

## Redes En Acción celebrates 10th anniversary

A decade ago, *Redes En Acción* launched its operations with a national center and six strategically located regional offices across the country. The mission: to develop a nationwide network – a veritable army – of collaborators to fight cancer in Latinos on three fronts – research, training and public awareness.

Now the National Cancer Institute-funded *Redes* program is celebrating its 10th anniversary and some remarkable strides in this battle. Today the *Redes En Acción* network numbers more than 1,800 researchers, medical professionals, educators, community organization administrators, government agency leaders, students and others.

“We’ve come a long way,” said Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH, *Redes* Principal Investigator. “We started this initiative in 2000 with a handful of researchers who had worked together on Latino cancer issues for a number of years.

“From that core, we’ve expanded the number of collaborators tremendously and made very significant progress in our efforts to reduce and eliminate cancer health disparities among the Latino population – both

# Redes En Acción



## ANNIVERSARY

within our individual communities and across the country.”

Examples of the diverse national organizations and agencies *Redes En Acción* has formed collaborative partnerships with include the Cancer Information Service (CIS) of NCI, Latino Council on Alcohol and Tobacco, Susan G. Komen for the Cure, National Institute of General Medical Sciences, National Human Genome Research Institute, NCI Specialized Programs

### The Network

- Community partnerships: 1,800

of Research Excellence, NCI Cancer Genetics Networks, and Women’s Health Initiative. *Redes En Acción* has also collaborated with NCI-designated cancer centers, academic institutions and community organizations within each of the program’s regional sites.

Initially, the program received support under the NCI’s Special Populations Networks (SPN) initiative. In 2005, the NCI funded *Redes En Acción* as part of its Community Networks Program (CNP) initiative to address cancer disparities among minority and underserved populations.

### Research

Essential to success in this effort has been the *Redes* program’s achievements in initiating and promoting research related to cancer in Latinos.

Over the past 10 years, the NCI – through *Redes En Acción* – funded 18 studies in the pilot research program, a key component of the initiative’s research activities. NCI support for the studies totaled \$900,000.

Each pilot project was required to produce results that could be leveraged into subsequent peer-reviewed funding, such as an R01-type NIH proposal. To date, the pilot investigators have been awarded 88 subsequent competitive

*Continued on page 2*

*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 CA114657-01

## Redes Tenth Anniversary

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grants totaling more than \$96 million in funding – a 100-fold return on their NCI pilot developmental awards.

In addition to the pilot program, which primarily provided career-development opportunities for young researchers, *Redes En Acción* has supported numerous cancer studies directed by established investigators as well. Since 2000, *Redes*-related cancer research projects at both the national and regional levels surpassed \$96 million in leveraged funding from public and private sources. *Redes En Acción* researchers have directed or participated in – through subcontracts or shared resources – 85 new or ongoing cancer projects.

Communities have benefited from the research agenda represented by these studies in various ways: for example, preventing or reducing smoking among youths in local schools, promoting breast and cervical cancer screening services, preventing obesity in Latino home and community environments, and providing clinical trial education to underserved women. Specific diseases targeted in investigations include breast, prostate, cervical, lung and colorectal cancers.

### Training

During the past decade, the training component of *Redes En Acción* has attracted and introduced Latinos to cancer fields by promoting cancer-related education activities for 225 Latino undergraduate and graduate student interns, pre- and post-doctoral trainees, and junior faculty.

The training program has provided unique opportunities to work with and receive mentorship from established cancer investigators. These relationships

#### Pilot Research Projects

- Studies: 18
- Funding: \$900,000
- Subsequent grants to pilot researchers: 88
- Subsequent grants funding: \$96 million

#### Leveraged Research Funding

- *Redes*-related cancer studies: 85
- *Redes*-related study funding: \$96 million

#### Training

- Interns, pre-/post-docs, junior faculty: 225

have enhanced the research skills and knowledge of cancer prevention and control in Hispanic populations among the young Latinos in the program.

For example, intern projects have included development of grant proposals, manuscripts and surveys; statistical programming / analysis; literature reviews; and data collection in tobacco research and other Latino health issues. Pre- and post-doctoral trainees have worked in community health promotion, clinical trial recruitment, data analysis, cancer genetics, and other research-related projects. Funded junior faculty worked toward developing a pilot project application, grant proposal or a manuscript for publication to a peer-reviewed journal, while unfunded trainees worked closely with *Redes En Acción* and other Latino researchers on cancer prevention and control projects.

### Awareness

In addition to its research and training efforts, *Redes En Acción* has developed wide-ranging public education and communications activities, including a Web site, newsletters, events and presentations, mass media products and general publications.

The [Web site](#), which averages 70,000 visits a year, details the initiative's research, training and awareness activities, as well as Latino disparities data, publications available to the public, investigators' scientific publications, and other information about the program.

Quarterly newsletters complement the Web site with news of current *Redes En Acción* activities nationwide and profiles of Latino professionals engaged in cancer control and prevention in the program's various regions. More than 105

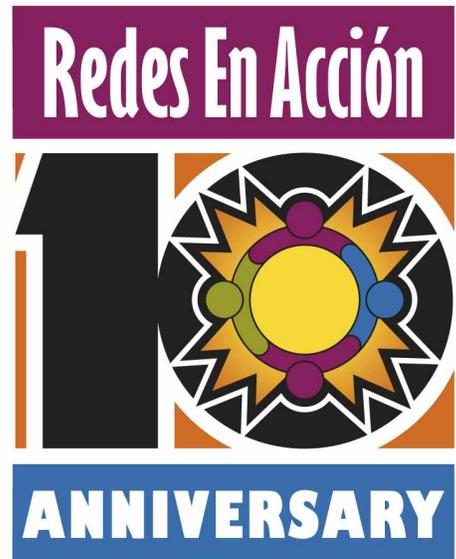
such role models have been spotlighted in the *Redes* newsletter over the course of the initiative.

Regionally, *Redes* staff members around the country have raised cancer awareness in the public through more than 2,462 community and professional events. These include health fairs, anti-smoking and breast cancer awareness programs, and neighborhood center and school events.

Educational efforts also include an array of print and video tools designed to raise awareness of cancer risks and screening resources available to Latinos. These resources include a series of bilingual *Buena Vida* publications that offer information on cancer topics, clinical trials, screening procedures, the importance of diet and exercise, and smoking prevention and cessation.

*Redes En Acción* has also produced television and radio PSAs (public service announcements) promoting Latino clinical trial participation and a series of TV spots in Spanish and English focusing on cervical, colorectal and breast cancers.

In addition, the *Redes* program has developed and distributed more than 200 news stories, ads and press releases about Latino cancer issues, which were printed or broadcast by national, regional and local media.



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## Redes meeting: *Nuevas Fronteras* in Cancer Research

A full slate of speakers and panels will address an array of Latino cancer topics as *Redes En Acción* commemorates a decade of service, hosting its 10th Annual National Steering Committee Meeting.

The theme of the meeting, which is scheduled March 3-5 in San Antonio, Texas, will be *Nuevas Fronteras in Cancer Research*. While participants will celebrate the past decade of accomplishments, the meeting will focus on the future as well.

Invited as the keynote speaker is Sanya Springfield, PhD, Director of the National Cancer Institute's Center to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities (CRCHD). Dr. Springfield is responsible for overseeing CRCHD's mission to coordinate and strengthen NCI's cancer research portfolio in basic, clinical, translational and population-based research to address cancer health disparities; lead NCI's efforts in the training of students and investigators from diverse populations that will be part of the next generation of competitive researchers in cancer health disparities research; and create state-of-the-art regional networks / centers dedicated to cancer health disparities research and care through geographic program management.

At the meeting, Dr. Springfield will address cancer health disparities research and research capacity and how the CRCHD is working to advance its vision to lessen the burden of cancer by accomplishing the Center's mission objectives.

The meeting will spotlight some excellent examples of the *Redes* program's research training efforts in a panel of "success stories" featuring just a few of the many beneficiaries of *Redes En Acción's* partnership with the National Cancer Institute:



Dr. Sanya Springfield

Drs. Isabel Scarinci, Carlos Mazas, Anna Nápoles and Ana Natale-Pereira.

The two-day meeting will also cover different facets of the *Redes* Latino cancer research, training and awareness mission, as well as various related cancer issues and topics. Scheduled speakers include:

- Noshir Contractor, PhD, who will discuss the results of the *Redes En Acción* survey conducted by his team at Northwestern University and *Social Networking Relationships and Communication Characteristics*
- Elena Rios, MD, President and founder of the National Hispanic Medical Association: *Policy Challenges for Hispanic Health Issues*
- Tom Kean, MPH, Executive Director of C-Change: *Views on Cancer Health Disparities*
- Aimee James, PhD, MPH, Assistant Professor at the Alvin J. Siteman Cancer Center: *Diet & Exercise: Trends in Cancer Intervention Research*
- Dan Reyna, MSS, MPA, General Manager of the United States-Mexico Border Health Commission: *U.S./Mexico Border Health Commission: Public Health Issues*
- Robert Croyle, PhD, Director of NCI's Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences: *Human Behavior and Cancer Risk Research*
- Jorge Gomez, MD, PhD, Director of NCI's Office of Latin American Cancer Program Development: *Progress in Cancer Care among Hispanics in the U.S. and Latin America*

In addition, a cancer survivorship panel on *Developing Successful Strategies to Help Latinos Live With, Through & Beyond Cancer* will feature Diana D. Jeffery, PhD, Health Care Research Analyst, Department of Defense, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, and Andy Miller, MHSE, CHES, Director of Survivorship of the Lance Armstrong Foundation.

## Latino males: Acculturation influences smoking cessation



Latino men who are more adapted to U.S. culture are more likely to quit smoking than their less-acculturated counterparts, according to research by scientists at The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center.

The number of years and the proportion of life spent in the United States, along with English preference for watching news and television programs, were found to be positively related to smoking cessation for men.

The research was funded by a grant from the National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities.

An article on the study published in the December 2009 issue of *Cancer Epidemiology,*

*Biomarkers and Prevention*, included Carlos Mazas, PhD, a researcher in the *Redes En Acción* network, as a co-author. Dr. Mazas was principal investigator of a pilot research project funded by the National Cancer Institute through *Redes*.

Lead author Yessenia Castro, PhD, said researchers found that acculturation has no effect on the likelihood of Latinas quitting smoking. The study of 271 Latino smokers who called a Spanish-language smoking cessation Quitline examined the influence of gender and indicators of acculturation on the ability to quit smoking.

"Successful tobacco control efforts must place a special emphasis on reaching Latinos and other

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

**Brendaly Rosemond, MA, Miami, Florida**

# A Latina working for Latinos

**B**rendaly Rosemond (formerly Rodríguez) has a strong background in the language and culture of the Latino population, and as Community Relations Manager for the *Hispanic Community Health Study / Study of Latinos* (HCHS / SOL) in Miami, that experience and expertise have been invaluable.

“Having personal cultural competence and language proficiency is paramount for me to be able to fulfill my daily responsibilities in outreach and local partnership development,” she says. “My experience and certifications as a Spanish translator and a communication instructor help me in expediting the work of marketing, development of promotional materials and implementation of outreach educational activities. A Latina working for Latinos!”

HCHS / SOL is a multi-center epidemiologic study in Latino populations to determine the role of acculturation in the prevalence and development of disease, and to identify risk



factors playing a protective or harmful role in Latinos. The nationwide research is sponsored by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) and six other institutes, centers and offices of the National Institutes of Health.

“There’s great satisfaction in working at both local and national levels, knowing that SOL will have an impact in benchmarking research and policy, to in turn influence practice of health care providers working with Latino/Hispanic populations for years to come,” notes Brendaly.

Born in Puerto Rico, Brendaly first came to the United States as an exchange student before moving here fulltime to attain her master’s degree in intercultural communication from Arizona State University.

She’s a Fulbright Senior Communication Scholar (Germany-1997) and a certified translator in Spanish-English by the National Australian Association of Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) and member of the American Translators Association (ATA). Interestingly, for three years she co-hosted a weekly Spanish radio program in Australia.

**T R A I N I N G**

**Roberto Cervantes, MD, San Diego, California**

# Preparing those who serve

**A**s program manager of a community health center, Dr. Roberto Cervantes believes that training staff members who serve patients is “of paramount importance.”

“Many of our employees were born and raised in the same communities they now serve, educated with the same belief system as our patients and have minimal knowledge regarding health and prevention strategies, all of which limits their ability to serve as role models in their community,” he said.

“Therefore, personnel training is of paramount importance, because we need to educate our staff first, since they are going to be the voice and face of our health center, will promote prevention services, create awareness of disease, address cultural barriers and beliefs, and encourage healthy life practices.”

Dr. Cervantes, who earned his medical degree in 2003 from The Autonomous University of Baja California in Mexicali,



Mexico, is in the process of obtaining his U.S. medical license, and is continuing his career in the public health field.

He serves as program manager for a major research project, an NIH-funded clinical trial focused on recruiting 1,200 Latinos, at San Ysidro Health Center. In this role, he is responsible for preparing, implementing and supervising all aspects of training and certifications for the staff.

Dr. Cervantes is a bilingual, bicultural physician with more than eight years of experience in the area of community-based clinical practice and integration of health programs into clinic settings.

“Cultural competency is of essential importance to the success of our research trial and health promotion programs,” he noted. “The fact that we speak their language and understand the cultural and psychosocial barriers and limitations that they face enables us to gain easier access and trust within their community.”

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

Soledad Liliana Escobar-Chaves, DrPH, Houston, Texas

# Developing health promotion programs

**F**or Dr. Soledad Liliana Escobar-Chaves, knowledge of the Latino culture is essential to the success of health interventions targeting Hispanics. Indeed, without this foundation, these efforts are doomed, she believes.

“Interventions that do not take into account cultural competency are condemned to failure,” she says. “Unless we build our interventions based on what the Latino community thinks and believes, we will not succeed.”

“It is important to know the needs of the community and the role of each of the family members and friends in regard to how decisions about health are made.”

An Assistant Professor at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Public Health, Dr. Escobar-Chaves is a researcher whose interests are focused on development, implementation and evaluation of school-based, clinic-based and community-based health promotion programs related to cervical cancer (HPV and the HPV vaccine), sexual risk behavior, media, violence and obesity.

Her current study, *For Our Daughter’s Sake: Latino Women and the HPV Vaccine*, aims to identify psychosocial factors influencing decisions about vaccine uptake among Latino parents / caregivers of daughters ages 11-18 who are offered the HPV vaccine.

“Lessons learned from this study will allow us to develop a conceptual model of influences on HPV vaccination and to find the best ways to transmit messages and strategies so that the Latino community can understand the importance of getting their daughters vaccinated,” says Dr. Escobar-Chaves, Principal Investigator of the study.

A native of Cali, Colombia, Dr. Escobar-Chaves came to Houston as a World Health

Organization (WHO) fellow to work at the Center for Health Promotion and Prevention Research, UT School of Public Health on a violence prevention project. For her master’s and doctoral research projects, she conducted fieldwork with adolescents in schools in the Houston area.

These and subsequent research projects underscored that “it is crucial to have an in-depth knowledge of the target community,” she said. “Among Latino populations in particular, this includes getting to know their culture, language, values and beliefs. Any intervention should be tailored to take into account lessons learned from the community.”

With regard to HPV, HPV vaccine and cervical cancer, notes Dr. Escobar-Chaves, major barriers exist in raising awareness among Latino parents with young girls.

These include:

- Lack of knowledge (what HPV and cervical cancer are)
- Fear of the unknown (What can the HPV vaccine do over time? What are the side effects? Does it really protect or prevent HPV?)
- Belief that the vaccine is unnecessary because their daughters are not yet sexually active
- Thinking about the benefits of preventing a disease that may occur in the long future, as with cervical cancer

However, challenges accompany all scientific research. And research is one of the key components in addressing health disparities facing Latinos, Dr. Escobar-Chaves emphasizes.

“Research allows us to look for and to address the needs of those who are most at risk or most vulnerable,” she says. “Research, education and community engagement go hand in hand toward the goal of reducing and ultimately eliminating Latino health disparities.”



## For Our Daughter’s Sake: Latino Women and the HPV Vaccine

**H**uman Papillomavirus (HPV) infection is the most common sexually transmitted infection (STI) in young sexually active populations and causes 99 percent of cervical cancers. Latino youth are disproportionately at risk for STIs and Latina women are affected disproportionately by cervical cancer. A vaccine to protect against HPV is available. Although studies have reported high levels of HPV vaccine acceptability, only 1.1 percent of Latinas have had at least one dose. These data suggest that the health promotion messages concerning HPV infection, its relation to cervical cancer, and the vaccine may not be reaching Latinas or may not be clearly understood. The purpose of this one-year study is to identify psychosocial factors influencing decisions about vaccine uptake among Latino parent / caregivers of daughters ages 11-18 who are offered the HPV vaccine. This information will be used to develop and pilot-test messages and educational materials to increase HPV vaccination in a future study. Lessons learned from this study will contribute to efforts to increase HPV vaccine uptake among Latina women.

– Dr. Soledad Liliana Escobar-Chaves

# New Buena Vida smoking guide available

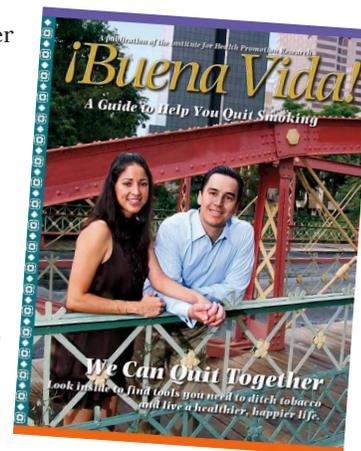
**R**edes En Acción researchers have helped develop a new tool to help Latinos stop smoking. An educational magazine, *¡Buena Vida! A Guide to Help You Quit Smoking*, is available online in both [Spanish](#) and [English](#).

The latest in a series of *Buena Vida* publications focusing on cancer and other health topics, *¡Buena Vida! A Guide to Help You Quit Smoking* offers stories, tools and tips for breaking the smoking habit. The magazine features the stories of five Latinos who have quit smoking, the experiences and challenges they faced, and the methods they used.

Produced in tandem by the Institute for Health

Promotion Research (IHPR) and the Cancer Therapy & Research Center at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, the magazine was funded as part of the San Antonio Tobacco Prevention & Control Coalition (SA-TPCC).

SA-TPCC, a multi-organization partnership, is conducting a tobacco prevention campaign promoting a “smoke-free” San Antonio. The coalition, funded by the Texas Department of State Health Services, is led by the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District with help from IHPR.



## Survey assesses Redes network impact

**P**articipating in the *Redes En Acción* network has “enhanced members’ access to knowledge and to professional relationships and increased the impact of their work on their community, on practitioners, on academics, and on cancer centers.” *Redes* members also feel that “their professional reputation was enhanced by having the opportunity to belong to and participate in this network.”

These findings were among the results of a recent study analyzing and evaluating *Redes En Acción*, examining the 10-year-old Latino cancer research network and its effectiveness.

“Those of us who have been closely and personally involved in *Redes En Acción* over this past decade have observed and discussed what we call the ‘*Redes* ripple effect,’” said Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH, *Redes* Principal Investigator. “It’s deeply gratifying to find from this study just how powerful this ripple effect has been and to see how individuals in the network feel invigorated and empowered as a result of their participation in *Redes*.”

The survey of *Redes En Acción* network members was directed by Noshir Contractor, PhD, Professor of Behavioral Sciences at Northwestern University, a leading authority in the field of network science. Dr. Contractor,

### REDES NETWORK STUDY REPORT



Director of the Science of Networks in Communities Research Group at Northwestern, will present the findings at the 10th Annual *Redes En Acción* National Steering Committee Meeting March 3-5 in San Antonio, Texas.

In the *Redes Network Study Report*, prepared by Hua Wang of Northwestern University and study Principal Investigators Dr. Contractor and Diana Jimeno-Ingrum (University of Notre Dame), survey respondents “indicated that *Redes* did increase the impact and influence of their work on cancer centers and enabled greater quality or frequency of publications or other tangible products for them.”

Before conducting the study, Dr. Contractor said *Redes En Acción* “is one of the first projects...that I know the National Cancer Institute is very interested in because it’s actually looking at ways of analyzing and evaluating it as a

network, not as individuals.

“So methodologically, this goes beyond just the study of *Redes* – it’s becoming an example of something that will be seen as an example for other projects.”

Surveyed for the study were “core members” of the *Redes* program: National Steering Committee members, *Redes* staff, students and trainees, pilot research project investigators, and consultants / advisers.

The primary goal of the survey was to assess *Redes En Acción*’s communication and coordinating efforts, according to the study report.

“In particular, we sought to 1) understand how *Redes* benefits the Latino cancer-related work of its core members, 2) describe how members of the *Redes* network are communicating and the helpfulness of the various communication media that are used, 3) identify any barriers that may be preventing collaboration among individuals, and 4) identify any critical hubs and connectors within *Redes* to get a better understanding of the leverage points that might be accessed for future activities.”

In analyzing communication networks within *Redes En Acción*, the study found that “individuals are well connected... These results augur well for the advancement of *Redes*’ collaborative work and partnerships.”

NEWS & INFORMATION / NOTICIAS Y INFORMACIÓN

## Latino Cancer Summit set for summer

**L**atinas Contra Cancer will host the 2010 National Latino Cancer Summit, focusing on *Science Meets Service, Moving Forward Together*, in San Francisco, California July 27-29, 2010. As in the past, *Redes En Acción* will co-sponsor the event.



Coordinators announce that the Summit is open for **registration** and the submission of abstracts. Deadline for abstracts is March 15.

The Summit will address cancer issues in the Latino community, along the cancer continuum – prevention, diagnosis, treatment, survivorship and end of life – with special focus on prevention, intervention and innovation. This year’s agenda features 12 workshops that will underscore the impact of cancer on the Latino community.

Participants will hear from experts, network with researchers and speak with health care providers, community agency leaders and educators. The event offers an outstanding opportunity to network toward solutions and address cancer disparities in the Latino community.

### NCI Cancer Bulletin available *en español*

The National Cancer Institute now offers its monthly online newsletter *en español*.

The *Boletín del Instituto Nacional del Cáncer*, a modified Spanish translation of information from the *NCI Cancer Bulletin*, aims to keep Spanish-speaking reader

s in the United States and around the world up to date on the latest research advances in the prevention, treatment and understanding of cancer.

The monthly publication, which features selected articles and research highlights from the *NCI Cancer Bulletin*, will be e-mailed free to subscribers. To send a copy of the latest issue to a colleague or friend, [click here](#).

### NHMA 14th Annual Conference: health care reform & Hispanics

The **National Hispanic Medical Association’s** 14th Annual Conference, *Health Care Transformation: Prevention and Health Promotion for the Hispanic Community*, will be March 25-28, 2010 in Washington DC.

With the Obama administration’s emphasis on health care reform and the focus on prevention, primary care and integrative medicine discussions at the national level, it is extremely important to become familiar with the new federal policies and programs that will impact Latino communities.

The NHMA’s CME Conference is a national conference that provides health expert education on policies, health professions education, clinical models of care, and research all focused on the Hispanic patient / community.

Coordinators expect 1,000 attendees, including physicians, residents and representatives from public and private health care sectors.

NHMA is a nonprofit organization representing the interests

## GmaP initiative targets cancer disparities

**T**he Institute for Health Promotion Research at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio and *Redes En Acción* researchers will help develop a Transdisciplinary Geographic Management Program (GMaP) “hub” to reduce cancer health disparities in a region covering Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arizona and Colorado.

The effort is part of an initiative of the Center to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities (CRCHD) of the National Cancer Institute (NCI) to create regional networks around the country dedicated to cancer health disparities research,



**Dr. Amelie Ramirez**

training, awareness and care.

Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH, *Redes En Acción* Principal Investigator and IHPR Director, will direct the Region 4 GMaP.

“Our new Region 4 GMaP will build a synergistic network of investigators in basic, clinical, population- and community-

based research to eliminate cancer health disparities,” said Dr. Ramirez. “We will partner with more than a dozen other NCI and CRCHD programs to build the GmaP for this region.”

In the two-year planning grant, IHPR and its partners will:

- Establish a participatory GMaP network
- Conduct a cancer health disparities needs assessment in Region 4
- Develop a regional participatory cancer health disparities research implementation plan

The GmaP initiative is a regional strategy aiming to build critical “hubs” for support and efficient management of cancer health disparities research, training and infrastructure programs. Its goals are to 1) advance the science of cancer health disparities in the regions, 2) contribute to the next generation of cancer health disparities researchers, and 3) achieve measurable reductions in cancer health disparities.

## Congratulations, Marielos Vega!

**A**t 14, Marielos Vega dropped out of high school in her native Costa Rica to work as a housekeeper to help support her family. At 20, she came to the United States without a high school education and speaking almost no English.

Today, she's a college graduate – the first in her large extended family – and a rising research nurse in the cancer field in the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, New Jersey Medical School. She is one of numerous young Latinos across the country who have benefited from *Redes En Acción's* research training activities.

Recently, Marielos added still more achievements to her ever-growing résumé – becoming an officer in the U.S. Army Nurse Corps and a United States citizen. She will go on active duty in June.

In an e-mail to *Redes En Acción* with these accompanying photos from her naturalization ceremony, she said, “I was very happy because most of the time nurses go in as 2nd Lieutenants, but



The naturalization ceremony: Marielos taking the oath (in uniform, front row center) and with family (bottom)

because of all the work that I have done so far, including that related to *Redes*, I was given the rank of Captain. As a Latino woman I am very happy and proud of it.”

And *Redes En Acción* is very happy and proud of you!



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## NEW PROJECTS / NUEVOS PROYECTOS

### Southwest Region

*Promotion of Physical Activity in the Latino Community* (San Diego Prevention Research Center) is a five-year project supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). *Redes En Acción* network researcher John Elder, PhD, directs the project as Principal Investigator, while Gregory Talavera, MD, MPH, *Redes* Southwest Region Co-PI, serves as Co-Investigator.

The mission of the San Diego Prevention Research Center (SDPRC) is to foster academic-community partners to promote Latino health using principles of community-based participatory research. Primary emphasis is physical activity in Latino youth.

SDPRC features collaboration between a School of Public Health (San Diego State University), a School of Medicine with a residency in Preventive Medicine (University of California, San Diego), and a Department of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences (SDSU). Community partner organization is the San Ysidro Health Clinic (SYHC), located near the San Diego / Tijuana border, and the Community Committee, of which SYHC is a member, is the Enhancing Family Resources Collaborative.

Through training and education activities, SDPRC is creating a network of experienced professionals that will serve the needs of San Ysidro and other South Bay communities

regarding physical activity promotion, program evaluation and community building. The core research activities include conducting a community-wide needs and assets assessment for physical activity in San Ysidro and developing and evaluating a community-wide walking initiative for adults and a soccer games / leagues enhancement program for children and adolescents.

Also guided by Dr. Elder (PI) is the *Bi-National Study of Chronic Disease*, a collaborative research project involving the University of Cuernavaca and SDSU to examine bi-national risk factors for chronic disease prevention. The four-year project is supported by CDC.

Dr. Elder received Special Interest Projects (SIP) ancillary studies funding available to Prevention Research Centers to partner with the Instituto Nacional de Salud Pública de Cuernavaca. Working with Drs. Elva Arredondo and Gregory Talavera, he is developing a Latin American Network on Obesity reduction.

The SIP is a United States-Mexico collaboration that aims to assess, develop and implement evidence-based recommendations focused on physical activity and nutrition as strategies of obesity prevention among Latinos living in the two countries.

### Central Region

María E. Fernández, PhD, *Redes* Central Region Co-PI, was awarded a grant through the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT) to test new strategies to reduce the incidence of cervical cancer among Hispanic women. Cervical cancer incidence and mortality rates among Latina women are almost twice that of non-Hispanic white women, and Latinas in Texas experience among the highest rates of cervical cancer mortality in the country.

Dr. Fernández will develop and test two educational interventions for the parents of Hispanic girls in the hope that parents will ensure their daughters receive a vaccine that prevents the major types of Human Papillomavirus (HPV) that cause cervical cancer. The educational materials include a *photonovela* (graphic novel) and an interactive video.

“Our study is the first ever to develop and test tailored interactive cancer communication approaches to increase HPV vaccination among Hispanic girls,” said Dr. Fernández. “Because the effectiveness of the interventions will be evaluated in a ‘real world setting,’ the findings of the study will be easily translatable to current clinical and community practice.

“If effective, the intervention could substantially reduce the cervical cancer-related disease burden among Hispanics in Texas.”

### Smoking cessation

*Continued from page 3*

underserved groups who have greater difficulty quitting and less access to pharmacological or behavioral treatment,” said Dr. Castro. “Our findings indicate that smoking cessation outreach to Latinos also needs to take into account male smokers who have lived in the

United States for short periods and who prefer Spanish.”

While the study showed important acculturation-related predictors of smoking cessation, the researchers say cultural adaptation probably affects smoking indirectly by influencing other important variables, such as levels of stress, social support, feelings of competency or depression.

“It’s critically important for us to understand the mechanisms by which acculturation affects smoking,” Dr. Castro said. “It’s these variables that can and should be targeted in treatment.”

Earlier studies have shown that both acculturation and gender influence smoking prevalence among Latinos, but little was known about their effects on smoking cessation.

## AROUND REDES

### Northwest Region

**Anna Nápoles, PhD**, has been promoted to Associate Adjunct Professor of the Division of General Internal Medicine, Department of Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco. Dr. Nápoles is a *Redes En Acción* Northwest Region Co-Investigator.

**Marynieves Díaz-Méndez, MD**, *Redes* Northwest Region Outreach Coordinator, delivered her third two-hour workshop on *Cancer and Nutrition* to the staff of LifeLines and the program's Latina breast cancer patients. 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.

**Rena J. Pasick, DrPH**, *Redes* Northwest Region Advisory Committee

member, delivered a seminar entitled *Numbers & Narratives, Insiders & Outsiders: Considering evidence in context for cancer disparities research* at the Medical Effectiveness Research Center for Diverse Populations of the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF). Dr. Pasick, Associate Director for Community Education and Outreach at the UCSF Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center, has worked in population-based cancer control research for the past 20 years. Her research has included large-scale intervention trials designed to increase the use of breast and cervical cancer screening among ethnically diverse and underserved women.

*Latinas Contra Cancer* was recently honored by the Latino Caucus of the American Public Health Association with the 2009 Meritorious Community-Based Health Organization Award. The award was presented at the American Public Health Association 137th Annual Meeting & Expo. *Latinas Contra Cancer* provides cancer health education, patient navigation and psychosocial family support group services targeting the

underserved and low-income Spanish-speaking population in the Bay Area of Northern California. *Redes En Acción* works with LCC on the organization's National Latino Cancer Summit (scheduled July 27-29 this year).

### Southwest Region

CME training by the San Diego Access to Cancer Care Coalition is scheduled in February 2010 in San Diego targeting 100 health care providers. The training, entitled *Ensuring Access to Quality Cancer Care: Cultural Competency Training for Cancer Care*, features the following learning objectives: 1) understanding how cultural competency relates to health care access, 2) understanding cultural barriers to cancer prevention and treatment, and 3) demonstrating what is culturally competent care. Chair of the San Diego Access to Cancer Care Coalition is **Sheila F. LaHousse, PhD**, *Redes* Southwest Region Project Manager. *Redes En Acción* Southwest Region / San Diego State University Graduate School of Public Health serves as a partner organization for the Coalition.



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