertise includes evaluation of cancer control community interventions, survey research, analysis of cancer-related data, and methodological issues.

Dr. Suarez has contributed significant expertise in Latino health concerns as a participant in NHLIC: *En Acción*, the Replication of the *A Su Salud* program, and the *Redes En Acción* SPN. In the *Redes* CNP program, she will participate on the National Steering Committee and, with Dr. Eliseo Pérez-Stable, co-direct the Research Work Group. She will also assist with survey development, data analysis and interpretation, and provide technical assistance to community-based groups with regard to pilot research development.



# RESEARCH

- ▶ 16 pilot projects funded by NCI, totaling \$800,000
- ▶ \$8.6 million in competing grant funding awarded to 7 pilot project principal investigators, based on pilot study results to date
- ▶ National Network Center responsible for almost \$2 million in funding directly generated as a result of the *Redes En Acción* initiative, and \$5.8 million in extramural funding
- ▶ More than 80 new and/or ongoing research projects being led by *Redes En Acción* investigators, totaling \$26 million in value-added projects
- ▶ Surveyed more than 600 Key Opinion Leaders nationwide, culminating in development of the *Redes En Acción* Latino Cancer Report, a consensus set of recommendations aimed at helping to shape a national agenda on Latino cancer prevention and control issues
- ▶ Surveyed more than 700 physicians nationwide to identify specific cancer issues that will contribute to future directions in physician education materials and programs and measure knowledge, attitude and behavioral changes in these issues over time

## Redes En Acción: New Horizons

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Planned research activities include

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NHLIC: *En Acción* was implemented



## Contact Information

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### National Network Center

#### Principal Investigator

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### Program Consultants

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Lucina Suarez, PhD



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