

Regional

California cancer research symposium

The California Cancer Research Program will sponsor its first Research Symposium on April 18, 2001, in Sacramento at the Holiday Inn Capitol Plaza. For more information and to request an announcement, please contact Trish Koplin at 916-322-8742 or email tkoplin@dhs.ca.gov. The Cancer Research Program's web site (still under partial construction) is: www.dhs.ca.gov/crpf/.

California BCEDP Consumer 800 number

The California Breast Cancer Early Detection Program Consumer 800 Number (800-511-2300) is a statewide resource for assisting underserved women to receive breast cancer screening. It is a program of the Cancer Detection Section of the California Department of Health Services. The BCEDP 800 number is provided through a contract with the Northern California Cancer Center (NCCC).

Calling the BCEDP is often the first step for many women in receiving a potentially life-saving breast and cervical exam. The BCEDP 800 number pre-qualifies and refers underserved women for free cancer screening statewide. Information Specialists speak Spanish and English. Services are also available in Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese, and Korean.

Latina cancer support group facilitator project

The Northern California Cancer Center (NCCC) has developed a training program for support group facilitators working with Spanish-speaking cancer patients. Successful Latina cancer support groups are underway in San Francisco, Santa Clara, and Alameda counties. If your organization is interested in supporting a group of Latina cancer patients, or you know of patients who could benefit from these groups, contact Pam Priest-Naeve at 510-429-2500.

Regional President's Cancer Panel meeting

Feb 1-2, 2001, University of Southern California (USC), Los Angeles, CA
This meeting will feature speakers from Alaska, California, Guam, Hawaii, Oregon and Washington, and will also consider issues related to Asian/Pacific populations.
For information, e-mail: pcp-r@mail.nih.gov

HELPLINE phone numbers

California Smokers' HELPLINE
English - 800-7-NO BUTTS
Español - 800-45-NO FUME

NOTICIAS

News to Use

National

Cancer Awareness

January
Cervical Cancer Month
For information:
Phone 888-909-3849
e-mail nccack@nccc-online.org

March

National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month
For information:
Phone 800-227-CRFA or 703-836-4412
<http://www.preventcancer.org/>

National Nutrition Month

For information:
Phone 312-899-0040
<http://www.eatright.org>

Calendar

President's Cancer Panel

January 18-19, 2001 in New York, NY
Theme: "Improving Cancer Care for All – Applying Research Results, Ensuring Access, Ending Disparities"
Sponsored by NCI
For information:
Phone 301-496-5708
e-mail quickl@dea.nci.nih.gov

Intercultural Cancer Council Governing Board – Annual Business Meeting & ICC National Network Meeting – Mid-Atlantic Region

February 3-6, 2001 in Washington, D.C.
For information: e-mail icc@bcm.tmc.edu

18th Annual International Breast Cancer Conference

March 1-3, 2001 in Miami Beach, FL
For information:
http://www.cancerconf.com/Conference_info/conf_erece_info.html

Association of Community Cancer Centers (ACCC) – 27th Annual National Meeting

March 28-31, 2001 in Washington, DC
For information:
Phone 301-984-9496
e-mail mmay@accc-cancer.org
<http://www.accc-cancer.org>

Awards



Jose R. Marti, MD, *Redes En Acción* Co-Principal Investigator for the Northeast Regional Network Center, was honored by the Borough of Brooklyn during Hispanic Heritage Month in Brooklyn. The award goes to a Hispanic-American who has made a noteworthy contribution to the borough.



Helen McCarthy, RN, OCN, MPA, has been awarded the St. George Medal by the American Cancer Society. This is a national award for outstanding leadership and contribution as a volunteer. McCarthy is Project Manager/Research Associate for the *Redes En Acción* Northeast Regional Network Center. Both McCarthy and Dr. Marti were actively involved in the NCI-funded National Hispanic Leadership Initiative on Cancer: *En Acción* program, which



preceded *Redes En Acción*.

Remember...

The CIS (Cancer Information Service) is an excellent source of cancer information for the Spanish-speaking public. As the NCI's link to the public, the CIS interprets and explains research findings in a clear and understandable manner. Through a network of 14 regional offices, the CIS serves the entire country, including Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Both Spanish- and English-language callers can receive a personal response to specific questions about cancer, as well as resources for cancer programs and services in their communities. Examples of information available include cancer types, symptoms, treatments and clinical trials. Please encourage your Spanish-speaking audience to call the following toll-free number:

1-800-4-CANCER
(1-800-422-6237)

Redes web site in development

In coming weeks, *Redes En Acción* will launch a web site operating on the Internet. One of the earliest and best benefits will be the ability for members of the National Steering Committee, colleagues and consultants, Regional Network Center personnel and members of the media to communicate with the National Network Center and with one another.

The site's home page also will contain basic information available to anyone about *Redes En Acción*: goals and objectives, activity timeline, personnel, maps of the regions, telephone numbers and addresses of principal participants. It will include resource lists, research (original and attributed), and "where to look" information for laypersons.

Redes En Acción intends to build the site quickly into an interactive site, listed with major browsers, where individuals can find a wide range of cancer information as it relates to Hispanics as well as links with other "like-minded" institutions and organizations. Eventually, the site may provide information about scholarships and grants for Hispanic students seeking to enter medical or health-related studies, a list of clinics and clinical trials, and other timely and topical data.

Future plans also call for integrating this site into the lists used by public schools, universities, libraries, health clinics and media outlets.

Watch future issues of *Redes Report* for announcements about the availability and status of the new *Redes En Acción* web site.

The *Redes Report* is produced quarterly by *Redes En Acción*: Cancer Awareness, Research and Training, NCI Grant No. UO 1 CA 86117-01

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

Jose R. Marti, MD
Co-Principal Investigator
The Brooklyn Hospital Center
Brooklyn, NY

Southeast RNC

Edward J. Trapido, ScD
Co-Principal Investigator
Sylvester Comprehensive
Cancer Center
University of Miami, Florida

North Central RNC

Aida L. Giachello, PhD
Co-Principal Investigator
Midwest Latino Health
Research Center
University of Illinois at Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

South Central RNC

Martha A. Medrano, MD, MPH
Co-Principal Investigator
Medical Hispanic Center
of Excellence
University of Texas Health
Science Center at San Antonio
San Antonio, Texas

Northwest RNC

Eliseo J. Pérez-Stable, MD
Co-Principal Investigator
University of California,
San Francisco
San Francisco, California

Southwest RNC

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

National Hispanic Medical Association

Elena Rios, MD, MSPH
Washington, DC

Program Consultants

Alfred L. McAlister, PhD
Lucina Suarez, PhD



Redes Steering Committee identifies Hispanic cancer issues and priorities

The *Redes En Acción* National Steering Committee, reflecting a broad spectrum of backgrounds and views, met in its inaugural session in San Antonio August 23-25, 2000 to begin identifying and prioritizing Hispanic cancer issues.

Forty members of the highly diverse National Steering Committee (NSC), representing academic institutions, federal and private entities, and various national community-based organizations, spent three days discussing and debating the issues during this critical year 1 planning session for the *Redes En Acción*. Cancer Awareness, Research and Training program.



The National Steering Committee meeting draws more than 40 Hispanic cancer authorities along with *Redes En Acción* investigators and staff members.

Principal Investigator Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH, called the meeting "a highly successful first step in developing a national Hispanic cancer agenda." Dr. Ramirez is Associate Professor of Medicine and Deputy Director of the

[continued on page 4](#)

Regional advisory groups offer additional feedback

Following the inaugural National Steering Committee meeting, Hispanic cancer issues prioritized by participants were provided to the six regional centers of *Redes En Acción* for further discussion and input within their Regional Center Advisory Committees. Those six regions extend individually from cities with large Hispanic/Latino populations: New York, Miami, Chicago, San Diego, San Francisco and San Antonio.

Since September, *Redes* Co-Principal Investigators have conducted similar Hispanic cancer issue prioritization sessions with their Regional Center Advisory Councils. Membership of the individual regional groups are similar in makeup to that of the National Steering Committee: cancer scientists, academicians, health care providers, representatives of federal and private entities, and administrators of community-based organizations.

The purpose of these meetings was to receive feedback and input into Hispanic cancer issue prioritization from all areas of the country. The next step in developing consensus for a national Hispanic cancer agenda is to incorporate the findings from the national and regional committees into surveys that will be conducted in early 2001 with Hispanic physicians and key opinion leaders nationally.

Inside



Welcome to the winter 2000/2001 *Redes Report*. This is our second issue, and we're extremely excited about the progress of *Redes En Acción* and the developments we'd like to share with you in this newsletter.

Our primary focus is on the high level and quality of participation in our inaugural National Steering Committee, in which the discussion of Hispanic cancer issues was extremely intense and most edifying. That discourse carried over to the initial meetings of our Regional Center Advisory Committees, where experts and authorities in all areas of the United States were given the opportunity to weigh in on these important issues.

In this issue, you will also find brief profiles of individuals in various regions of the country who are making significant contributions in the areas of Hispanic cancer research, education and public awareness. We consider these individuals to be exemplary "role models": a researcher in San Francisco, a doctoral student in San Diego and the developer of breast cancer programs for Latinas in Chicago. We plan to make role model profiles such as these a central element of the quarterly *Redes* newsletters, and we hope you'll enjoy their stories.

We plan to keep you up-to-date on the progress we're making with *Redes En Acción* activities, and in this issue you'll find stories about the exciting plans we have for a new web site and for our new partnership with the Latino Council on Alcohol and Tobacco in a tobacco prevention and control network funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

And don't forget to look for our regular Noticias/NewsToUse column, featuring brief items from throughout the country: important upcoming conferences and other pieces of information about Hispanic cancer issues. We hope you'll find it helpful. And if you have pertinent information you'd like to share through this column, please feel free to submit items via fax, e-mail or regular mail. You'll find information about how to contact us in the mastbox on the back.

Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH
Principal Investigator
Redes En Acción



MENTORS

Shaping Careers

Guadalupe Xochitl (Suchi) Ayala
San Diego

For doctoral student Guadalupe Xochitl (Suchi) Ayala, a variety of key mentorships and associations with established researchers have been instrumental in her career development. Mentors at each step of her higher education – undergraduate, master's and doctoral levels – have provided valuable insight in such areas as data collection and analysis, grant writing, manuscript preparation and community-wide approaches to health promotion.

Ayala, a doctoral student in the Joint Doctoral Program in Clinical Psychology at San Diego State University/University of California, San Diego and a Health Promotion master's student in the Graduate School of Public Health at San Diego State University, considers herself fortunate to have the opportunity to work with "the right mentor at the right time in her career."

Equally important to her career development, however, has been her contact with health professionals from diverse backgrounds who have helped her feel confident in her abilities

and potential as a researcher. One of these is Dr. Deborah Parra-Medina of the University of South Carolina, who encouraged her to pursue research in Latino health. "Dr. Parra-Medina encouraged me to expand my perspective and purpose for research to make it meaningful to the community," said Ayala.

In addition to providing hands-on training, Dr. Parra-Medina approached their interactions with the assumption that Ayala could accomplish the task at hand. "When I met Suchi I saw a reflection of myself – a dedicated person charting unknown waters," recalled Dr. Parra-Medina.

Ayala holds a master's degree in experimental psychology from California State University, San Marcos, and has more than seven years of experience in the health research field, including four years experience working with Spanish-dominant populations. She is currently working as Project Manager on an NIH-sponsored health communication project entitled "Innovative Nutrition Communication for Latinos." Her passions in research include health promotion with Latinos, research methodology and analysis, and women's health issues.

To Dr. Parra-Medina, Ayala's potential was never in doubt. "She may have questioned her abilities but I never did," she noted. "I could see that she had the *ganas*."



RESEARCH

Helping Hispanics

Dr. Celia Kaplan
San Francisco

Dr. Celia Kaplan, Assistant Adjunct Professor and health researcher at the University of California, San Francisco, has spent much of her career working on projects focusing on Latino health.

At the Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center, where she initiated her research career, Dr. Kaplan participated in numerous NCI projects on cancer prevention among Latinas. Recent work has included various cancer prevention studies of low-income, uninsured women and health risk behaviors of Latino youth and their mothers. In an upcoming study, Dr. Kaplan will be examining breast cancer reduction practices in women of different ethnic groups.

"My hope is that the knowledge gained from these studies will add to the already growing body of research now available to Latinos," she said. "The information we gather collectively can be

useful for policy makers and those in community organizations to build effective programs and make informed decisions about what is best for their communities."

As a member of the Medical Effectiveness Research Center at UCSF, she works closely with Dr. Eliseo Pérez-Stable, the Northwest Regional director of *Redes En Acción*. Her primary research interests are women's health, cancer prevention and control, and adolescent risk behaviors, with a focus on minority populations. A native of Argentina, Dr. Kaplan received a master's degree in Latin American Studies and a doctorate of public health at UCLA.

Dr. Kaplan credits much of her professional success to fellow researchers and collaborators in the field of cancer prevention. "Their support and mentorship have helped me gain the confidence, understanding, and expertise to embrace larger research endeavors," she noted.



Dr. Catalina Reyna Ramos
Chicago

When Dr. Catalina Reyna Ramos began working with the Y-ME National Breast Cancer Organization as Bilingual Community Educator in 1994, she was unaware of the impact of cancer on Latinas in this country. Earlier, as a physician (graduate of the Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico), she had seen relatively little cancer among her patients in Mexico.

Today, her focus has changed dramatically. As Director of Services for Special Populations of Y-ME, which is headquartered in Chicago and has 26 chapters throughout the U.S., Dr. Ramos is dedicated to helping overcome what she refers to as an overall lack of cancer awareness among the Latino population. She has organized a network of volunteers, all breast cancer survivors or their family members to aid in the effort.

The multifaceted Latino program she developed for Y-ME includes components ranging from community awareness to support services. These components include community education, annual media campaigns, peer support groups and

services for women with cancer, a Spanish-language newsletter and other educational materials, a 24-hour hotline (1-800-986-9505) that receives 6,000 calls annually from Latinas, and a bilingual Internet site (www.y-me.org).

In addition, the Y-ME Latino program has initiated a comprehensive health event, Festival de la Mujer, which motivates older women to have mammograms onsite or by referral, and provides breast health alternatives for younger women who accompany them.

Dr. Ramos attributes the success of the Y-ME Latino programs to "paying attention to psychosocial issues and dealing with fears, designing interactive programs with the community (including initiating pilot programs first), setting clear long- and short-term objectives, evaluating each program with quality indicators, working in partnerships with many groups, and having a medical advisory board."

Dr. Ramos harbors concerns, including the fact that emotional issues are ignored when diagnoses are made. In addition, based on calls to the hotline, she feels more attention should be focused on the plight of rural Latinas with breast cancer. "They face long distances to services, delays in getting treatment and fewer alternatives such as getting mastectomies instead of radiation therapy," she said.



LCAT-REDES COLLABORATION

Takes aim at tobacco use

The Latino Council on Alcohol and Tobacco (LCAT) is teaming with *Redes En Acción* and other organizations in a new campaign aimed at creating a national network of experts, researchers and community-based organizations working on tobacco prevention and control.

The National Hispanic/Latino Tobacco Prevention and Control Network (NHLTPAC Network) is responsible for expanding leadership training, enhancing current networks with tobacco control and fortifying existing tobacco prevention and control efforts targeting diverse Hispanic subgroups across the country. The project is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The NHLTPAC Network will convene "mini-summit" meetings in conjunction with *Redes En Acción* Regional Network Centers (RNCs). In addition, the NHLTPAC Network and these *Redes* RNCs will collaborate in training and mentoring tobacco prevention and control fellows at each site.

"The collaboration and partnership of *Redes En Acción* and

LCAT's National Tobacco Control Network funded by CDC are of great benefit to the Latino community," said Arlyn Elizée, LCAT Project Director for the National Tobacco Network, formerly with Florida's Office of Tobacco Control's "Truth" Campaign.

"Since smoking accounts for at least 30 percent of all cancer deaths, by providing national tobacco control training and support to the regional Cancer Control Networks, we will help build leadership and capacity to reduce the incidence of tobacco-related illnesses and premature deaths."

"The significance and overall impact and benefit of this partnership affects not only the Latino community," noted Jeannette Noltenius, PhD, LCAT Executive Director, "but the country as a whole, as it reduces the overall smoking and cancer rates, and the costs associated with them."

The ultimate goal of the NHLTPAC is to reduce tobacco prevalence in Hispanic communities by 20 percent and reach Healthy People 2010 goals.

// We will help build leadership and capacity to reduce the incidence of tobacco-related illnesses and premature deaths.//

NEWS FROM NHMA

► *The National Hispanic Medical Association's 5th Annual Conference is scheduled for March 23-25, 2001 in Washington, D.C. The theme of the conference will be "Healthy Hispanic Families."*

The meeting will be at the L'Enfant Plaza Hotel (800-235-6397). Conference registration rates are \$300 per person / \$100 for students. Hotel room rates are \$179 per night / \$149 per night for students.

► *Applications for the Class of 2001 NHMA Leadership Fellowship Program are now being accepted. The one-year program is conducted in conjunction with the Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, New York University.*

Last fall, the 20 physicians in the program, who are all medical directors or professors, participated in the Washington, D.C. Institute, where they discussed trends in health impacting Hispanics. Participating in the Institute with the Fellows were Chris Jennings, Senior Advisor to President Clinton; Dr. David Satcher, Surgeon General; Congresswoman Christenson, Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus Health Brain Trust; Alejandro Perez, Executive Director of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus; numerous other government officials; and representatives from think tanks, the American Medical Association, American Association of Health Plans, Pan American Health Organization and others.

The NHMA Leadership Fellowship Program Fellows also participated in the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Policy Summit.

continued from page 1

Chronic Disease Prevention and Control Research Center at Baylor College of Medicine.

"This was a highly prestigious assemblage of scientists, health care providers, administrators and key community leaders," she said. "They offered their expertise, experience and unique perspectives to the process of framing Hispanic priorities related to cancer education, research and awareness."

In addition to committee members from throughout the United States, meeting participants included U.S. Rep. Ciro D. Rodriguez, D-Texas, who served as honorary chair of the NSC; Dr. George Alexander, National Cancer Institute Program Director for *Redes En Acción*, Co-Principal Investigators directing the *Redes* Regional Network Centers and the National Hispanic Medical Association; and consultants to the *Redes* network.

To emphasize the importance of this mission, Rep. Rodriguez reminded delegates at a breakfast meeting of the legacy of disregard for the health needs of some Hispanics, especially in economically depressed areas.

"You must keep fighting," Congressman Rodriguez told the delegates. As a member

of the House Hispanic Caucus, Rodriguez is seeking to create a separate Committee on Public Health. The congressman said it was vital that organizations such as *Redes En Acción* develop as powerful partners to academic, political and business organizations. With public attention comes influence, and the ability to create partnerships among federal and other public agencies, universities and community clinics, to improve the education of Hispanics about cancer, along with greater access to clinical trials and treatment.

From the more than a dozen Hispanic cancer issues addressed at the conference, the goal is to develop programs and pilot projects in:

- Cancer research targeting Hispanics
- Training health professionals and opening doors into medical fields to Hispanic students through grants and scholarships
- Promoting mentorships
- Promoting cancer awareness among the Hispanic population

As conference participants prepared to prioritize issues, Dr. Ramirez emphasized that the planning process must move quickly because *Redes En Acción* plans to



Redes Principal Investigator Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez and U.S. Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez are interviewed by area media.

launch pilot projects in its regions in years 2 and 3 of the five-year program.

Media coverage of the meeting was extensive. All six area network affiliate television stations sent news crews and ran stories about the conference, including the Spanish-language Univision and Telemundo affiliates. The San Antonio Express-News, the largest newspaper in South Texas, also ran a lengthy "spot news" report. Most of these stories focused on the unique mission of *Redes En Acción* – to create a "first of its kind" clearinghouse of information and resources concerning Hispanics and cancer.

