



New NCI-Funded Initiative
Organizes National and Regional
Hispanic Cancer Networks

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A major new initiative funded by the National Cancer Institute will bring together the most extensive collection of organizations ever assembled nationwide to collaborate in the fight against cancer among this country's Hispanic populations.

The 5-year program, *Redes En Acción: Cancer Awareness, Research and Training*, is developing a broad-based coalition of cancer research centers, community-based organizations and federal partners to foster a national infrastructure for Hispanic cancer prevention and control activities. The groups will be organized geographically, with coordinating centers in six regions across the United States.

Redes En Acción (Networks in Action) is directed nationally by Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH, Associate Professor of Medicine and Deputy Director of the Chronic Disease Prevention and Control Research Center at Baylor College of Medicine (BCM). The program's National Network Center is BCM in Houston and San Antonio, Texas.

"This is a milestone event – a major commitment to setting, prioritizing and effecting an agenda of cancer issues impacting Hispanics all over the country," said Dr. Ramirez, Principal Investigator of the program. "*Redes En Acción* represents the most ambitious effort ever to draw upon the expertise of local, regional and national groups and work together to reduce the burden of cancer among Latino populations."

In addition to developing regional networks, *Redes En Acción* will establish training and research opportunities for Hispanic students and researchers, and develop pilot research projects on key cancer issues affecting Hispanics. Program activities also include developing pilot projects into full, competing grant applications and providing support for cancer awareness activities among Hispanic communities.

Redes En Acción is part of a new \$60 million effort recently announced by the NCI to address the unequal burden of cancer within certain special populations in this country over the next five years. The *Redes En Acción* program is funded by one of 18 grants at 17 institutions creating or implementing cancer control, prevention, research and training programs in minority and underserved populations.

The Special Populations Networks for Cancer Awareness, Research and Training are intended to build relationships between large research institutions and community-based programs, said Richard D. Klausner, MD, director of the NCI.

“This initiative is one of the largest of its kind in the federal government,” Dr. Klausner noted. “It is intended to encourage people from the community to work with scientists to find ways of addressing important questions about the burden of cancer in minority communities.”

Redes En Acción is designed to expand the existing infrastructure of a previous NCI-funded program, the National Hispanic Leadership Initiative on Cancer: *En Acción*. Under the direction of Dr. Ramirez from 1992 to 2000, this cancer prevention and control research and community outreach program initiated the first comprehensive assessment of cancer risk factors among the major populations of Hispanics: Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cuban Americans, and Central and South Americans.

Redes En Acción regional activities will be coordinated by six program Co-Principal Investigators:

- Jose R. Marti, MD, **Northeast RNC** (Regional Network Center), The Brooklyn Hospital Center, Brooklyn, NY
- Edward J. Trapido, ScD, MSPH, **Southeast RNC**, Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center, University of Miami, Florida
- Aida L. Giachello, PhD, **North Central RNC**, Midwest Latino Health Research Center, University of Illinois at Chicago
- Martha A. Medrano, MD, MPH, **South Central RNC**, Medical Hispanic Center of Excellence, University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio
- Eliseo J. Perez-Stable, MD, **Northwest RNC**, University of California, San Francisco
- Gregory A. Talavera, MD, MPH, **Southwest RNC**, Graduate School of Public Health, San Diego State University, California

Also participating as partners in the program are the National Hispanic Medical Association, directed by Elena Rios, MD, and the Cancer Information Service in San Francisco, Houston, Miami and New York City.

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