

Redes researchers aim for 'smoke-free' San Antonio

The nation's 7th largest city has launched a pioneering campaign to become "smoke-free," and *Redes En Acción* researchers are playing a leading role in the effort.

The new **San Antonio Tobacco Prevention & Control Coalition** (TPCC) (www.tobaccofreeSA.org) is a multi-organization partnership working to create and promote a "smoke-free" city with a tobacco prevention and cessation campaign to increase awareness of role models and effective resources to quit smoking.

The effort, which is funded by the Texas Department of State Health Services, is spearheaded by the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District and the Institute for Health Promotion Research (IHPR) at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. *Redes En Acción* Principal Investigator Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH, is director of the IHPR.

"This is an extremely important and ambitious undertaking that will surely have a positive influence on the lives of young people, adults and families – and potentially impact future generations of San Antonio citizens," said *Redes* investigator Luis Velez, MD, PhD, who is guiding IHPR's efforts in the coalition.

The San Antonio TPCC encompasses numerous local and national partners. In

addition to the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District and IHPR, these include the American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, American Lung Association, Alamo Area Health Education Center, San Antonio Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse regional Prevention Resource Center, Texas Department of State Health Services Regional Office, and the University Health System (Texas Diabetes Institute).

Said Dr. Velez: "We hope to fight tobacco use by educating the public about the dangers of smoking and the benefits of cessation through brochures, news stories and billboards that feature local people's stories about how they improved their lives by quitting smoking. We're also increasing awareness of resources and support to quit."

Statistics from a 2006 youth tobacco survey and the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System underscore the need for action: in San Antonio, more middle-school students were smokers than their counterparts in the rest of Texas (13.6 percent to 9.5 percent) and more adults smoked (18.3 percent to 17.9 percent).

Smokers are at higher risk for lung cancer and various other cancers and health problems, as well as premature death.

"We really hope to make a difference in preventing smoking and improving the health of San Antonio residents," Dr. Velez said.

Coalition Goals Include:

- Preventing tobacco use and increasing cessation among youths
- Ensuring compliance with tobacco laws with adequate enforcement
- Eliminating exposure to secondhand smoke
- Reducing tobacco use among those with the highest burden of tobacco-related health disparities
- Developing and maintaining statewide capacity for comprehensive tobacco prevention and control

Internet smoking study shows promising results

An Internet study could have global implications in influencing smoking behaviors, according to recently published results.

The smoking cessation research, conducted by investigators at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), and San Francisco General

Hospital (SFGH), showed about 20 percent abstinence rates at one year.

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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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T R A I N I N G

Alice Gonzalez, Brownsville, Texas

Training is ‘the key’

To Alice Gonzalez of the National Cancer Institute’s Cancer Information Service (CIS), training is “the key to reducing cancer health disparities.”

“Increasing the number of Latino, culturally competent providers and other key personnel has an exponential effect in terms of reducing disparities,” she says. “More effectively trained, appropriate providers and others equals more patients and community members who receive culturally competent information, education and treatment.”

As CIS Partnership Program Coordinator for the South Central Region, Alice is responsible for implementing and supporting cancer control programs for populations along the U.S.-Mexico border in Texas and establishing and maintaining partnerships with community, regional and state organizations.

Her training responsibilities with CIS include disseminating NCI’s latest information and resources through presentations



to health professionals and *promotoras* about cancer resources and the use of various CIS program planning tools. She has provided training to 10 *promotora* groups, educating these community lay health workers about the CIS, cervical cancer, the human papillomavirus (HPV) and the HPV vaccine, and how to promote the 1-800-4-CANCER number among the community.

When it comes to health, culture is woven throughout Latinos’ knowledge, attitudes and beliefs. This makes cultural competence so important for health care providers and programs in this community.

“Attaining cultural competence is easier when the ‘target’ population is involved in delivering its own care, messages, etc.,” Alice emphasizes. “Involving Latinos in the development and carrying out of public education about cancer should be a priority for all of us, or our efforts to educate and to prevent disease among Latinos will not succeed.”

R E S E A R C H

Noella A. Dietz, PhD, Miami, Florida

Targeting tobacco consumption

The number of tobacco-related deaths in this country and the associated costs to society are staggering. Dr. Noella A Dietz has devoted much of her career to doing something about it.

While her previous research has involved smokers of all ages, she is particularly interested in young people. A heavy majority of adult smokers become hooked on tobacco at an early age – before the age of 18, so targeting the youth population is vital in impacting tobacco addiction and its consequences, she emphasizes.

Dr. Dietz, Research Assistant Professor at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, is currently principal investigator of the *Tobacco Control Media Evaluation Project*, which is funded by the Florida Department of Health (FDOH). The state of Florida currently is running a comprehensive tobacco prevention and cessation program, with



prevention efforts focused on youth and cessation efforts aimed at all smokers with an emphasis on adults.

“The purpose of the contract with FDOH is for me to use CDC guidelines and recommendations to conduct media evaluation,” said Dr. Dietz. “Our intention is to examine the effects of the campaign on susceptibility

to smoke, intentions to smoke, and tobacco use behaviors.”

Another area of research interest for Dr. Dietz is the impact of secondhand smoke. She is co-investigator on a study called *Secondhand Smoke and Worker Health*, funded by the Flight Attendant Medical Research Institute.

Studies have shown that as smoking prevalence in public areas has decreased, secondhand smoke elsewhere, such as in the home, has taken on increasing importance as a key exposure source, she noted, and targeted educational campaigns may be necessary.

AWARENESS

Rina Olea, Bay Area, California

Providing unconditional support

Is Rina Olea an angel or a barrier buster? Well, depending on who you talk to, she's both – and more.

As Manager of Programs and Outreach for Breast Cancer Connections (formerly Community Breast Health Project), a San Francisco Bay Area resource center, she is a champion for uninsured and medically underserved women, receiving the “Barrier Buster” award in 2004 for her advocacy work. The BCC board president says women constantly send grateful messages to the center, referring to Rina as “their angel.”

Rina manages the BCC's largest program, the Gabriella Patser Program, working with medical providers to ensure that young women who are at risk for breast cancer but lack the resources to properly diagnose the disease have access to the care they need. The program also educates women on breast health practices, helps them take control of their own health care, and



provides services such as interpreting and transportation. She also manages and coordinates BCC's community outreach efforts.

Rina recalls as a child hearing stories about her family's struggles as they learned to adapt to a new culture.

“The common strand in each of these stories was a special person that took them under their wing to help them thrive in America,” she says. “That is what I aspire to be for my clients. I want them to know that my support is unconditional and does not have an expiration date.”

Rina says many clients that are no longer using the Gabriella Patser Program still keep in touch. “Those connections are what

I treasure and will always remember. I've impacted their lives in a meaningful way by helping them understand the importance of their well-being and that cancer does not mean a death sentence.”

Internet smoking study

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The study was led by Principal Investigator Ricardo F. Muñoz, PhD, with Eliseo J. Pérez-Stable, MD, serving a key role in the research. Dr. Pérez-Stable is the *Redes En Acción* co-principal investigator for the Northwest Region.

The research project provided Web sites in English (www.stopsmoking.ucsf.edu) and Spanish (www.dejardefumar.ucsf.edu) to help smokers quit, including tools to track their progress. The randomized control trial recruited smokers – 500 Spanish-speaking and 500 English-speaking adult Internet users – from 68 countries.

According to an article published online in *Nicotine & Tobacco Research* in July (<http://ntr.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/ntp090>), the overall seven-day abstinence rates at the 12-month mark were 20.2 percent for Spanish speakers and 21 percent for



English speakers.

The success rates are particularly encouraging considering there are more than a billion smokers worldwide and more than 5 million tobacco-attributable deaths each year.

“Internet smoking cessation interventions with such abstinence rates provided globally in additional

languages could contribute substantially to tobacco control efforts,” the article noted.

The authors pointed out that traditional smoking cessation methods (e.g., nicotine replacement therapy and smoking cessation groups) have been shown to produce abstinence rates at six months of between 14 percent and 27 percent.

“Evidence-based Internet interventions with comparable abstinence rates could be a powerful global tool to reduce tobacco-related morbidity and mortality,” the *Nicotine & Tobacco Research* article stated.

The study was supported by funding provided by the Tobacco-Related Disease Research Program and the University of California Committee on Latino Research to the UCSF / SFGH Latino Mental Health Research Program, directed by Dr. Muñoz.

Latinos under-utilize hospice, palliative care

A recent federally funded study found that only one-third of terminally ill cancer patients said their physician had discussed end-of-life care.

Although many physicians fear these discussions may distress terminally ill patients or may not offer any benefit, the study showed that discussing end-of-life care results in increased patient understanding of illness severity, fewer invasive procedures, and lower rates of ICU (intensive-care unit) admission at the end of life.

This study also showed that Latinos and African Americans utilize hospice and palliative care at a much lower rate than whites. Latinos account for under 5 percent of patients enrolled in hospice programs.

Palliative and hospice care providers offer expert management to alleviate the suffering associated with cancer for the patient and the family. These health care professionals can help those affected by cancer cope with physical and spiritual pain and other symptoms, as well as

psychological and social problems.

Studies have identified barriers to hospice and palliative care for minority populations. These barriers include financial concerns and the burden on the patient's family, mistrust of the health care system, lack of awareness about such services, perceived conflicts of personal or cultural values, and language barriers.

Recognizing the importance of discussing end-of-life issues with terminally ill patients, the National Cancer Institute (NCI) has teamed with the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) and the Lance Armstrong Foundation to offer *Education in Palliative and End-of-Life Care for Oncology* (EPEC™-O).

EPEC™-O, which was initially developed with funding from NCI by the EPEC™ project team at Northwestern University, is a comprehensive curriculum designed to educate and equip physicians, nurses and other health care personnel with the skills needed to address the physical, psychosocial and spiritual suffering

associated with cancer.

EPEC™-O offers Continuing Medical Educational (CME) credits through ASCO and Continuing Nursing Education (CE) through the Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association. Sessions can be taken individually and in any order. Each plenary session and module of the EPEC™-O curriculum is eligible for individual credits for a total of up to 32.5 hours CME / CE for the entire program. Instructions for obtaining CME / CE credit are included in the CD-ROM.

The CME credit availability from ASCO has been extended from May 14, 2009 to May 14, 2012. Also, the Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association has extended the Nursing Contact Hours for EPEC™-O until May 1, 2011.

The NCI is the nation's cancer research agency. For more information about EPEC-O, cancer research and resources, visit www.cancer.gov or call toll-free 1-800-4CANCER. To learn more about EPEC-O, go to www.cancer.gov/aboutnci/epeco.

Ana Nátales-Pereira featured on Web site

A patient navigation Web site recently spotlighted Ana Nátales-Pereira, MD, MPH, a member of the *Redes En Acción* network in the Northeast Region and an early recipient of *Redes* pilot project funding.

The Web site, *Patient Navigation in Cancer Care* (www.patientnavigation.com), interviewed Dr. Nátales-Pereira for its series of expert commentaries from leaders in patient navigation. Her recent research project, funded through the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, utilizes patient navigation for an elderly Latino Medicare population to improve cancer screening, the Web site noted.

Dr. Nátales-Pereira is Associate Professor of Medicine at New Jersey Medical School and primary care physician at



the University Hospital, both part of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) in Newark.

In the interview, Dr. Nátales-Pereira discusses the potential role of community health workers in patient navigation.

"This commentary examines the community health worker model of patient navigation tailored to the Latino Hispanic communities of the Greater Newark area," the Web site said. "As Dr. Nátales-Pereira noted, her daily interactions in treating these patients revealed how little they knew about cancer and how many chal-

lenges they face when trying to navigate through the health care system."

Redes Pilot Projects

A WARDEE SPOTLIGHT:

Dr. Carlos Mazas

Carlos Mazas, who serves on the faculty of The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center (MDACC), earned a PhD in clinical psychology from Indiana University and completed an internship at the South Texas Veterans Health Care System-San Antonio, Texas. He possesses a strong background in the study of mechanisms underlying addictive behaviors and extensive experience in conducting laboratory experiments on biobehavioral processes related to alcohol and nicotine dependence.

In 2007 Dr. Mazas was awarded funding by the National Cancer Institute through *Redes En Acción* for a pilot research project titled *Ecological Momentary Assessment among Spanish-speaking Latino Smokers*. Prior to that time he had participated in smoking cessation and nicotine dependence studies, serving in various capacities – project director, counselor trainer, lead counselor and postdoctoral fellow.

Since 2008, Dr. Mazas has assumed leading roles in three NCI-supported research projects: principal investigator (PI) of *Smoking Cessation among Spanish-speaking Latino Smokers* and co-PI of *Cancer Risk Reduction through Combined Treatment for Tobacco and Alcohol Use and the Puerto Rico Community Cancer Control Outreach Program*.

► *At what point in your life did you realize that you wanted to be a researcher? What led to that realization and why did you make that decision?*

Since I was in high school in Argentina, I wanted to investigate the etiology of nicotine and alcohol dependence. Two lovely relatives died from cancers (breast and lung) while I was growing up. Thus, I decided to go into research because I was interested in the etiology of nicotine and alcohol dependence, as well as its treatment interventions.

Throughout my career, I have sought



Dr. Carlos Mazas

training and opportunities to learn new skills and methodologies to improve treatment interventions. I performed comprehensive neuropsychologic and psychosocial evaluations among African Americans, Whites and Hispanics; co-lead numerous research-based cognitive-behavioral treatments for anxiety disorders and depression; and conducted motivational interviewing among alcohol- and tobacco-dependent individuals. Then I realized that my bilingualism was a tremendous asset to my research career. So I have significantly contributed to the development and completion of two randomized clinical trials among Spanish-speaking and African American smokers in Texas, conducted smoking cessation interventions in Spanish, and translated psychosocial measures into Spanish.

► *What is your goal as a researcher? What do you hope to someday achieve?*

My short-term goals are to 1) adapt and develop new methodologies such as ecological momentary assessment (EMA) to improve the accuracy of assessing health risk behaviors among Spanish-speaking Latinos, 2) continue to build and strengthen my research experience in tobacco-related disparities among

underserved populations, physical activity and diet, and 3) further my statistical knowledge.

My long-term goal is to become a faculty member in a research setting where I can conduct research on the assessment, prevention and treatment of behavioral risk factors for cancer. I plan to target minority and underserved populations in my work. MDACC offers a wealth of educational and research experiences for young researchers like me to achieve their career goals.

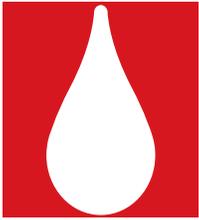
► *What advice would you give to young people who might be considering a research career?*

A research career has several benefits and rewards. Research is creativity by cultivating discipline, developing methodologies, testing ideas and contributing to the field of one's interest. Contributions to the research field and science come in all sizes, but more frequently it comes in small sizes. All contributions help to fill a part of the puzzle. Advances in science are a slow process and all data are equally important. Sometimes one thinks that in order to be a researcher, one needs to develop an outstanding idea or project similar / compatible to those that win a Nobel Prize.

Bringing new young people to the research field is like bringing novel and cutting-edge approaches. For example, one may have a research idea that will help to generate further research ideas, like helping junior minority faculty develop their own careers while at the same time contributing to cancer cure, such as with the *Redes En Acción* project; or make a significant contribution to one's area of research by providing a novel approach to treating certain cancers and instilling hope to those who suffer from them; and / or to a lesser degree, one may investigate a phenomenon that will have an impact on the public health and lifestyle of Latinos.

NEWS & INFORMATION / NOTICIAS Y INFORMACIÓN

Latinos helping Latinos: Marrow donors



When a child or adult is diagnosed with leukemia or any other blood disease, the hope is to find someone who is compatible and willing to donate blood stem cells (healthy white cells) or bone marrow.

Latino children comprise the highest number of leukemia cases among ethnic minorities diagnosed in the United States, according to *American Cancer Society Facts & Figures 2008*. As of January 2009, 5.3 percent of individuals on the Be the Match Registry (the national bone marrow registry) were Latinos.

To register, a person fills out a form and performs a cheek swabbing test. If compatible, the individual will be asked for a blood stem cell donation (used 70 percent of the time), which is similar to donating blood. The other process is marrow donation (used 30 percent of the time).

To request an information kit, call 510-568-3700. Visit www.aadp.org to view a calendar of upcoming bone marrow drives in your community.



LAF Web site evolves with Latinos in mind

The Lance Armstrong Foundation Spanish Web site (www.LIVESTRONG.org/espanol) has been developed with the Spanish-speaking user in mind. More than just a translation of the LAF English site, it is an entire redesign focused on the Latino audience.

There is a wide range of possibilities. Connect to LIVESTRONG SurvivorCare and answer various questions regarding cancer. Add the new Spanish widget to the desktop for LAF updates. Watch or listen to online videos and audio about cancer survivorship. Send an electronic greeting card to encourage people affected by cancer to seek support from the Lance Armstrong Foundation.

The site also includes online training for *promotores* that focuses on improving quality of life of Latino cancer survivors. The training is a

six-piece video certification course with check points throughout the instruction.

An easy-to-navigate resource that allows individuals to find information with ease and provides culturally relevant stories and messages, the LAF Spanish Web site helps empower the Spanish-speaking cancer community.



Save the date for APOS 7th Annual Conference

The American Psychosocial Oncology Society (APOS)

7th Annual Conference is scheduled February 18-21, 2010 in New Orleans, Louisiana. The conference is dedicated to *Integrating Psychosocial Research and Practice in Quality Cancer Care: Confronting Challenges Together*.

As in the past, *Redes En Acción* will serve as a conference affiliate. APOS is now accepting abstracts for symposium, podium and poster presentations.

To visit online, click [here](#).



Redes En Acción Principal Investigator Amelie G. Ramirez participated in the U.S.-Latin America Cancer Research Network's planning meeting of the Latin American Breast Cancer Pilot Project earlier this year. Network participants included (top row, left to right) Hala Moddelmog, Susan G. Komen for the Cure, U.S.; Osvaldo Podhajcer, Instituto Leloir, Argentina; Gary Kelloff, NCI, U.S.; Dr. Ramirez; Larry Norton, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, U.S.; Edith Perez, Mayo Clinic, U.S.; Luiz Santini, Instituto Nacional de Cancer, Brazil; and Juan de Dios Reyes-Magalanes, Ministry of Health, Chile. Participants also included (bottom row, left to right) Pelayo Correa, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, U.S.; Anna Barker, NCI, U.S.; Alejandro Mohar, Instituto Nacional de Cancerologia, Mexico; Ignacio Musé, Ministerio de Salud, Uruguay; Jorge Gomez, NCI, U.S.; Marisa Dreyer Breitenbach, Instituto Nacional de Cancer, Brazil; and Elizabeth Thompson, Susan G. Komen for the Cure, U.S.

AROUND REDES

Southeast Region

Dr. Edward Trapido, former co-principal investigator for the *Redes En Acción* Southeast Region, has accepted a position at Louisiana State University as the Wendell Gautier (Endowed) Chair of Cancer Epidemiology at the School of Public Health, Deputy Director for Population Sciences at the Stanley S. Scott Cancer Center and at the Louisiana Cancer Research Consortium, and Senior Liaison for Interdepartmental Research to both the Dean of the School of Medicine and the Dean of the School of Public Health. Dr. Trapido leaves the University of Miami in September after 25 years.

Northwest Region

A new community-based participatory research project developed by **Dr. Anna Nápoles**, co-investigator for the *Redes En Acción* Northwest Region, and Dr. Carmen Ortiz,

executive director of Cancer Support and Resource Center, has been funded by the California Breast Cancer Research Program. The project, *Nuevo Amanecer: Promoting the Psychosocial Health of Latinas*, will test whether a Spanish-language, culturally appropriate peer support counselor program can reduce anxiety and distress and improve quality of life among Spanish-speaking Latina women diagnosed with breast cancer.

Southwest Region

Dr. Sheila LaHousse, who served as partnership program coordinator for the National Cancer Institute's Cancer Information Service, California Region, has been named project manager for the *Redes En Acción* Southwest Region. She is also co-director of the San Ysidro Health Center's Center for Latino Research and Health Promotion.

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National Network Center

Principal Investigator

Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH
University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio
8207 Callaghan Rd. Ste. 353
San Antonio, Texas 78230
Phone: 210-562-6200
Fax: 210-348-0554
E-mail: ramirezag@uthscsa.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@uthscsa.edu

Visit us online at www.redesenaccion.org