

## Redes meeting focus: '2010 and beyond'

**R**edes En Acción celebrated its eighth year of success in promoting Latino cancer research, training and awareness with the first National Steering Committee (NSC) meeting ever conducted outside the initiative's San Antonio National Network Center.

The 8th Annual NSC Meeting, which was moved to San Francisco so that its location and timing would dovetail with the first-ever National Latino Cancer Summit, served as a forum for various Latino cancer and health issues and spotlighted the past, present and future of the *Redes En Acción* program. The theme of the event was *Collaborations and Sustainability – 2010 and Beyond*.

"As a co-sponsor of the Latino Cancer Summit, we were able to increase the impact of both the Summit and the *Redes* NSC meeting by convening back-to-back in San Francisco," said Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH, Principal Investigator of *Redes En Acción*. "The dual-conferences intensified the national focus on Latino cancer to a level that I believe is unprecedented."

At the NSC meeting, the *Redes* leadership heard speakers address a wide range of topics – from research, training and public education activities at *Redes* sites to a broad examination of global cancer issues.

María Teresa Canto, DDS, MS, MPH, provided an update on the Community Networks Program (CNP)



Dr. Concepción Diaz-Arrastia and fellow conference participants listen to presentations.



Drs. María Teresa Canto, left, and Amelie G. Ramirez

of the National Cancer Institute's (NCI) Center to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities (CRCHD). Dr. Canto is the Program Director of CRCHD's Disparities Research Branch.

Among the achievements of the CNP, which includes *Redes En Acción*, is the funding of 35 studies so far through the pilot project research program, she said. Another 18 applications from 2007 have been recommended for funding through the pilot program, which has a goal of training junior investigators in community-based participatory research.

Now that *Redes En Acción* is nearing the third and final phase of the CNP, Dr. Canto asked that the initiative's leaders address the following questions:

- What are the key interventions you have been able to identify that will

impact on reducing cancer disparities in your communities?

- How are these interventions being tested or measured to address the disparities?
- What is the dissemination plan for this research?
- What is the proposed plan for replication of the interventions found to be successful?

Another presentation directly related to *Redes En Acción* came from Noshir Contractor, PhD, Professor of Behavioral Sciences at Northwestern University, who described plans to survey 170 members of the *Redes* network. Goal of the project, he said, will be to analyze, visualize and interpret results of the "*Redes* effect" among the

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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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**A W A R E N E S S**

*Maríelena Meza, San Diego, California*

**‘On Top of the World’**

**A**s Maríelena Meza goes about her job as Cancer Program Patient Navigator and Case Manager at the San Ysidro Health Center, she draws inspiration from her family – and, in particular, her mother.

“The feeling I get from doing my job is the greatest feeling in the world, almost hard to describe,” she says. “I think that coming from a Hispanic family and having to grow up watching my mother struggle to communicate in English, find resources and keep her medical appointments despite all of the barriers somehow motivates me.”

Maríelena, who was born in Tijuana, Mexico, understands well the special issues Latinas and their families face – particularly those with low acculturation – when diagnosed



with breast cancer. They must make many complicated treatment decisions with major consequences over a short period of time.

An especially relevant challenge is engaging the health care system for the first time with little or no health insurance and very limited financial resources.

“Limited understanding of the English language is a powerful barrier to communication and quality medical care,” Maríelena says. “Language and literacy may be particularly challenging in treating breast cancer because of the complexity of the information and decision-making process.”

As Patient Navigator, Maríelena helps guide patients through the health care system, identify resources to assist with financial obligations, and much more. It’s a job that brings her great satisfaction.

“When I play my role as Patient Navigator, I feel like I must complete my task and give it 100 percent so that the patient is content,” she says. “And when this happens, it makes me feel on top of the world.”

**R E S E A R C H**

*Marielos Vega, BSN, RN, Newark, New Jersey*

**Promoting Colorectal Cancer Screening**

**W**hen Marielos Vega dropped out of school at the age of 14 to work as a housekeeper to help support her family in her native Costa Rica, it would have been hard to imagine her becoming a cancer researcher and role model for other Latinos. But that is precisely what has happened, and her future keeps looking brighter.

Immigrating to the United States at the age of 20 without a high school education and speaking almost no English, through persistence, dedication and hard work she has earned Registered Nursing and Bachelor of Science in Nursing degrees and is working on her Master of Science in



Nursing. For the past seven years, Marielos has served as Research Nurse in the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, New Jersey Medical School.

Working closely with Ana Natale-Pereira, MD, MPH, her primary research focus is on interventions that promote colorectal cancer screening among Latinos. Some of their early research was funded by the National Cancer Institute through the *Redes En Acción* pilot projects program.

“We’ve found that a major contributor to low screening rates for colorectal cancer includes lack of knowledge about this cancer in the general Newark population,” Marielos says. “Regardless of education, income, race/ethnicity, gender and other variables, most people know very little about colorectal cancer. Lack of knowledge appears to be even greater among immigrant Latinos.”

A current study supported by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services – Minority Health Services Research Program suggests that colorectal cancer training programs aimed at community-based organization leaders could assist in increasing awareness of colorectal cancer and importance of screening among people obtaining services from those organizations.

“Overall this effort will help to increase screening rates and reduce colorectal cancer disparities,” Marielos says.

TRAINING

Patricia A. Areán, PhD, San Francisco, California

# Mentorship: Key to Advancement

For Dr. Patricia (Pat) Areán, the role of mentorship in the development of researchers who seek to overcome Latino health disparities in the community cannot be overstated.



“There is nothing more important than having a dedicated mentor, someone who is truly invested in advancing your career,” she says. “I think anyone can receive ‘training,’ basically the knowledge-based and skill-building aspect of research, but effectively applying that knowledge and those skills to Latino health disparities research is the hard part.

“When it comes to community-based and health disparities research, having access to a seasoned mentor who will not only guide you through the process of this type of research but will also help introduce you to the community and help you gain access to that community is invaluable.”

A Professor of Psychiatry at the University of California, San Francisco, Dr. Areán is Director of the Community-Academic Research Training Alliance and Facilitator of the Department of Psychiatry Mentorship Program at UCSF. She is also Chair of the UCSF Psychiatry Diversity Committee and directs the department’s over-60 research and training program.

Dr. Areán has derived great satisfaction from seeing those she has trained go on to successful careers, feeling empowered and excited about doing research in underserved communities.

“It’s been fulfilling to see the junior people who have worked with me create research careers that have had an impact on low-income and ethnic minority older adults,” she says. “We need more researchers like that out there and I’m glad to be doing my part to build a cadre of solid community-based researchers dedicated to mental health disparities research in ethnic minority populations.”

## New NCI publications available *en español*

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Latinos are the largest minority and the fastest-growing population in the country. In an effort to continue to meet their health care needs, the National Cancer Institute (NCI) is continuing to translate its cancer information publications to Spanish. The most recent additions to these translated and/or updated materials are some of the NCI fact sheets and two What You Need to Know publications:

*Lo que usted necesita saber sobre el cáncer de colon y recto* (What You Need to Know About Cancer of the Colon and Rectum) – This booklet discusses risk factors, screening, symptoms, diagnosis, treatment and sources of support, to name a few of the topics covered. Also available online at [www.cancer.gov/espanol/tipos/necesita-saber/colonyrecto](http://www.cancer.gov/espanol/tipos/necesita-saber/colonyrecto)

*Lo que usted necesita saber sobre el cáncer de seno* (What You Need to Know About Breast Cancer) – This booklet discusses such subjects as possible causes, screening, symptoms, diagnosis, staging, treatment, breast reconstruction and sources of support. Also available online at [www.cancer.gov/espanol/tipos/necesita-saber/seno](http://www.cancer.gov/espanol/tipos/necesita-saber/seno)

The following fact sheets have been revised and are now available:

*El Instituto Nacional del Cáncer de Estados Unidos* (The U.S. National Cancer Institute), (FS 1.23s) – Provides a history of



NCI and its purpose. Also available online at [www.cancer.gov/espanol/instituto/hojas-informativas/descripcion](http://www.cancer.gov/espanol/instituto/hojas-informativas/descripcion)

*Mamografías selectivas de detección: preguntas y respuestas* (Screening Mammograms: Questions and Answers), (FS 5.28s) – Addresses several questions related to mammograms, such as different uses, cost and benefits, as well as breast cancer risk factors, and more. Also available online at [www.cancer.gov/espanol/cancer/hojas-informativas/mamografia-respuestas](http://www.cancer.gov/espanol/cancer/hojas-informativas/mamografia-respuestas)

NATIONAL LATINO CANCER SUMMIT

# ‘A resounding success’

**B**y all accounts, the first-ever national gathering of researchers and community members focused specifically on cancer in Latinos served as a ground-breaking event.

Billed as the inaugural National Latino Cancer Summit, the cutting-edge conference – *Science Meets Service, Moving Forward Together* – drew 325 registrants from across the United States to San Francisco. Participants included scientists, physicians, nurses, educators, community agency administrators, outreach workers, students, cancer survivors, and others.

In summary, the two-day Summit, sponsored by *Latinas Contra Cáncer* (LCC) and co-sponsored by *Redes En Acción*, was “a resounding success,” said Ysabel Durón, Summit convener and LCC founder.

From participant evaluations and comments, as well as e-mail and letter correspondence after the event, the clear message from those in attendance was that “there is a future for the National Latino Cancer Summit,” Durón said.

Much of the glowing feedback, she added, focused on the fact that the cancer discussions centered on Latinos.

“We heard an enthusiasm uncommon to these kinds of intellectual gatherings,” said Durón. “Much of the infectiousness and excitement resulted from turning a spotlight on Latino cancer issues.”

The Summit packed considerable action into two days: seven keynote addresses and 14 panels with 62 panel participants and facilitators. In addition, there were five posters and 20 agency / institution / corporate expo tables. Conference participants came from 21 states and Costa Rica.

“The National Latino Cancer Summit was an extremely ambitious undertaking,” said Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH, *Redes En Acción* Principal Investigator. “I applaud Ysabel and everyone who participated in the planning and implementation for a wonderful job. This conference provided food for thought for all of us who are involved in the Latino cancer field.”

Several *Redes En Acción* leaders participated in the event. In addition to Dr. Ramirez, who was a keynote speaker, Drs. Emilio



Ysabel Durón

Carrillo, Marynieves Díaz-Mendez, Eliseo Pérez-Stable and Elena Rios participated on workshop panels, and Drs. Gregory Talavera and Pérez-Stable served as panel facilitators.

Durón said the Summit met its preliminary goals – to bring together Latino researchers and community agencies and educators, create opportunities for networking and collaboration, and provide a Latino cancer snapshot. However, she added, the conference has already produced some “unexpected” early outcomes:

- An oncologist from Washington state intends to try to create a *promotora* group in her community.
- A researcher reported that, based on what she learned at the conference, she would be able to increase her research activities.
- A Colorado *promotora’s* efforts to solicit testimonials from breast cancer survivors in her community before the Summit has resulted in a decision by those survivors to initiate a local support group.
- Dr. Elmer Huerta, American Cancer Society Board President, said he would ask ACS to make the Summit a line item in its future budget.

From the polls, surveys and evaluations developed before, during and after the event, a Summit final report will be produced. In addition, a University of California, Berkeley Latino Student Task Force will develop a report based on on-site surveys collected by the group.

**Fernandez ME, Wippold R, Torres-Vigil I, Byrd T, Freeberg D, Bains Y, Guajardo J, Coughlin SS, Vernon SW.** Colorectal cancer screening among Latinos from U.S. cities along the Texas-Mexico border. *Cancer Causes Control*. 2008 Mar;19(2):195-206.

**Vernon SW, del Junco DJ, Tiro JA, Coan SP, Perz CA, Bastian LA, Rakowski W, Chan W, Lairson DR, McQueen A, Fernandez ME, Warrick C,**

## PUBLICATIONS / PUBLICACIONES

**Halder A, DiClemente C.** Promoting regular mammography screening II. Results from a randomized controlled trial in U.S. women veterans. *J Natl Cancer Inst*. 2008 Mar 5;100(5):347-58.

**Vernon SW, Tiro JA, Vojvodic RW, Coan S, Diamond PM, Greisinger A, Fernandez ME.** Reliability and validity of a

questionnaire to measure colorectal cancer screening behaviors: does mode of survey administration matter? *Cancer Epidemiol Biomarkers Prev*. 2008 Apr;17(4):758-67.

**Karliner LS, Napoles-Springer AM, Schillinger D, Bibbins-Domingo K, Pérez-Stable EJ.** Identification of limited English proficient patients in clinical care. *J Gen Intern Med*. 2008 Jul 10. [Epub ahead of print] PMID: 18618200 [PubMed - as supplied by publisher]

## Redes meeting

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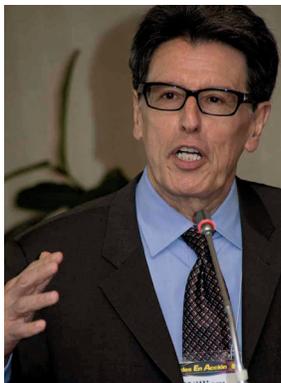
network of individuals, their organizations, projects and key research relevant to the network.

He said the overall goal for the project's second phase will be to generate data that can be used to populate a portal to provide community members the opportunity to find resources, experts and referrals on resources (e.g., people, datasets, documents, analytic tools, instruments and protocols).

A considerably broader view of issues related to cancer was provided by Thomas Glynn, PhD, who discussed *Cancer Beyond our Borders: Global Cancer & the Tobacco Burden*. Dr. Glynn is Director of Cancer Science and Trends, and International Cancer Control, American Cancer Society.

The global cancer burden is growing, he said. Where in the past cancer was largely a disease of the developed world, today it is a serious issue in all parts of the world. Increasingly, the cancer burden will shift to the middle- and low-income countries, he added.

Several factors will influence the growth of cancer in the coming decades, especially in the developing world, said



**Dr. William A. Vega**

Dr. Glynn. The primary factors are growing and aging populations, continued impact of infectious agents, adoption of Western lifestyle behaviors,

and growing tobacco use.

Tobacco alone accounts for 20-30 percent of the global cancer burden, he said. There are currently more than a billion smokers, and at least 600 million people alive today will die from tobacco-related disease, including 250 million children.

"Tobacco killed 100 million in the 20th century," said Dr. Glynn. "It is projected to kill one billion this century."

Speakers at the NSC meeting also included:

- Eliseo Pérez-Stable, MD, Co-Principal Investigator of the *Redes* Northwest Region, and Maria E. Fernandez, PhD, Co-PI of the Central Region: *Redes Awareness / Education Activities and Products*

- Dr. Pérez-Stable: *Training: Perspectives from the Local and National Levels*

- Robert O. Valdez, PhD, Executive Director, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Center for Health Policy, who provided an overview of the Center and its activities.

- William A. Vega, PhD, Professor of Family Medicine, David Geffen School of Medicine at the University of California, Los Angeles: *Network to Study Health Care Disparities Affecting Minorities / Mentoring a New Generation of Health Care Disparities Researchers*

- Elena Rios, MD, President & Founder of the National Hispanic Medical Association: *Observations from the Beltway*

- Greg Talavera, MD, MPH, Co-PI of the Southwest Region, and Frank Penedo, PhD, Co-PI of the Southeast Region: *Update on Project SOL: San Diego and Miami Field Centers*

- Armin D. Weinberg, PhD, Director, Chronic Disease Prevention & Control Research Center, Baylor College of Medicine: *National Cancer Picture: C-Change and Intercultural Cancer Council*

## NCI publications

*Continued from page 3*

*El análisis del antígeno prostático específico (PSA): preguntas y respuestas* (The Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) Test: Questions and Answers), (FS 5.29s) – Discusses what PSA is, its purpose, who should get this test and what the test results mean. Also available online at [www.cancer.gov/espanol/cancer/hojas-informativas/antigeno-prostatico-especifico-respuestas](http://www.cancer.gov/espanol/cancer/hojas-informativas/antigeno-prostatico-especifico-respuestas)

*Antitranspirantes o desodorantes y el cáncer de seno: preguntas y respuestas* (Antiperspirants/Deodorants and Breast Cancer: Questions and Answers), (FS 3.66s) – Addresses the relationship between antiperspirants and breast cancer. Also available online at [www.cancer.gov/espanol/cancer/hojas-informativas/antitranspirantes-desodorantes](http://www.cancer.gov/espanol/cancer/hojas-informativas/antitranspirantes-desodorantes)

*Interpretación de resultados de pruebas de laboratorios* (Interpreting Laboratory Test Results), (FS 5.27s) –

Discusses what lab tests are, what they are used for and understanding the results. Also available online at [www.cancer.gov/espanol/cancer/hojas-informativas/pruebasdelaboratorio](http://www.cancer.gov/espanol/cancer/hojas-informativas/pruebasdelaboratorio)

*El Servicio de Información sobre el Cáncer del Instituto Nacional del Cáncer: preguntas y respuestas* (The National Cancer Institute's Information Services: Questions and Answers), (FS 2.5s) – Discusses the Cancer Information Service's (CIS) purpose, services offered, contact information, etc. Also available online at [www.cancer.gov/espanol/recursos/hojas-informativas/servicio-informacion-cancer-respuestas](http://www.cancer.gov/espanol/recursos/hojas-informativas/servicio-informacion-cancer-respuestas)

All NCI publications are free of charge, and orders for up to 20 items per month are shipped at no charge. To order the above publications or to search a database of all available Spanish-language publications, visit the Publications Ordering Service at [www.cancer.gov/publications](http://www.cancer.gov/publications) or call the Cancer Information Service toll-free at 1-800-4 CANCEER.

## NOTICIAS: AROUND REDES

### Central Region

**María E. Fernandez, PhD, *Redes En Acción*** Central Region Co-Principal Investigator, has been engaged in research and diversity training at the University of Puerto Rico as part of a collaborative effort to assist the Puerto Rico Comprehensive Cancer Center regain its National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center status. The endeavor, which partners the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center and the University of Puerto Rico Comprehensive Cancer Center, is supported by a \$15 million NCI grant.

The collaboration focuses on research and other areas, including diversity training, physician education and community outreach. Dr. Fernandez and M.D. Anderson researchers involved in the project believe that findings from this research may help in developing ethnic-specific cancer prevention strategies in addition to allowing minority fellows and graduate students from both institutions the opportunity to be involved in multidisciplinary research.

The researchers have been visiting the collaborating cancer center to present ideas for potential projects. One goal of this comprehensive cross-training program is to increase the number of Hispanic students interested in research careers. The researchers hope that this collaboration not

only will improve the level of patient care, but will be the beginning of many long-term partnerships with cancer centers across the nation and the world.

### Northwest Region

**Marynieves Díaz-Méndez, MD, *Redes En Acción*** Northwest Region Outreach Coordinator, conducted a two-hour workshop on Cancer and Nutrition in Spanish to the staff of LifeLines and the program's Latina breast cancer patients and family members. The LifeLines Breast Cancer Program, initiated in 2001, provides practical assistance and emotional support to underserved women and men with breast cancer in San Francisco, as well as offering education and wellness activities. LifeLines is a program of Shanti, a nonprofit organization that enhances the quality of life, health and well-being of people living with life-threatening illnesses, including breast cancer and HIV/AIDS.

**Eliseo Pérez-Stable, MD, *Redes En Acción*** Northwest Region Co-Principal Investigator, discussed Cancer and Prevention at the CARE 2008 Summer Program. CARE (Cancer Awareness, Resources and Education) is a program of San Francisco General Hospital that offers educational classes to Latinos living with

cancer and their families. Each series of classes runs 12 weeks and includes such topics as the latest cancer treatments, depression, nutrition, therapeutic massage, and management of cancer-related symptoms.

### Northeast Region

**Jose R. Marti, MD,** former *Redes* Co-Principal Investigator for the Northeast Region, recently participated in a live radio call-in show in New York City, representing *Redes En Acción*. The program was organized by the Lance Armstrong Foundation. Dr. Marti also discussed *Redes En Acción* in an interview conducted by a radio station in San Diego.

### Southeast Region

**James R. Konschnik,** Chief Executive Officer of the Florida Breast Cancer Coalition Research Foundation (FBCCRF), recently became a member of the *Redes* Southeast Regional Community Advisory Council. The FBCCRF is a grassroots nonprofit organization with the mission to end breast cancer through education, advocacy and research. The Foundation works statewide to raise awareness and mobilize Floridians to ensure sufficient public funding for breast cancer research, quality health care for all without fear of discrimination, and an environment free of carcinogens.



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