

HHS Announces Promotores de Salud Initiative

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) today announced an initiative to promote utilization of Promotores de Salud as a means of strengthening outreach and education on the availability of health services and insurance coverage to underserved Hispanic/Latino communities.

Promotores, who are sometimes known as community health workers, peer leaders, patient navigators or health advocates, typically work in their own communities to convey information to their neighbors and other community members on health and wellness, the availability of support services and access to health services. Promotores have become increasingly active in U.S. Hispanic/Latino communities for the past 50 years and for longer in some Latin American countries.

The HHS initiative aims to develop a national program to recognize the work of Promotores, develop a database of Promotores networks, which will include information on their training and where they work, and to foster cooperation among various networks. The project also aims to develop an English-Spanish web site with information and resources to assist community workers and their networks.

"Promotores are remarkably successful at helping people recognize the importance of health in their lives and connecting them with reliable information and services," said Dr. Garth Graham, HHS deputy assistant secretary for minority health and director of the HHS Office of Minority Health. "Through this initiative, we hope strengthen those community-based outreach efforts, help people enroll in public programs and the forthcoming health insurance exchanges and use new services that the Affordable Care Act provides."

Fifteen experienced Promotores from across the U.S. will regularly share information to the HHS Office of Minority Health and a federal work group that is guiding the initiative. Venus Ginés Founder of Día de la Mujer Latina, Inc. was selected as Chair.

The Affordable Care Act authorizes promotion of these community health workers to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate information and enrollment assistance to underserved Hispanic/Latino populations. The HHS Action Plan for Reducing Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities calls for increasing the use of Promotores to stimulate participation in health education, behavioral health education, prevention and health insurance programs.

The federal work group guiding the initiative comprises representatives of the Office of the Secretary, Administration on Aging, Administration for Children and Families, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, National Institutes of Health, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and Office of Global Health.

For more information, visit: <http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/promotores>.