

# Redes En Acción

The National Latino Cancer Research Network



**On Target in Year 9**  
Report on The Eighth Annual Redes En Acción  
**National Steering Committee Meeting**

July 29-30, 2008

[www.redesenaccion.org](http://www.redesenaccion.org)



**R**edes En Acción: The National Latino Cancer Research Network is a major Community Networks Program initiative supported by the National Cancer Institute’s Center to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities. 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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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### *On Target in Year 9*

**W**ith 18 pilot research projects garnering \$925,000, about 200 junior scholars moving through the training program, and a comprehensive Latino cancer awareness program in place nationwide, *Redes En Acción* has provided a powerful weapon in the battle against cancer health disparities in this country.

As the *Redes* initiative – now in its 9th year – assesses its impact, the statistics compiled since its inception offer a compelling argument for the power of networking, collaboration and synergistic dynamics. Perhaps never before have so many divergent parties come together across the United States to address the many challenges inherent in the cancer issues facing Latinos.

Significant as they may be, the numbers only tell part of the story. The final legacy of *Redes En Acción* may well lie in its lasting effects on people’s lives – the researchers who found fellow investigators as well as much-needed financial and moral support, the students who found mentors and meaningful education and career paths, the Latino cancer patients and survivors who found assistance with their struggles and a voice to articulate their experiences, and many others.

On a day-to-day basis, as each of us works to piece together small parts of a very large puzzle, it’s easy to lose sight of the considerable impact of a major – and massive – endeavor such as *Redes En Acción*. Typically, it’s at the annual National Steering Committee meeting that many of the partners gather to stop, look back and share the deep satisfaction that comes from accomplished objectives and anecdotal evidence of the many lives touched by the ongoing efforts of this *Redes* family.

While we changed a few things in planning this year’s meeting – particularly the venue (gathering in San Francisco rather than San Antonio) – that feeling of satisfaction was present once again. We reported on recent achievements, shared experiences of members engaged in Latino cancer and health leadership roles outside *Redes En Acción*, and engaged in discussions about the program’s planned activities and future goals.

It is with great gratitude that I thank all of you who have worked tirelessly in this past year – and over the past eight years – to make *Redes En Acción* what it is today.

¡Mil Gracias! And let’s go back to work!

Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH  
 Principal Investigator  
*Redes En Acción*





## IN REVIEW

### 2007-08 *Redes En Acción* Research, Training & Awareness

Since 2005 *Redes En Acción*: The National Latino Cancer Research Network has been at the forefront of the National Cancer Institute's Community Networks Program (CNP) nationwide initiatives. Through collaborations within a diverse network of public, private and nonprofit organizations, *Redes En Acción* has effectively and innovatively promoted Latino cancer research, training and awareness efforts. Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez, *Redes* Principal Investigator, updated the National Steering Committee on these activities. Drs. Eliseo Pérez-Stable and María E. Fernández, Co-PI's of the Northwest and Central Regions, respectively, and Dr. Anna Nápoles-Springer, Northwest Region Co-Investigator, shared some of their training and awareness achievements.

## Research

Since the inception of *Redes En Acción* in 2000 as an NCI Special Populations Networks SPN initiative and later as part of the NCI Community Networks Programs, a key achievement has been the program's success in channeling 18 studies through the pipeline for NCI pilot research project funding totaling \$925,000. Investigators engaged in those pilot studies – many who were first-time grant recipients – have gone on to garner more than \$25 million in new funds for subsequent research projects.

"This is something we're really proud of," said Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez. "These are pilot investigators who got their start with *Redes En Acción* and have flourished and are now doing some phenomenal work."

The success of the *Redes En Acción* research program can be measured in other ways, as well, she said. For example, as an SPN program (2000-2005), network investigators at regional and national sites conducted 80 studies receiving \$32 million in funds – all projects outside the *Redes* research scope. In only three years – since the CNP was launched – *Redes En Acción*

investigators have developed an additional 57 research projects attracting more than \$63 million in funding.

"This means we have more than 130 research projects in the past eight years and over \$95 million in funding that the formal infrastructure of *Redes En Acción* has been able to generate," said Ramirez. "The impact on Latino cancer and health issues by our researchers has been enormous."

That impact is also reflected in publications in scientific journals, she said. "As a group, in only the past three years – between 2005 and 2007 – the *Redes* team has published more than 120 scientific articles. And based on the information we've gathered from our regional sites, we have over 70 more articles in development."

In addition to the array of studies linked to *Redes En Acción* over the years, the initiative recently launched a new patient navigator research project at its regional and National Network Center sites. Findings and more information about the study will be available in the months ahead.

## Training

Since 2000, 194 junior faculty, post-docs and interns have participated in the *Redes En Acción* training program, which is aimed at helping increase the Latino presence in cancer control and research fields. To date, the *Redes* CNP has worked with 63 of these trainees.

Each of these individuals has received invaluable mentorship and participated in specific training activities, which included grant writing; data collection, analysis and reporting; literature reviews; and scientific publication development.

"These are Latinos and Latinas who are typically at early stages of their careers," said Dr. Ramirez. "The impact of the *Redes* training will be significant to their lives and careers, and will almost certainly pay huge dividends in future cancer research."

She offered examples of early success stories, such as oncologist Ana Maria Lopez, who has distinguished herself as one of the top physicians in Tucson, Arizona, and Peter Prieto, once a *Redes En Acción* intern as a medical student in Grenada, who recently received a fellowship in the surgery oncology branch of NCI.

*Redes En Acción* is also working to develop a new program aiding Latino graduate students in the Southwestern United States enter doctoral programs.



Dr. Eliseo Pérez-Stable

A strong proponent of mentorship, Dr. Eliseo Pérez-Stable shared with NSC meeting participants his experiences and encouraged colleagues to "take the lead" in "promoting research-capacity minority faculty development" at their institutions. "Our institutions, no matter how progressive they are, won't do it unless we lead it, unless we go to the mat and fight for it...other people will join us, but we have to be out there in front."

Dr. Pérez-Stable recommends taking leadership roles in organizations and institutions, then leveraging resources that these positions provide access to. Having funding for mentoring activities helps, he said, "but you can think of it as generic...how do you help pull other people up?"

"How do you help the assistant professor get their K award or their RO1 or R21, or the fellow figure out what project they could do so they can get a paper out and help them along the continuum?"





# IN REVIEW

## 2007-08 Redes En Acción Research, Training & Awareness

### Awareness

With a host of quality print and video products, timely news dissemination, the availability of many of the nation's top Latino cancer authorities, and extensive interpersonal activities at the regional sites, public education has always been a strength of *Redes En Acción*. Now, with an expanding array of awareness-building tools, this facet of the program is growing even stronger.

Through its quarterly newsletter and comprehensive Web site – both developed during the SPN period – *Redes En Acción* built a strong foundation for its communications infrastructure. Over the past three years, as a CNP, the program has bolstered this effort with an online directory of Latino cancer experts and a monthly E-Alert disseminating timely funding, event, research, training and other news of interest to its nationwide network of partners.

Meanwhile, *Redes En Acción's* award-winning TV public service announcements (PSAs) promoting cancer clinical trials to Latino audiences across the country have found new venues. The program's nationally recognized book relating the Latina breast cancer experience in the words of survivors, *Nuestras Historias: Mujeres Hispanas Sobreviviendo el Cáncer del Seno* (Our Stories: Hispanic Women Surviving Breast Cancer), has found new sponsorship with the Lance Armstrong Foundation. And, thanks to a grant from Susan G. Komen for the Cure, one of the program's series of bilingual *Buena Vida* magazine-style educational publications (*Protecting Your Family from Breast Cancer*) is now in its second printing – and Komen for the Cure has distributed 35,000 copies across the United States.

In addition, a new series of television PSAs promoting cancer

screening among Latinos is set for launch nationwide in early 2009. Two of the spots, still in development, were shown for the first time at the NSC meeting.

Regionally, *Redes* sites in South Texas and Northern California have contributed quality educational products and programs to the initiative's public awareness effort.



Dr. María E. Fernández

Funded by NCI, the *Redes* Central Region's *Vivir sin Cáncer* project tested culturally appropriate materials for increasing calls to NCI's Cancer Information Service about human papillomavirus (HPV), the HPV vaccine, and cervical cancer in general. Yet another study conducted by investigators in the Central Region, called *Vale la Pena*, aimed to "develop and test two *promotora*-delivered interventions to increase colorectal cancer screening among Hispanics," said Dr. María Fernández.

In the Northwest Region, researchers have recently developed a bilingual educational booklet promoting clinical research. "Some people support research that's on cells and molecules but that doesn't involve humans," said Dr. Eliseo Pérez-Stable, "and yet advancement of knowledge really requires (human) research. So we thought a very first basic step is to say research is good...and in this case, clinical or human or population research...because this is (what) affects people."

### Agenda

#### Tuesday, July 29

**6:00 – 8:00 p.m.** Reception & Registration

#### Wednesday, July 30

**8:00 – 8:30 a.m.** Continental Breakfast

**8:30 – 9:00 a.m.**

Welcome/ Meeting Overview/ Introductions

Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH, PI, Redes En Acción

**9:00 – 9:15 a.m.** Redes Y3 Report Card

Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH

**9:15 – 9:35 a.m.**

Community Networks Program Update/Summit/  
New Directions

Speaker: Maria Canto, DDS, MS, MPH, Program Officer,  
Center to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities, NCI

Q&A Session

**9:35 – 10:00 a.m.**

Awareness/Education Activities and Products  
National Premiere of the Redes Media PSA Campaign:  
Promoting Screening Practices of Latinos

Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH

What Our Sites Are Doing in Cancer Education/  
Dissemination

Eliseo Pérez-Stable, MD, Co-PI, Northwest RNC

Guide for CBOs on Developing Peer Support Programs

Clinical Trials Guide

María E. Fernandez, PhD, Co-PI, Central RNC

Vale la Pena CRCs Materials

Vivir sin Cáncer HPV Materials

Q&A Session

**10:00 – 10:30 a.m.**

Training: Perspectives from the Local and National Levels

Speaker: Eliseo Pérez-Stable, MD

Q&A Session

**10:30 – 10:45 a.m.** Break

**10:45 – 11:05 a.m.**

Redes Patient Navigator Studies: Pilot, Assessment and National Intervention

Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH

**11:05 – 11:25 a.m.**

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Center for Health Policy

Speaker: Robert O. Valdez, PhD, Executive Director, RWJF  
Center for Health Policy

Q&A Session

**11:25 – 11:45 a.m.**

Network to Study Health Care Disparities Affecting Minorities / Mentoring New Generation of Health Care Disparities Researchers

Speaker: William A. Vega, PhD, Professor,  
David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA

Q&A Session

**11:45 – noon** Group Photo

**12:00 – 1:15 p.m.** Lunch

**12:30 – 12:45 p.m.**

Observations from the Beltway

Speaker: Elena Rios, MD, President & Founder,  
National Hispanic Medical Association

**1:15 – 1:30 p.m.** Break

**1:30 – 2:00 p.m.**

Update on Project SOL: San Diego and Miami Field Centers

Speakers:

Greg Talavera, MD, MPH, Co-PI, Southwest RNC

Frank Penedo, PhD, Co-PI, Southeast RNC

Q&A Session

**2:00 – 2:15 p.m.**

Redes Network Survey: Preliminary Data

Speaker: Noshir Contractor, PhD, Professor,  
Northwestern University

Q&A Session

**2:15 – 2:30 p.m.**

Cancer Beyond our Borders: Global Cancer & the Tobacco Burden

Speaker: Thomas J. Glynn, PhD, Director,  
Cancer Science and Trends, and International Cancer Control,  
American Cancer Society

**2:30 – 2:45 p.m.**

National Cancer Picture: C-Change & Intercultural Cancer Council

Speaker: Armin D. Weinberg, PhD, Director,  
Chronic Disease Prevention & Control Research Center,  
Baylor College of Medicine

**2:45 – 3:00 p.m.** Break

**3:00 – 4:00 p.m.**

Redes Evolution: Measuring Our Success

Moderator: Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH

**4:00 – 4:15 p.m.** Meeting Summary

**4:15 p.m.** Adjourn



# NATIONWIDE

## Redes Leaders Address Latino Health Disparity Issues

Through major national research projects, initiatives, institutions, organizations, centers and programs, members of the *Redes En Acción* network have assumed leadership roles and are making a significant impact on disparity issues affecting Latino cancer and health.

### Project SOL Update

The National Institutes of Health has launched the largest ever long-term epidemiological study of health and disease in U.S. Latinos – the \$61 million, multi-site Hispanic Community Health Study, perhaps better known as Project SOL (Study of Latinos). Two *Redes En Acción* Co-Principal Investigators, Drs. Gregory Talavera and Frank Penedo, and a member of the National Steering Committee, Dr. John Elder, play key roles in that historic undertaking.

**Gregory A. Talavera, MD, MPH, Co-PI,** *Redes Southwest Region*; Associate Professor, Graduate School of Public Health, San Diego State University

After months of preparation, the project began participant examinations earlier this year at the study's four sites – Chicago, Miami, New York's Bronx and San Diego, said Dr. Gregory Talavera in his Project SOL update.

At present, he said, 542 completed examinations had been recorded. The recruitment target for the 3-year study is 16,000 Latinos aged 18-74, with about two-thirds in the 45-74 age bracket and equal numbers of Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and Central and South Americans.

Study obstacles differ from site to site, said Talavera. "The big challenge for us (in San Diego) is the cost of recruitment," he noted. "We have to go through a lot of households to select one, and San Diego being the youngest (Latino population) of all four cities, it's basically like choosing one out of nine households that are eligible."

Making recruitment more challenging, said Talavera, is the amount of time participants are being asked to contribute to the study – basically, a day of intensive physical exams and psychosocial cultural measures,



Dr. Gregory Talavera

then going home and wearing a sleep monitor and a device to measure physical activity for a specified period of time. "But the majority, I think, are very enthusiastic about being part of this landmark study."

**Frank J. Penedo, PhD, Co-PI,** *Redes Southeast Region*; Associate Professor, Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center, University of Miami

Regarding the impact of behavioral factors on cardiovascular disease (CVD) among Latinos, Dr. Frank Penedo offered snapshots of what Project SOL is currently capturing and what an ancillary study using the project's sample would additionally provide.

Because of the time demands that the ambitious protocol places on participants, portions of the psychosocial and sociocultural assessment – including elements that may be significant to understanding processes that actually may be protective – had to be cut, said Penedo.

"We have a critical need to understand how these factors relate to CVD," he said. "Unfortunately, we really don't have very good data in terms of Hispanics."

Because the assessment included in Project SOL has "significant gaps," Penedo said, the ancillary study proposal calls for a more comprehensive examination. "It really provides us a very sophisticated map trying to get at what matters in terms of cardiovascular disease processes."

"We're proposing to capture (data from) about 5,200 participants across the four sites, and that was based on the analyses that we developed. Stay tuned and hopefully next year we can report more on this."



Dr. Frank Penedo

### RWJF Initiatives

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) has demonstrated a commitment to addressing and reducing health disparities among Latinos and other underserved populations. Two *Redes En Acción* National Steering Committee members, Drs. Robert Valdez and William Vega, have assumed leadership roles in RWJF-funded initiatives.



Dr. Robert Valdez

**RWJF Center for Health Policy**

**Robert O. Valdez, PhD,** Executive Director; Professor of Family and Community Medicine, University of New Mexico

A multi-pronged, interdisciplinary approach to eliminating health disparities, the RWJF Center for Health Policy is striving to increase minority presence in the health, social and behavioral science pipeline.

Says Executive Director Dr. Robert Valdez: "This center is really designed to try to increase

the number of Latinos and American Indians and other underrepresented minority community group members in the fields of social and behavioral sciences, but in particular economics, sociology, political science, who can be engaged in interdisciplinary research with clinical scientists to address issues that are important to health policy around the country."

In the process, the Center is bridging academia and community. By emphasizing both academic and community leadership development, Valdez said, "we are looking at community capacity building as a central role of the Center because part of what we're interested in is doing the kind of research that in fact takes us outside of the university walls and engages community in an ongoing process of research interventions development."

Significant to the Center's efforts has been enabling social scientists to see how their research relates to health disparity issues. The key is providing a framework where the social, economic and political environment is the center of a set of individual – as well as societal – choices about how resources are distributed within communities, said Valdez.

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# NATIONWIDE

## Redes Leaders Address Latino Health Disparity Issues

### RWJF Initiatives *(continued from page 5)*

*Network to Study Health Care Disparities Affecting Minorities / Mentoring a New Generation of Health Care Disparities Researchers*  
**William A. Vega, PhD**, Professor of Family Medicine, David Geffen School of Medicine, UCLA



Dr. William Vega

Discussing the recently initiated Network for Multicultural Research on Health and Healthcare, which will study health care disparities affecting underserved minority populations, Dr. William Vega summarized the primary mission: to create a focused set of published work that would provide a comprehensive overview of the issue of quality of care.

"From our point of view, it's a patient-centered perspective of the experiences that our patients are having in transactions with clinicians and with processes of care," said Vega, who with Dr. Michael Rodriguez directs the Network. "We believe that although there

are certainly pieces and things around here and there, a comprehensive understanding of this for the Latino population has not been present."

To create "a body of knowledge quickly," Vega said, the program identified and recruited senior investigators from across the country. These investigators, he added, would provide the foundation for meeting the program's secondary mission: mentoring researchers at the junior faculty level, providing an opportunity to develop a publishable research article. These junior scholars are funded by the Network and provided data analysis support using national data sets and regional databases.

The Network offers the opportunity to closely examine quality of care and access to care issues, and bridge over into policy analysis and policy research, he noted.

### Cancer Around the World

**Thomas J. Glynn, PhD**, Director, Cancer Science and Trends, and International Cancer Control, American Cancer Society

Looking at a host of up trends, Dr. Thomas Glynn painted a gloomy picture of cancer worldwide in the coming years.

"Six hundred million people alive today are going to die of tobacco-related disease," Glynn said. "One hundred million people died in the 20th century from tobacco use – (it will be) one billion in this century, unless we can change things."

In the next few years, cancer will pass ischemic heart disease as the primary cause of death worldwide, said Glynn.

What is fueling this dramatic surge in cancer incidence and mortality? A major cause is global population aging. "Cancer is a disease primarily

of older people," he said, "so we're going to see more cancers for that reason alone, no matter what we do about changing lifestyles."

Another major cause is infectious diseases; a third is adoption of Western lifestyle behaviors, such as diet, exercise and childbearing patterns (later childbirth, which impacts breast cancer incidence).

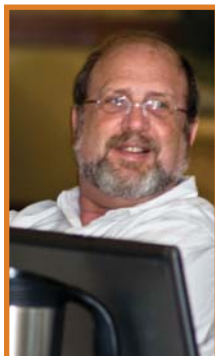
Finally, about 20-30 percent of global cancer burden is due to tobacco use, which has been significantly increasing in middle- and low-income countries.



Dr. Thomas Glynn

### ICC & C-Change

**Armin D. Weinberg, PhD**, Director, Chronic Disease Prevention & Control Research Center, Baylor College of Medicine



Dr. Armin Weinberg

Dr. Armin Weinberg, who has been a moving force behind the Intercultural Cancer Council (ICC) for many years, said the ICC "took a hard look at itself" and has made some strategic changes.

Over the years, the ICC has developed an extensive network of national partners, Weinberg said, "and the Biennial Symposium we have every two years was a great place to bring these pieces together...national leaders, people from the community, survivors, leaders from the National Cancer Institute, CDC and so on."

At the most recent Symposium, he said, the

organization reached out more to the community and brought in almost 400 community-based organizations "by design." Since that number is complemented – as usual – with about 150 students from minority institutions and their mentors, "literally over half of the audience was there by design."

The shift will mean "a change in how we engage the network following that kind of meeting," said Weinberg. "We're looking at how we partner better with our national organization partners so we can make those connections stronger."

In addition, Weinberg has been active in C-Change since the organization's launch under George and Barbara Bush a decade ago. Comprised of leaders from the public, private and nonprofit sectors, C-Change is dedicated to conquering cancer through collaboration.

Recent activities have included convening an examination of the nation's prevention research agenda, and behavioral science and policy summits. The group will soon host an internal cancer disparities discussion, said Weinberg.



# National Steering Committee Members and Invited Guests

**Maria Teresa Canto, DDS, MS, MPH**

*National Cancer Institute*

**Noshir S. Contractor, PhD**

*Northwestern University*

**Concepcion Diaz-Arrastia, MD**

*University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston*

**John Elder, PhD**

*San Diego State University*

**Thomas J. Glynn, PhD**

*American Cancer Society*

**Holly L. Howe, PhD**

*Cape Canaveral, FL*

**Ana Natale-Pereira, MD, MPH**

*New Jersey Medical School*

**Rena J. Pasick, DrPH**

*University of California, San Francisco*

**Sylvia Rickard**

*Utah Breast Cancer Network*

**Elena V. Rios, MD, MSPH**

*National Hispanic Medical Association*

**Lupe G. Salazar, MD**

*University of Washington*

**Edward Trapido, ScD**

*University of Miami*

**Robert O. Valdez, PhD, MHSA**

*University of New Mexico*

**William A. Vega, PhD**

*University of California, Los Angeles*

**Armin D. Weinberg, PhD**

*Baylor College of Medicine*

# Redes En Acción Team

## National Network Center

**Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH**

**Principal Investigator**

*University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio*

**Kipling Gallion, MA**

*University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio*

## Regional Centers

**Co-Principal Investigators**

**Juan Emilio Carrillo, MD, MPH**

*New York Weill Cornell Medical Center*

**Maria E. Fernandez, PhD**

*University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston*

**Frank J. Penedo, PhD**

*University of Miami*

**Eliseo J. Pérez-Stable, MD**

*University of California, San Francisco*

**Gregory A. Talavera, MD, MPH**

*San Diego State University*

## Regional Program Coordinators

**Nereida Borrero, RN, MSN, GNP**

*The Brooklyn Hospital Center*

**Marynieves Díaz-Méndez, MD**

*University of California, San Francisco*

**Anna Nápoles-Springer, PhD**

*University of California, San Francisco*

**Patricia Quintana, MD**

*San Diego State University*

**Chantell Torregrosa-Macias**

*University of Miami*

**Bernardo Useche, PhD**

*University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston*

## Institute for Health Promotion Research Team

**Kay Haverlah**

*University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio*

**Deborah Parra Medina, PhD**

*University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio*

**Sandra San Miguel de Majors, MS**

*University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio*