



SECOND NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE LATINO ELDERLY
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FINAL REPORT



Conference Poster by
Brazilian artist Duda Penteadó

*'We Are You: A Portrait of America in
the Turn of the Millennium''*

Co-Sponsors

Life Project Development Center, Orlando, FL - University of Illinois at Chicago Urban Health Program,
Chicago, IL - Roybal Institute for Applied Gerontology, Los Angeles, CA

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CONFERENCE FINAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One of the biggest challenges for Latino seniors is gaining access to services and programs. Yet this segment of our society is most in need. According to the US Administration on Aging (AoA), the Hispanic older population was 2.2 million in 2004 and is projected to grow to over 15 million by 2050. By 2028, the Hispanic population aged 65 and older is projected to be the largest racial/ethnic minority in this age group. The intent of this document is to bring to the forefront the aging phenomenon that is occurring in conjunction with the aging of the baby boomers. The goal is to share this document and its findings with the Senate & Congressional Hispanic Representation, as well as national, state, local, public and private agencies, in addition to other individuals and organizations that value the importance of Latino senior aging issues.

In 2005, in preparation for the White House Conference on Aging (WHCoA), The Latino Gerontological Center (LGC) organized its Second National Conference on the status of the Latino elderly. To allow a maximum participation of Latino seniors as well as their service providers, this effort included a series of Round Table discussions held in Orlando, FL on May 12; Chicago, IL on May 24; and New York City on October 6-7, 2005, for the specific purpose of creating regional agendas.

We combined the observations and recommendations from our Second National Conference to form a National Latino Aging Agenda, containing information relevant to all U.S. Latino seniors, such as the economic, social, programming, and institutional barriers that impede and limit their access to senior services and programs, which are often exacerbated by language and cultural differences.

The contents of the National Latino Aging Agenda can be summarized as follows: (1) the Government needs to increase grants and financial opportunities to better service the needs of the Latino aging population; (2) programs and services need to be expanded to the undocumented Latino aging population; (3) the Latino aging population lacks bilingual and bi-cultural services; (4) literature needs to be translated in standard Spanish at appropriate reading levels for the aging Latino population; and (5) an overall need exists to increase awareness within the Latino community on geriatrics and gerontology.

Submitted by:
Mario E. Tapia
President & CEO
Latino Gerontological Center
October 1st, 2006

Priority Issue #1

Improve the delivery of information and administration of high quality health and support services.

Barriers:

- Inadequate access to health care and affordable high quality support services and programs such as Medicare, mental health, elder abuse, and long term care options
- Scarcity of Spanish publications on mental health, no inclusion of the role of family and the need to address myths dealing with mental health issues within a Latino cultural context
- Stigmatization, including cultural, resulting in hesitation to receive services
- Lack of awareness on palliative care and end of life decisions
- Insufficient caregiver support regarding mental health or elder abuse matters
- No access to services for the undocumented
- Lack of funds for research on Latino seniors
- Underutilization of health and supportive services
- Need for more partnerships with other social service entities
- Insufficient bilingual staff to provide Medicare services; shortage of staff and lack of training programs for Medicare service providers
- Cost of medication is prohibitive
- Medicaid services not available to undocumented
- Services that are "fee for service"
- Lack of knowledge on what is long term care
- Unaffordable long term care insurance options

Proposed Solution(s):

- Create information and publications in Spanish about mental health issues that address myths within a cultural context, include the role of family and other related topics
- Develop culturally appropriate practices to reduce the stigma of mental health issues and the hesitation to receive mental health services

- Provide incentives that integrate partnerships among providers
- Develop standard intake forms for all hotlines
- Increase education regarding living wills, advance directives, power of attorney and healthcare proxy
- Funding for research on Latino seniors
- Increase utilization of existing services through the development of a bilingual / bicultural workforce and train staff on how to work with diverse cultures
- Increase the number of primary physicians
- Give incentives to institutions to create environments that are family like / family friendly
- Increase funding for more senior health centers that provide health and supportive services
- Increase coverage of preventative measures for a variety of health related problems
- Provide Medicare / Medicaid services to the undocumented and eliminate “fee for service” components
- Increase funding to provide targeted services that support caregivers as a solution to decrease elder abuse or if dealing with a senior with dementia disorders
- Increase services for elderly Latina battered women
- Increase penalties for elder abuse
- Provide funding for more community outreach that provides information, improves the delivery and administration of supportive services including nutritional, legal services, end of life issues, long term care and other topics of interest to Latino seniors
- Provide incentives to create media partnerships that assist in community outreach efforts to increase public awareness and utilization of state, city, and local government agencies such as the Area Agency on Aging (AAA)
- Clear up confusion surrounding how to choose between generic and brand name medicine by implementing educational training sessions
- Create a national long term care policy similar to Medicare

Priority Issue # 2

Lack of bicultural / bilingual healthy lifestyles information and disease prevention and chronic disease management programs that fit within the cultural milieu of Latino seniors.

Barriers:

- Lack of intergenerational programs and family inclusion in prevention programs
- Inadequate marketing and promotion efforts to caregivers and children about senior resources
- Not considering and acknowledging senior preferences when developing strategies
- Insufficient research on Latino seniors
- Lack of education opportunities and support for caregivers / children / community
- Limited number of Latinos in health and human services, those that are in the system often feel isolated, lack information and resources and other factors lead to stressful situations and "burnout"
- Information is not culturally sensitive or relevant and does not fit within the cultural context of Latino seniors and their families
- Lack of recognition and work within the existing community structure
- Need more opportunities for networking, sharing of resources and working collaboratively
- Providers lack knowledge about the differences of cultures within the Latino community
- Necessity to find creative ways to facilitate healthy habits / behavior and change
- Need to move beyond competition for senior funding
- Latino seniors and their families often have limited literacy, language skills and education
- Inadequate number of bicultural / bilingual care navigators to assist Latino seniors in navigating the system and / or serve as patient advocates (person to person)
- Fear of the "system" i.e., healthcare, human and social services
- Cultural barriers / legal status barriers
- Not enough people power / labor intensive

- Lack of recognition and accommodation of the changing needs of the Latino senior population as their needs change

Proposed Solution(s):

- Reduce or eliminate stringent eligibilities for entitlements for the undocumented
- Provide funding for creative culturally relevant intergenerational programs that facilitate and promote healthy habits / behavior and change for Latino seniors and takes into consideration and accommodates the changing needs of the Latino senior population as their needs change
- Assist and provide technical assistance to shifting marketing and promotion efforts to caregivers and children about senior resources
- Increase the number of Latinos in health and human services and provide resources and leadership to enable them to provide senior services
- Enable health and human service providers to have more bicultural / bilingual care navigators to assist Latino seniors in navigating the system
- Grant additional resources and opportunities for networking, sharing of resources and working collaboratively
- Aid in the development of information that is relevant, culturally sensitive, and fits within the cultural context that acknowledges Latino senior preferences when developing strategies, taking into consideration limited language skills, educational level and limited literacy
- Augment funding to increase providers' knowledge of the cultural differences of within the Latino community
- Amplify education opportunities and support for caregivers / children / community on healthy lifestyles, prevention, and disease management programs
- Offer incentives to work and recognize existing community structures when implementing healthy lifestyles, prevention, and disease management programs that encourages collaboration and assists them to move beyond competition for senior funding
- Make funding and incentives available for community organizations, health and human service providers, businesses, the educational community, and others to increase people power by forming partnerships and collaborations to reduce cultural barriers and in some cases fear of accessing programs and services promoting healthy lifestyles, prevention, and disease management for Latino seniors
- Increase funding for training programs for the medical and health service community on patient advocacy strategies

- Increase funding for research on Latino seniors and require greater inclusion of them in research projects / programs
- Expand and enhance eligibilities and entitlements for programs and services promoting healthy lifestyles, prevention, and disease management for Latino seniors, including eligibility for the undocumented

Priority Issue #3

Insufficient amount of attention or resources designated for safe and livable communities, housing, transportation and other resources that create safe neighborhoods.

Barriers:

- Unsafe neighborhoods
- Lack of public protection from gangs and other criminal activity
- Lack of affordable housing
- Unaffordable assisted living and independent senior living facilities
- Inadequate transportation
- Non English and limited English language skills results in no or limited access to services and programs
- Stringent eligibilities and entitlements and the need to include eligibility for the undocumented

Proposed Solution(s):

- Increase funding and provide technical assistance for planning and developing safe neighborhoods including public safety and the built environment such as homes, neighborhoods and roadways to optimally accommodate and create safe communities for the elderly
- Plan communities that address senior needs i.e. living communities where seniors have access to medical centers, culturally sensitive housing options, recreation centers, shopping and markets
- Innovative housing options that address the needs of the 21st Century family i.e., multigenerational families
- Increase the number of available Medicaid / Medicare beds in nursing home facilities
- Increase supervision in senior developments

- Provide funding and incentives for senior services in safe environments i.e., faith based communities
- Augment funding for affordable housing by expanding Section 8
- Develop networks and increase outreach to better disseminate information on affordable housing options
- Increase incentives for businesses and corporations to construct affordable assisted living and independent senior housing
- Provide tax incentives to private investors for adequately maintained property rented to low income seniors
- Offer incentives exploring enhancement to transportation barriers and assist in the creation of alternative modes of transportation
- Increase availability of transportation options by providing incentives that encourage organizations to collaborate and share transportation services
- Afford funding to create bicultural and bilingual “one-stop shops” that provide a venue for marketing, networking, sharing of resources and client information across multiple management systems
- Promote coordination between health and aging networks to better inform seniors about the various support systems available, including affordable housing options
- Assist in creating mechanisms to that allow for better follow up, tracking and evaluation of how services are being utilized; create a statewide general information system i.e., 311, 211
- Expand and enhance eligibilities and entitlements for housing, transportation and other programs and include eligibility for the undocumented

Priority Issue #4

Inadequate caregiver support prevents caregivers from delivering quality care.

Barriers:

- Lack of knowledge and awareness of available resources including eligibility for programs and support services offered to aging populations and caregivers such as Medicare, Circuit Breaker, non-profit services and free resources

- Inadequate bilingual services; translation and interpreter services; medical providers and support staff to conduct and support outreach to Latino seniors and caregivers
- Insufficient bilingual & bicultural resources for professional and family caregivers
- No culturally proficient training programs for caregivers
- Lack of respite care programs for caregivers
- Low pay for home workers and inadequate reimbursement for respite care services
- No Federal tax breaks for caregivers, such as grandparents raising grandchildren, taking care of a disabled family member as well as other family relationships not considered by mainstream as family
- Stringent eligibilities and entitlements and the need to include eligibility for the undocumented

Proposed Solution(s):

- Create incentives for businesses, non-profit organizations, national, state and local agencies to establish collaborative working relationships to increase knowledge, awareness of available resources, eligibility for programs and support services offered to aging populations and caregivers
- Offer and increase funding and incentives for bilingual translation and interpreter services so that medical providers and support staff are able to provide medically appropriate translations as well as conduct and support outreach efforts to Latino seniors and caregivers
- Assist in the development of bilingual & bicultural resources for professional and family caregivers and create culturally proficient training programs for all caregivers
- Create incentives for physicians working in senior centers i.e., new or shifted loan forgiveness
- Create incentives for doctors to offer home visits
- Provide funding and incentives to establish respite care programs for caregivers
- Compensate respite care services to effectively attend to the needs of those being served
- Increase pay for home workers to insure quality of services
- Provide Federal tax breaks and free health care for caregivers
- Create and mandate standard policies for senior centers, centers that are not in compliance should not continue to receive funding

- Expand and enhance eligibilities and entitlements to include eligibility for the undocumented

Priority Issue #5

Lack of knowledge and awareness on money management and financial issues resulting in underutilization of educational and support programs on economic security.

Barriers:

- inadequate access to support and programs on economic security
- Seniors "outliving their money"
- Excessive taxes when transferring assets to loved ones
- Lack of resources and funding for job training and work programs for seniors
- Need for financial and mortgage education such as reverse mortgages
- Lack of education and awareness for families and seniors on finances such as banking practices and mortgages
- Seniors lack direction and guidance in matters related to economic security
- More emphasis on the financial needs of the 55+, early retirement, disabled, etc. is needed
- Lack of outreach to "forgotten senior's", those who have no family or community relationships
- Abuse and ID theft from families and others; protective services needs to protect the vulnerable
- Inability to pay for medical expenses without depleting existing assets
- Cost of medication is prohibitive
- Need for practical methods to increase awareness of available community programs and accessibility of resources with direct contact
- Uncertainty of the future of Social Security, concerned about upcoming generations
- Extreme low income individuals will never be able to save or manage a retirement account
- Lack of collaboration and partnerships between agencies to provide better financial planning services

- Insufficient information, education and awareness on economic security issues

Proposed Solution(s):

- Create programs, work incentives, job training and work programs to prevent seniors from "outliving their money"
- Eliminate transfer taxes for seniors transferring assets to loved ones
- Extend contracts for senior employment; Title V
- Use Medicare card as a card that offers additional discounts for other services i.e., transportation, cultural, etc.
- Increase program resources and funding for job training and work programs for seniors
- Increase educational opportunities that create awareness for families and seniors regarding finances, banking practices, mortgages and reverse mortgages
- Craft financial literacy programs throughout the life cycle and specifically provide seniors with direction and guidance in matters related to economic security
- Create funding opportunities for programs and services that address the financial needs of the 55+ population, early retirees and disabled
- Preserve social security
- Increase funding for programs that assist in reconstructing families, provide outreach to "forgotten seniors" and inform the general public about senior negligence as a means to increase economic security and wealth creation
- Provide protective services to prevent senior abuse and ID theft from families and others, especially for the vulnerable
- Reduce the cost of medical expenses and prescriptions so that seniors will not deplete their assets
- Offer incentives for collaboration and partnerships between agencies to provide better services in an environment where seniors can feel comfortable and secure
- Assist organizations in finding more practical ways to increase awareness of available programs, information and education available to Latino elders and their families
- Increase accessibility of resources that provide direct one on one contact

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