



November 13, 2008

Dennis deLeon
President
Latino Commission on AIDS
24 West, 25th Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10010

Dear Mr. deLeon,

Thank you for the National Latino AIDS Action Network (NLAAN) release of the Latino HIV/AIDS Policy Federal Recommendations in June 2008. CDC would like to recognize the hard work and dedication of over 120 organizations that resulted in the policy recommendations, which were developed as a result of the 2008 National AIDS Summit.

CDC has examined NLAAN's federal policy recommendations and responded to those that specifically address CDC's involvement in preventing HIV/AIDS among Hispanic/Latinos in the United States. Please contact Maria Alvarez, Acting Hispanic/Latino Executive Committee Chair for CDC's Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention at MAlvarez@cdc.gov if you have any questions.

Thank you again for your continued commitment and support to HIV/AIDS prevention among Hispanics/Latinos.

Sincerely,

Richard Wolitski, Ph.D.
Acting Director,
Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention
National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis,
STD and TB Prevention

Enclosure

Latino/Hispanic HIV/AIDS Federal Policy Recommendations Addressing the Latino AIDS Crisis

National Latino/Hispanic AIDS Action Network (NLAAN) released 16 federal policy recommendations addressing what it has termed the Latino AIDS Crisis on June 25, 2008. CDC's responses to NLAAN's seven recommendations directed to CDC are outlined below.

➤ NLAAN supports the development of a comprehensive National AIDS Strategy reflecting the needs of all affected communities.

- CDC is supportive of a national HIV/AIDS strategy to address the HIV/AIDS epidemic in our nation. A proposed national plan or strategy for the domestic HIV/AIDS epidemic must be comprehensive by addressing prevention, care, and treatment. Because many federal agencies would be affected, this level of planning would most likely occur at the level of the White House or the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). CDC is ready and willing to actively participate in the development of a national plan.
- In 2008 and 2009, CDC will begin an in-depth, comprehensive, and inclusive process to develop a new long-range strategic plan for HIV prevention activities through 2020. A panel of experts will conduct an independent review of CDC's HIV prevention efforts, which will guide the strategic planning process. The new strategic plan will provide a blueprint for HIV prevention activities that is aligned with CDC's Health Protection Goals and integrated with other infection diseases such as viral hepatitis, STD, and TB.

➤ Declare a heightened national response to address the epidemic among Latinos

- CDC recognizes that the HIV/AIDS epidemic is a serious threat to the Hispanic/Latino community and has made strong commitments to address the epidemic within this population. CDC is working diligently with partners and leaders across the nation to develop strategies for addressing the rapidly rising HIV rates among Hispanic populations.
- Hispanics/Latinos have the second highest rate of HIV diagnoses among all racial and ethnic groups in the United States. Hispanics/Latinos account for 15% of the U.S. population, but 18% of persons living with HIV/AIDS. This disparity underscores the need for greater efforts to address the HIV/AIDS epidemic among this population. And CDC has responded to that need. In fact, CDC has

dedicated an estimated 23% of the domestic HIV prevention budget to Hispanic/Latino prevention efforts.

- The Hispanic/Latino population is one of CDC's three priority populations for HIV prevention efforts. CDC supports HIV prevention activities for HIV-infected Hispanics and those at-risk for HIV through funding to community-based organizations (CBOs) and state and local health departments.
- The unique cultural and linguistic needs of this population, including acculturation issues, immigration status, gender roles, homosexuality and HIV stigma, and diversity, all present challenges to the development of effective research efforts and interventions. Additionally, CDC's work has shown a need for more evidence-based interventions for Hispanic populations, most notably among Hispanic men who have sex with men (MSM). There are many opportunities to advance HIV/AIDS prevention among this population. More funding and collaboration among CDC, the National Institutes of Health, and other partner organizations can lead to greater results and successes.

➤ **Assure access to culturally and linguistically competent quality care and prevention**

- CDC works to ensure that its HIV prevention products such as interventions, training and technical assistance, testing resources, and social marketing campaigns are available in Spanish and easily accessible to Hispanic/Latino audiences. We also allocate HIV prevention funds specifically for community-based organizations (CBOs) in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands to ensure HIV prevention services are culturally and linguistically administered.
- Spanish training and technical materials for five behavioral interventions and are currently being developed for several behavioral interventions for Hispanics/Latinos. CDC provides technical assistance to the organizing committees for National Latino AIDS Awareness Day and National HIV Testing Day. This includes coordinating Spanish materials and surveillance data on Hispanic/Latinos. CDC websites such as National HIV and STD Testing resources, are available in English and Spanish (CDC en Español) <http://www.cdc.gov/spanish/>. Two CDC social marketing campaigns "Prevention is Care" and "One Test Two Lives" include materials (posters and brochures) in both Spanish and English.
- Currently, CDC has seven best evidence interventions for Hispanics under various stages of development and/or dissemination. Our Replicating Effective Programs (REP) and Diffusion of Effective

Behavioral Intervention (DEBI) projects package and disseminate evidence-based interventions nationally.

- REP is currently developing intervention packages for youth (¡Cuídate!), Latinas (SEPA), and heterosexual couples (CONNECT).
 - Two other interventions (Project AIM for youth and Project START for young incarcerated men) were piloted by REP case study agencies serving Latino populations.
 - DEBI project is currently disseminating two Evidence Based Interventions (EBIs) for Latinos: VOICES/VOCES for STD clinic patients, and Modelo de Intervención Psicomédica (MIP), a motivational interviewing model program, for injection drug users.
 - Other DEBI interventions that have been adapted in the field for Latinos include Safety Counts, Community PROMISE, and Partnership for Health.
- CDC is also currently funding projects to develop and evaluate several HIV behavioral interventions for Latinos. These projects involve:
 - Adaptation of the Popular Opinion Leader (POL) intervention for HIV-infected Latino men who have sex with other men (MSM);
 - Project Sin Buscar Excusas Proyecto SOL (Safer Options for Life) for Latino MSM in New York City and Miami;
 - Effectiveness trial of the VOICES/VOCES intervention in Puerto Rico; and
 - Rigorous evaluation of Project AMIGAS—an adaptation of the SISTA intervention for Latino women—in Miami, Florida.

➤ **Assist Latino prevention providers in the development and implementation of local solutions**

- CDC is working to increase the Hispanic/Latino community's capacity to participate in the research, planning, and delivery of prevention interventions and related services. We fund nine national and regional organizations to provide capacity building assistance to Hispanic/Latino-serving community-based organizations (CBOs) so that these prevention providers can develop and support HIV prevention activities in local Hispanic/Latino communities. CDC also supports locally developed interventions implemented by local health departments.
- Through its Minority HIV/AIDS Research Initiative (MARI), CDC is supporting the training of Hispanic/Latino researchers participating in studies focused on HIV prevention in this population. These studies include MARI for injection drug users in Miami; MARI vaccine trials

in San Francisco; MARI study ELLAS -Latinas Lashing out against AIDS for pregnant Latinas in South Carolina; and the MARI study on routine HIV testing in primary care settings for African Americans and Hispanics.

➤ **Improve the understanding of factors that contribute to risk among Latinos**

- CDC acknowledges the need for a better understanding of social, cultural, and environmental factors influencing HIV risk behaviors among Latinos. One of the 2008 Leadership Priorities of CDC's National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD and TB Prevention (NCHHSTP) is to explore the impact of social determinants of health in reducing health disparities in HIV/AIDS, viral hepatitis, STD, and TB among populations disproportionately affected by these diseases. During 2008, the Center produced a social determinants of health green paper; a Center report on programs and activities focusing on reducing health disparities and examining social determinants of health; and held an expert consultation meeting with leaders in the social determinants of health field and with public health and community partners to develop a shared vision for addressing social determinants of health at CDC.
- Progress in this area will require outreach and partnerships with other federal, state, and local agencies and entities, such as the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Corrections, and Department of Education. CDC may also need to work more closely with parallel agencies in Mexico and other Central or South American countries.
- CDC also has two research studies examining HIV/AIDS behavioral risk factors among Latinos. The study is Brother y Hermanos—a study of the risk factors for HIV which was conducted in Los Angeles, New York, and Philadelphia with 2100 African-American and Latino MSM. This multi-phase, multi-site study aimed to identify various social, psychological, cultural, and behavioral factors associated with HIV risk among African American and Latino MSM. Several papers on this study have been prepared and submitted for publication in 2008. The second study is Women's Study—a study of African American and Hispanic/Latina women in the southeastern United States (North Carolina, Alabama, and Florida) that examines relationship, cultural, psychosocial, and behavioral factors associated with HIV infection.
- CDC's two supplemental surveillance systems the National HIV Behavioral Surveillance System (NHBS) and the Medical Monitoring

Project (MMP) that targets at-risk and HIV-infected individuals include significant numbers of Hispanics/Latinos and can be used locally to develop epidemiological profiles, for HIV-related planning, and to evaluate prevention programs and resource needs for HIV treatment and care.

- CDC has developed fact sheets to address stigma and cultural factors such as machismo, fatalismo, and familismo, which are available on the CDC website.

➤ **Provide Epidemiological Data that Accurately Represent HIV/AIDS among Latinos**

- CDC has provided epidemiology data that accurately reflect HIV/AIDS among Hispanic/Latinos. The dependent areas such as the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico are included in CDC's *HIV/AIDS Supplemental Report, Cases of HIV Infection and AIDS in the United States, by Race/Ethnicity, 2002—2006*. This report fully incorporates data from the U.S. dependent areas. Detailed demographic analyses for the dependent areas are also included in peer-reviewed publications. For example, "Characteristics of HIV Infection among Hispanics, United States 2003-2006" was published on September 1, 2008 in the *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes*. This report provides detailed information on HIV among Hispanics/Latinos and how HIV infection varies according to country of birth.
- CDC is in the process of assessing how the surveillance report could be further improved in the future. For example, CDC is collaborating with the Census Bureau to determine how the American Community Survey data can be further utilized to compute rates for race/ethnicity using data from Puerto Rico. Presently, detailed demographic analyses for the dependent areas are not included because the U.S. census data are collected differently in Puerto Rico compared to the rest of the United States and the District of Columbia.
- Data on HIV incidence and HIV/AIDS cases in Puerto Rico will be the subject of a forth coming *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* (MMWR).
- Additionally, CDC has provided training to state and local areas throughout the United States including Puerto Rico that conduct HIV incidence surveillance to enable area agencies to calculate and use incidence estimates to more effectively target HIV testing efforts.