



National Latino/Hispanic AIDS Action Network
24 West 25th Street, 9th Floor, New York, NY 10010-2704
Phone: 646-375-4415

**Statement on behalf of the National Latino AIDS Action Network (NLAAN)
Regarding the Passing of Dennis de Leon**

It is with utmost sadness that the National Latino AIDS Action Network (NLAAN) mourns the death of Dennis de Leon founder and former President of the Latino Commission on AIDS. From HIV/AIDS, to housing, water born disease, and health services, Dennis continuously and steadfastly sought justice and care for those less fortunate than himself. When he became aware of his infection, at a time when disclosure of one's status often meant negative personal and professional impacts, Dennis once again chose truth and justice and sought to utilize his personal struggle to help others.

According to the NLAAN Co-Chairs Dr. Britt Rios-Ellis, Francisco Ruiz and Oscar Lopez "One of the wonderful things about working with Dennis was his resolute and honest nature. The remembrance of Dennis de Leon lies heavy in our hearts and minds for several reasons. We recognize how fortunate we are to have experienced his insatiable quest for justice first-hand, to have shared in the benefit of his vision, and to have been blessed with the opportunity of having known and worked at his side. Dennis was not only a brilliant social justice advocate, but getting to know him helped us understand that for Dennis social justice required a deep-seeded commitment to truly loving those who have experienced marginalization."

We have lost a legendary and very strategic leader and we recognize that it will take the collective struggle of all of the NLAAN leadership and membership to ensure that we continue to honor Dennis' life work. Dennis is among a rare few who have contributed much to bringing Latinos and HIV/AIDS into our nation's consciousness. As we come together in the upcoming year, we know that Dennis' spirit is with us, guiding our efforts, and championing our shared cause.

In 2010, we will be honoring his legacy through the establishment of the Dennis de Leon Endowment for NLAAN activities and scholarships for community based organization and clinic staff wishing to attend NLAAN's biannual Latino/Hispanic HIV/AIDS Leadership Summit (date to be announced). The NLAAN Leadership Committee will be seeking funding and new partnerships with several agencies and foundations in the upcoming months to make the Dennis de Leon Endowment a reality.

NLAAN is committed to honoring Dennis' legacy through our work and we pledge to dedicate our efforts to win the battle that Dennis so valiantly led. Upon the death of our dear friend and leader, Dennis de Leon, The National Latino AIDS Action Network wishes to extend our deepest condolences to Mr. Bruce Kiernan, Dennis' partner of 32 years, his family, friends and to the Board and staff of the Latino Commission on AIDS.

NLAAN Leadership Committee Members

Katherine Boger - Executive Director

Alianza Latina, Inc
Buffalo, New York

Patricia Canessa - Executive Director

Salud Latina/Latino Health
Des Plaines, Illinois

Dr. Jorge Delgado - Assistant Director of Government Relations and Public Policy

National Minority AIDS Council
Washington, D.C.

Ernesto Dominguez - Youth Leader/Peer Educator

Advocates for Youth/The Sexual Minority Youth Resource Center
Portland, Oregon

Sergio E. M. Farfan - Co-Chair

Louisiana Latino Health Coalition For Hiv/Aids Awareness (LLHC)
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Anselmo Fonseca - Co-Founder / Advocate

Pacientes de SIDA pro Política Sana
San Juan, Puerto Rico

Dora Gutierrez - Director of Community Health Initiatives

Latin-American Health Institute (LHI)
Boston, Massachusetts

Judith Levine RN - HIV/AIDS Program Manager

DC Chartered Health Plan/DC Health Care Alliance
Washington, D.C.

Oscar Raúl López (NLAAN Co-Chair) - Director of Health Policy

Latino Commission on AIDS
New York, New York

Daniel Charles Montoya - Director of External Affairs

American Institutes for Research
Silver Spring, Maryland

Wilfredo Morel - Director Hispanic Health and Peer Advocate

Hudson River Community Health
Peekskill, New York

Lorenzo J. Ramirez - Community Liaison
Latinos Using Cardio Health Actions to Reduce Risk (LUCHAR)
Denver, Colorado

Juan Carlos Riascos - National Community Affairs Manager
Abbott Laboratories
Miami, Florida

Britt Rios-Ellis, Ph.D. (NLAAN Co-Chair) - Professor and Director
National Council of La Raza/ California State University Long Beach Center for Latino Community Health
Long Beach, California

Francisco Ruiz (NLAAN Co-Chair) - Manager, Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities
National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD)
Washington, D.C.

Bamby Salcedo - HIV Prevention Services Project Coordinator
Childrens Hospital Los Angeles
Los Angeles, California

Evelyn Ullah, BSN, MSW - Director, Miami-Dade County Health Department, Office of HIV/AIDS
Florida Department of Health
Miami, Florida

Vivianne Valdes-Hurtado, ANP, MSN - Clinical Program Coordinator
North Carolina AIDS Education & Training Center
Durham, North Carolina

Victor Martinez – Director of Programs and Services
BIENESTAR
Los Angeles, California

Richard Zaldivar - Executive Director/President & Founder
The Wall Las Memorias Project
Los Angeles, California