

**UIC** Midwest Latino Health Research,  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
AT CHICAGO **Training and Policy Center**  
**JANE ADDAMS COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK**

## **FACT SHEET**

### **Who We Are**

The UIC Midwest Latino Health Research, Training and Policy Center (Latino Research Center) at the Jane Addams College of Social Work (JACSW) was founded in April 1993, under the leadership of Aida L. Giachello, PhD, of the UIC JACSW, in partnership with the UIC College of Medicine's Hispanic Center of Excellence and the UIC School of Public Health. Initially, the Latino Research Center received a developmental grant from the US Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Agency for Health Care Policy and Research to establish a minority research center on the Medical Treatment Effectiveness Program focusing on the Midwest region. Since then, the Latino Research Center has developed the infrastructure to conduct studies on health/social disparities, training programs, and policy work. Its research on health disparities has targeted areas related to minority population health that have received limited attention, including chronic illnesses, injury prevention, and maternal and child health. The Latino Research Center has developed education and intervention models that are now viewed as best practices in the field and used nationally. The Center has also conducted numerous local, national and international trainings for community health workers and health and human service providers aimed at increasing their capacity to address health disparities and facilitate chronic disease prevention and management.

### **Our Mission**

The Latino Research Center has the long-term goals of improving the health and well-being of Hispanics/Latinos and other underserved populations as well as increasing the quality of service delivery to these populations locally and nationally. The Center accomplishes these goals by:

- Developing and conducting health and human service outcomes research and evaluation studies
- Increasing the pool of culturally and methodologically competent Latino and non-Latino faculty, students, and community practitioners in health and social services research and practice
- Engaging in policy work and information dissemination activities, based on research findings
- Providing mechanisms for communication, coordination, networking, and health information dissemination among service providers and community-based organizations
- Engaging communities using participatory action research and empowerment models to address health and human services concerns

### **Our Activities**

#### **Community Engagement and Partnership**

To address Hispanic/Latino health and social issues, the Latino Research Center engages in community organizing and mobilization around health, provides technical assistance, and has facilitated the establishment of new organizations in areas with high concentrations of Hispanics/Latinos in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, and Wisconsin. In addition, the Center has formed partnerships, engaged in community capacity-building through training, and built relationships locally, regionally, and nationwide. This has allowed the Center to expand its research and training activities in these geographical areas, as well as on the US-Mexico border through its partnership with the Pan American Health Organization.

#### **Chronic Illnesses Prevention, Management, and Control**

**National Center of Excellence for the Elimination of Disparities.** In October 2007, the Latino Research Center received funding from the US DHHS Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to establish a national Center of Excellence for the Elimination of Disparities (CEED) in collaboration with the Chicago Department of Public Health and the UIC Neighborhoods Initiative/Great Cities Collaborative. The CEED is a national resource center that addresses disparities in the areas of diabetes and cardiovascular disease among Hispanics/Latinos and African Americans in Chicago, the Midwest region, and nationwide. The CEED's activities will contribute to the elimination of health disparities through community and systems change impacting health system policies and practices at the institutional level and in services delivery. These changes will be geared towards: 1) the reduction of overweight/obesity; and 2) the reduction of linguistic, cultural, and institutional barriers to health services. The CEED is guided by a socio-ecological model that follows participatory and empowerment approaches for community engagement and mobilization.

**Hispanic Community Health Study- Study of Latinos (HCHS- SOL).** The Latino Research Center is the lead recruitment organization for the HCHS/SOL Chicago Field Center site, which is based at Northwestern University (Martha Daviglus, MD, PhD, and Principal Investigator). This study is sponsored by the US DHHS-National Institutes of Health (NIH)- National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) and represents the first long-term study of its scale to document cardiovascular and other chronic conditions among Hispanics of diverse nationalities living in the US. This historical study will investigate Latino health over a period of six and a half years in four sites: Chicago, IL; Bronx, NY; Miami, FL; and San Diego, CA. A total of 16,000 Latinos will receive physical examinations and participate in interviews. This study will identify the prevalence of a variety of conditions and their risk factors, including heart disease, stroke, asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, dental disease, hearing impairment, diabetes, kidney and liver disease, and cognitive impairment. It will also assess potential risk factors, including diet, physical activity, smoking, blood lipids, acculturation, health care access, medication use, and social and economic disparities.

**Diabetes.** Since 1996, diabetes has been a central focus for the Latino Research Center. Initially, the Center conducted research studies on physician and provider adherence to diabetes standards of care and gender differences in diabetes prevalence. In 1997, the Center began replicating a diabetes education model, which was developed and evaluated by Latino Health Access, Inc. (LHA) from Santa Ana, California. This replication was undertaken in partnership with LHA and with funding from the CDC- Division of Diabetes Translation. This model utilizes trained community health workers—many of them living with type 2 diabetes—as diabetes educators. The Center built upon the LHA model by developing and adapting curricula and guides designed for use by health promoters and practitioners. These were tested among Latino and African American populations and evolved into the **Diabetes Empowerment Education Program (DEEP)**, which resulted from the Center's collaboration with *Alivio* Medical Center, Mile Square Health Center, Norwegian American Hospital, and Sinai Family Health Centers. With funding from the NIH- National Eye Institute, these activities were expanded to include diabetes eye care.

In October 1999, the Latino Research Center began to organize the **Chicago Southeast Diabetes Community Action Coalition (CSDCAC)** with seven-year funding from the CDC through the Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) 2010 Initiative. The CSDCAC aims to reduce diabetes disparities and to implement capacity building, targeted action (educational and linkage programs through self-care centers), system and policy changes, and change among change agents, such as community leaders and organizations. Community coalition collaborators included: the Healthcare Consortium of Illinois, *Centro Comunitario Juan Diego*, and the Illinois Department of Human Services- Illinois Diabetes Control Program. Following a participatory action research model, the CSDCAC trained its members to perform a comprehensive community assessment, develop an action plan and implement programs to reduce disparities. As a result, the Center and community partners developed self-care centers in southeast Chicago.

**Health Disparities Study in Nebraska.** In 2005, under the sponsorship of the Nebraska Department of Human Services, the Center completed a seven-county behavioral risk factor survey focusing on chronic illnesses in geographical areas with high concentrations of racial and ethnic minorities throughout the state of Nebraska.

**Health Disparities and Contribution of the Workplace.** With funding from CDC- National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, the Center conducted a needs assessment with multiple racial and ethnic minorities and immigrant groups to ascertain the effect of social discrimination in the workplace on health

disparities, such as on the prevalence of chronic illnesses. Currently, the Center is in phase II of this project, conducting intensive face-to-face English interviews with racial and ethnic minorities and immigrant groups.

**Cardiovascular Disease.** The Latino Research Center conducted two hypertension studies: one study of medical chart reviews to describe the profile of hypertensive Latinos and one pilot study examining Latinos with hypertension, the care they received, and their quality of life. In addition, the Center conducted a cardiovascular disease prevention program aimed at Latino women, called *Dulce Corazon*, with funding from the Illinois Department of Public Health. The program focused on nutrition and increasing physical activity. The Center also conducted a study in partnership with the Maharishi College of Medicine in Iowa about high blood pressure reduction and meditation techniques.

**Cancer.** The Latino Research Center operated ***Redes en Acción North Central/Midwest Regional Network***. This network conducted and promoted Latino cancer research, the training of Latino cancer control investigators, and cancer education and awareness activities. It also addressed barriers to, and effective strategies for, the recruitment and retention of minorities and women in clinical and prevention trials. This network resulted from a partnership with the National *Redes en Acción* Center at Baylor College of Medicine in San Antonio, Texas through a five-year grant from the Special Populations Branch of the US DHHS NIH National Cancer Institute (NCI). The Center has also assisted in the development of a National and Midwest Cancer and Latino Agenda, under the leadership of Dr. Amelie Ramirez, National Principal Investigator, Baylor College of Medicine.

Prior to the *Redes* project, the Center organized regional conferences, which addressed the recruitment and retention of minorities and women in cancer clinical trials in the Midwest. The Center also conducted four studies with health care providers, community-based organizations, and cancer survivors about barriers and effective recruitment strategies for women and minorities in cancer clinical trials in the Chicago area. Additionally, the Center has a collaboration with the UIC Center for Population Health and Health Disparities.

**Asthma.** The Center examined equity in asthma treatment and control from the perspective of both patients and providers. Further, in collaboration with the Chicago Asthma Prevention Initiative, the Center participated in the development of an asthma wellness and skills training program for community health workers and health promoters.

### Policy

**Policy.** The Latino Research Center has participated in local, regional, and national health policy conferences and has provided briefings to members of Congress and their staff as a means to share/disseminate research findings and policy recommendations emerging from the Center's research studies. Center staff also participate in many local and national policy committees in which consultation is provided to private organizations and representatives of local and federal government.

**Tobacco Control.** The Latino Research Center, in collaboration with the National Latino Council on Alcohol and Tobacco Prevention (LCAT), developed a regional Latino Tobacco Control Agenda in research, training, and policy in the Midwest region. As a result, coalitions in Indiana and Nebraska formed to address tobacco control and prevention. In these states, the Center sponsored tobacco control policy forums to discuss the tobacco settlement agreement and its implications for Hispanics/Latinos.

### Prevention

**Injury Prevention.** In partnership with LCAT, the Latino Research Center conducted a qualitative study on motor vehicle driving practices among Latino populations in Illinois, North Carolina, and Texas. It addressed the issues of drunk driving and undocumented motorists. Until recently, the Center was the home of a statewide injury prevention coalition, **Illinois Hispanic Safe Communities**, funded by the Illinois Department of Transportation. The Center, in partnership with the Hispanic Police Officers Association, developed a training guide for community-based organization personnel on traffic safety issues for Hispanics.

### Cultural Competence

**Cultural Competence in Services Delivery.** The Latino Research Center completed a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation-funded study with *Centro San Bonifacio* and Erie Family Health Center that utilized community health workers to reduce and/or eliminate cultural and other communication barriers between patients and providers.

**Physician and Hispanic/Latino Patient Communication Barriers.** The Latino Research Center was contracted by the American Medical Association to conduct a study with Hispanic/Latino immigrants and Hispanic/Latino and non-Hispanic physicians in order to explore patient-provider communication barriers. The data collected was used to evaluate the issues and strategies that were identified by Hispanic/Latino national health leaders and experts during an August 2006 Hispanic Health Initiative national health summit.

**Cultural Competency Training.** The Latino Research Center conducts cultural competence training for hospitals and health and human services organizations locally and nationally.

### Women & Children's Health

**Bone Health.** The Latino Research Center held Building Better Bones classes on the southeast side of Chicago for minority women and evaluated the impact of the classes on women who had or were at risk for developing osteoporosis. These classes were conducted through a contract with the Illinois Department of Public Health's Office of Women's Health. With the support of community partners, the Center invited at-risk women to the Building Better Bones educational program, where they received a bone density screening as well as education on the importance of calcium-rich foods and exercise in preventing problems like osteoporosis. Women who had abnormal screening results were referred to local health centers.

**Pregnancy Outcomes.** The Latino Research Center has undertaken three pregnancy-related projects: 1) a hospital-based interview study to examine the relationship between the characteristics of prenatal care, content of care, satisfaction with care, and prenatal outcomes for Latinas; 2) an analysis of birth certificate data for the state of Illinois; and, 3) a focus group study to explore the relationship between the characteristics of prenatal care and satisfaction with care among different ethnic groups.

**Other studies have included:** 1) An evaluation of the Illinois Department of Human Services' Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Food Centers program in Chicago; 2) An assessment and annotated bibliography of the state child welfare program, examining its impact on Latino children and families; and 3) An assessment of emergent disabilities in Latino populations, in partnership with UIC's Center for Emergent Disabilities; and 4) An evaluation of the Indiana state case management and drug assistance program for substance abusers with HIV/AIDS.

### Developing Latino Researchers and Professionals

Since the Latino Research Center was established, it has provided training in health outcomes research to over 1,000 undergraduates, graduates, post-doctoral fellows, and junior faculty as well as seven community fellows. The majority of these students and faculty have come from UIC and other well known institutions throughout the Midwest. Several have received stipends through our collaborating partners, such as the Health Careers Opportunity Program at the UIC School of Public Health and the Hispanic Center of Excellence at the UIC College of Medicine. Students and professionals (pre- and post-doctoral and junior faculty) interested in cancer prevention and control received fellowships through the *Redes en Acción* Network. Other students consult with staff to develop class projects, theses, and papers on Latino issues. In addition, the Center has provided 1,500 training sessions to community leaders, health and human services professionals, and community health workers on the management and control of chronic diseases, tobacco control and prevention, and policy and advocacy issues.

Furthermore, the Latino Research Center provides technical assistance to leaders and organizations at the community, state, and national level. Areas of technical assistance have included: research development, community assessment, instrument translation, focus groups, grant writing, evaluation, and policy work.

### Training and Program Tools

Training curricula have been developed as a result of the Latino Research Center's studies. They include:

- The *Diabetes Empowerment Education Program* (DEEP) training manual and flipcharts. This is a multi-cultural, bilingual self-management education curriculum developed for Latinos and African Americans with type 2 diabetes. The DEEP has been tested in various health centers and community settings. Continuing Medical Education (CME) approval can be requested for this training.

- *Diabetes Today: Community Organizing and Partnership Building around Diabetes* curriculum. The purpose of this training is to prepare health and human service professionals to effectively train community leaders and community health workers in community organizing techniques aimed at the prevention and control of diabetes and its related complications and disabilities, particularly among poor, low-literacy, and racial and ethnic minority populations. The training covers skills in three main areas: 1) group facilitation and educational methodology, 2) community outreach/organizing/mobilization, and 3) coalition-building skills.
- *Advocacy Training manuals*. Two training manuals have been developed: one that focuses on advocacy and policy work on diabetes issues, and the second, which was developed to conduct bilingual advocacy and policy work around genetics education issues. The second is called *Making Community Partnerships Work: A Toolkit*. This toolkit is about community engagement/partnership building around genetics education and was developed under partnership with the March of Dimes National office. It is also now available through the MOD website: [www.marchofdimes.com](http://www.marchofdimes.com).

To date, the Latino Research Center's curricula have been used in:

- Ten border states along the U.S.-Mexico border, as part of the CDC Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) U.S. Diabetes Border Health Initiative to train community health promoters and other health professionals.
- Texas, with collaborative training grants from Bristol-Myers-Squibb, HRSA, the Texas Diabetes Council, Migrant Health Promotion, CDC, and PAHO.
- Chicago, under the CDC Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) 2010 and in collaboration with the Chicago Southeast Diabetes Community Action Coalition (CSDCAC). The Center is currently implementing the DEEP Training-of-Trainers, so that the DEEP can be put into practice in sites on the southeast side of Chicago, such as the Center's diabetes self-care centers.
- Regional Migrant Stream Forum conferences and National Health Promoter Conferences.
- Puerto Rico, in partnership with the University of Puerto Rico's School of Public Health.
- Florida, Kansas, and Pennsylvania, for the diabetes prevention and control programs at their state departments of health.
- New York, for the Northern Manhattan Perinatal Partnership, Inc./Building Bridges, Building Knowledge, Building Hope Coalition.
- Three California hospitals: California Hospital Medical Center in LA, Good Samaritan Hospital in LA, and Huntington Memorial Hospital in Pasadena.

### Other Activities

**Genetics Education.** Currently, the Latino Research Center is conducting a multi-site evaluation of community genetics education programs being developed in vulnerable racial and ethnic minority communities in Utah, New York City, and Washington, DC. The Consumer Genetics Education Network (CGEN) is a project of the March of Dimes National Office under a cooperative agreement with the US DHHS Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). The Center is also implementing two additional genetics education programs in Illinois under the sponsorship of the Illinois Department of Public Health.

### **Center Staff and Associates**

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