



Redes national meeting focuses on partnerships



From left, Drs. Ernest Hawk, Ed Trapido, Amelie Ramirez and Roland Garcia

Collaborating to address Latino cancer issues was the theme of the 6th Annual *Redes En Acción* National Steering Committee Meeting, which drew more than 75 participants representing federal, academic and community organizations, institutions and foundations across the country.

Through a variety of individual and panel presentations, participants gained insight from a wide range of partnering perspectives – from the National Cancer Institute (NCI) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to community and advocacy organizations to foundations and other nonprofit groups.

In outlining NCI cancer center efforts to impact health disparities of minority and underserved populations, keynote speaker Ernest T. Hawk, MD, MPH, noted that “progress has been made...but there’s a lot of work to be done.” Dr. Hawk, Director of the NCI Office of Centers, Training and Resources, told the *Redes* participants, “We are very enthusiastic about

working with your group as well as others to do our job more effectively. We have a lot to learn and I look forward to working with you in the future.”

He provided an overview of current cancer center disparity activities, particularly in research and training, and noted an expansion of focus in clinical trial minority participation to include both therapeutic intervention and nontherapeutic prevention trials. In addition, he highlighted NCI training activities, particularly the Minority Institution Cancer Center Partnership Program.

“The objectives of the program speak directly to the issue of cancer health disparities and how cancer centers can more effectively do their jobs by building partnerships with institutions focused on that issue specifically,” he said.

In addition to Dr. Hawk, National Steering Committee members and other meeting participants heard Eddie Reed, MD, Director of CDC’s Division

Dr. Eddie Reed



of Cancer Prevention and Control discuss CDC efforts to improve the cancer health of Latinos and other minority populations and ways that organizations such as *Redes En Acción* can work with the agency.

The meeting’s luncheon program provided highlights of Congressional activities focusing on Hispanic health

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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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RESEARCH

Guadalupe X. "Suchi" Ayala, PhD, San Diego, California

Diet and Latinos

Is there any doubt that the traditional Mexican diet provides a protective effect with regard to cancer? For Dr. Guadalupe Ayala, the answer is no.

"Although the evidence is mixed with respect to fat, there is strong evidence linking fruit, vegetable and meat consumption to cancer," she says. "We know that the 'traditional' Mexican diet, for example, is high in fruit and vegetable consumption. Yet, as people acculturate to the U.S., they tend to consume fewer of these protective foods."

Dr. Ayala's primary areas of research include studying the determinants of overweight and obesity in the Latino community, and developing theory-driven family- and community-based approaches to prevent obesity and reduce risk of

cancer among Latino families. An Assistant Professor in the Graduate School of Public Health at San Diego State University, she also serves as Research Core Director of the San Diego Prevention Research Center, a CDC-funded center focused on increasing physical activity and well-being among Latino families.



She is Principal Investigator of Marketing Health to Latinos Through Tiendas, a two-year, NCI-funded study exploring the efficacy of an environmental change intervention, conducted in small grocery stores (tiendas), on Latino customers' fruit and vegetable purchasing behavior.

"I am driven to study Latino dietary habits because as with many other cultures, food is central to our culture," says Dr. Ayala. "Food not only nourishes our body, it nourishes our soul. It helps us maintain a connection to our culture, to our heritage."

Redes publications listed in new online resource

The bilingual *Buena Vida* publications produced by *Redes En Acción* researchers are highlighted in a new compendium of tools to address disparities.

The publications, which serve as user-friendly educational materials addressing breast cancer, cervical cancer, cancer screening and clinical trials participation, are now listed in Communications Resources to Close the Gap, produced by America's Health Insurance Plans (AHIP). The compendium of resources can be accessed at www.ahip.org.

The AHIP guide provides a listing of tools, Web sites and recommendations on how to incorporate culturally and linguistically appropriate messages into everyday communications with consumers. As a .pdf file, the compendium can be downloaded and printed free.

To view the *Buena Vida* publications, visit www.redesenaccion.org.

AWARENESS

Marbelly Miranda Walker, MD, Houston, Texas

¡Viva La Revolución!

Dr. Marbelly Walker is actively engaged in what she calls the "revolution of awareness."

As Latina Program Coordinator and an educator for the Y-ME Texas Gulf Coast, she works in the community, conducting breast health workshops and promoting screening mammograms for low-income and uninsured/underinsured women. Taking the message to women in churches, community centers and elsewhere, last year 249 area Latinas were screened thanks to the efforts of Y-ME, a nonprofit organization that provides peer support for breast cancer patients.



"We are creating consciousness and awareness, and now the women are bringing the information to others," says Dr. Walker. "Now that we planted the seed, they are willing to take control of their health and to help others as well."

In addition to her educational role, she helps Latinas with abnormal results after their screening mammograms receive follow-up testing, acts as an interpreter for Latinas who are diagnosed with breast cancer, volunteers for the Hispanic breast cancer support group *Las Rosas Vivas*, and much more.

"My biggest reward is to know that I'm helping my community and that I'm an active participant in this 'revolution of awareness,'" she emphasizes. "Knowing that I can be the voice for those without a voice is a great satisfaction."

Dr. Walker was born and received her MD in Nicaragua, specializing in pathological anatomy. In 2004, she was honored with the DOVE Healthcare Service Award from *Glamour Magazine* in Spanish.

IN MEMORIAM

Soraya: Advocate, Friend

When talented Latina singer / songwriter Soraya lost her battle with breast cancer, the world lost a strong and articulate advocate for women everywhere. Armed with a gift for touching the heart of every person she met, Soraya was a voice for Latinas and for all who have suffered from breast cancer. Her influence knew no boundaries. Her personality, her talent, her courage, her poise and dignity – even and especially in the fight for her life – were an inspiration to so many around the world. Those who knew her are lucky to have been able to call her a friend. And all who follow are fortunate to have her words and her music to remember her by, and to remember her courageous battle, and to always remind us why we must continue to do all within our power to defeat this terrible disease. Her presence on the front lines in the fight against breast cancer will be missed – but even more, we will miss our friend.



Happy Birthday: CIS turns 30

The National Cancer Institute’s Cancer Information Service (CIS) recently celebrated its 30th anniversary.

A vital component of the modern CIS is its Partnership Program, through which CIS reaches out to minority and other medically underserved populations. The regional CIS offices identify communities that suffer an unequal burden of cancer and lack access to services, and work with organizations trusted by these communities to address those gaps. For example, Partnership Program staff participate on the *Redes En Acción* National and Regional advisory networks to implement a variety of cancer education initiatives.

Redes congratulates the CIS and looks forward to 30 more years of service!

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presented by Elena Rios, MD, MSPH, President and CEO of the National Hispanic Medical Association. The luncheon also included an audio-visual tribute to singer / songwriter Soraya, an active advocate for Latina women, who died of breast cancer earlier this year.

The meeting’s full slate of panels included discussions focusing on opportunities for Latino cancer disparity collaboration with community organizations, national groups, nonprofits, NCI components and cancer centers. The steering committee also received overviews of recent pilot projects funded by *Redes En Acción* through the NCI and examples of success stories – investigators who have used previous pilot projects as the basis to attain funding for more expansive Latino cancer studies.

TRAINING

Elizabeth Guevara, MD, Brooklyn, NY

Latino oncologists wanted

Dr. Elizabeth Guevara has a message for young Latinos who may be considering entering the field of oncology: we need you.

And a second message: if you decide to pursue this challenge, you’ll find some excellent career opportunities.

Dr. Guevara teaches in the Fellowship Hematology/Oncology Program at The Brooklyn Hospital Center and sees patients in her private practice.

“Oncology is a changing field,” she points out, “with ample opportunities to work and to develop new ideas.



There is an increased awareness of the magnitude of the problem affecting the Latino community, with vast implications for the future.”

Dr. Guevara underscores the health implications of the ever-growing Latino population and the consequent health disparities.

“For Hispanic patients, it is very important to be able to communicate in their own language and be attended by doctors that will have an understanding of the many cultural differences that play a role in getting proper care,” she says.

Additional needs are culturally appropriate “outreach campaigns of education in cancer early detection, screening and information about the services available to patients.”

Dr. Guevara sees increased attention to these needs focusing greater attention on Latinos in the future.

“Resources are being allocated to develop a variety of programs within our field,” she says.

“It is an exciting time to be in our field, to work for the community, with many opportunities for very challenging and rewarding careers.”

NOTICIAS: AROUND REDES

• **Southwest Region**

Dr. Ana Maria Lopez made the cover of *Tucson Lifestyle* recently after being named to the magazine's list of best doctors in Tucson. An Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine and Pathology at the University of Arizona and Medical Director of the Arizona Telemedicine Program at the Arizona Cancer Center, she was nominated for the honor by her physician peers. Dr. Lopez was Principal Investigator of a pilot project funded by NCI through *Redes En Acción* focusing on the feasibility of telecolposcopy for cervical cancer.



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• **National Network Center**

Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez, *Redes En Acción* Principal Investigator, was appointed to the National Children's Study Advisory Committee of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. The committee makes recommendations on the planning, development and implementation of a national longitudinal study of

environmental influences on child health and development.

• **Northwest Region**

Dr. Eliseo J. Pérez-Stable, Northwest RNC Co-Principal Investigator, served as Co-Chair of the Minority Investigators Workshop on Behavioral Research Methodologies sponsored by the National Cancer Institute in San Francisco and presented on *Measurement of Race, Ethnicity and Social Class in Research*. Selected through a competitive application process were 25 minority investigators. Of the six Latinos in attendance, four had connections to *Redes En Acción*.



Dr. Pérez-Stable also participated at the Health Policy Seminar for the Health Services Research Trainees at the Institute for Health Policy Studies (IHPS) and the Institute for Health and Aging (IHA), University of California, San Francisco (UCSF). The lecture was part of the Spring Speakers' Series on the current social and racial/ethnic disparities in health. He presented a paper titled *Addressing Health Disparities in Cancer Control Research*.

PUBLICATIONS / PUBLICACIONES

Penedo FJ, Dahn JR, Biing-Jiun S, Schneiderman N, Antoni MH. Ethnicity and Determinants of Quality of Life after Prostate Cancer Treatment. *Urology*. 2006;67:1022-1027

Ramirez AG, Vélez LF, Chalela P, Grussendorf J, McAlister A. Tobacco Control Policy Advocacy Attitudes and Self-Efficacy among Ethnically Diverse High School Students. *Health Education & Behavior*. 2006;33(4):502-514

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