

Hispanic Students Encouraged to Explore Health Care Careers

Latino Health Institute is Committed to Developing Opportunities for the Next Generation of Leaders

One way to ensure that our health care system addresses the needs of diverse communities is to recruit members of these communities into the system. It's far easier to provide health care services that transcend language and cultural barriers if the health care professional already speaks the language and understands the culture. That is why Beth Israel's Latino Health Institute (LHI) has been conducting outreach to local schools and Hispanic youth groups, raising awareness of the multitude of career opportunities for Latinos in the health care field.

"Nationwide, Hispanics are 15 percent of the population yet represent only 2.8 percent of the doctors in the United States," said Sharon Voytush, executive director of the Latino Health Institute. "The percentage of Hispanics working as nurses, pharmacists, physician assistants, laboratory technicians and in radiologic technology is also very low. It is time to correct this woeful under representation in these high-growth professions."

High-Tech, High-Growth Jobs

Earlier this summer the LHI organized two events to help address the problem.

The first event was our second annual Health Care Career Day for Hispanic Youth in partnership



High school students examine medicinal leeches with Beth Israel pharmacist Andrea Stigliano. Approved by the FDA in 2004, medicinal leeches secrete hirudin, a substance that prevents blood clots.



Dr. Janet Mackin, Dean of Phillips Beth Israel School of Nursing, talks about modern nursing to attentive teens

with ASPIRA of New York, a nonprofit dedicated to the education and leadership development of young Latinos. Twenty students selected from ASPIRA chapters in several New York City high schools converged on Beth Israel Medical Center for a seminar designed to introduce them to career opportunities in health care. The students received a welcome from Dr. Hector Castro, then a group of accomplished Beth Israel professionals discussed specific jobs and provided information about education requirements, employment outlook and salary ranges. The students also had an opportunity to visit with and observe hospital staff working in radiology, robotics, nursing, music therapy and the hospital pharmacy.

Perspectives on Nursing

Our second event this summer was devoted to nursing, and with good reason. The current and projected shortage of U.S. nursing professionals is a growing concern that threatens the reliability of the health care system. Making matters worse is the lack of diversity among nurses.

"To increase Latino participation in the nursing workforce we need better academic preparation in high school, more information about nursing degree programs and more financial aid for college," said Dr. Hector Castro, medical director of the Latino Health Institute. "We also need greater awareness of the tremendous opportunities and rewards in this exciting career."



David J. Shulkin, MD



Hector Castro, MD

We believe that recruiting, training and promoting people of different cultural backgrounds will not only improve communication with patients, it will also bring fresh ideas to the hospital staff.

Dear Friends:

It is hard to talk about medicine and health care in business terms. The issues are so personal, and the outcomes are critical. But the truth of the matter is that this is a business, and we need to think of it that way if we want to continue to be able to provide the best possible care for the people of this city. As health care professionals, our goal may be humanitarian, but we have to maintain a successful business model in order to achieve that goal.

And what sort of business model are we talking about? The same one that you will find in every respected and admired service industry these days: customer-centric. Our profession must improve its level of customer service. We need to better understand the diverse needs of our patients and be able to address those needs in ways that are most suitable to them.

Naturally, there are the medical needs, which will always come first. But we are also talking about the need for patients to trust their health care provider. This boils down to communication. Patients need more than just a perfunctory diagnosis and treatment options – many already get that from the Internet – they need to be engaged by their doctor. They need to be listened to. They need health care providers that understand them and their world.

Early on, Beth Israel Medical Center recognized that to meet the needs of the Latino community it had to speak the same language and better understand the culture. It had to offer an

ethnically-attuned service that caters to the special needs of this community. That is the model upon which we've based the Latino Health Institute.

The business strategy underpinning the Latino Health Institute also led to the creation of the hospital's Diversity Committee (see story page 4). We believe that recruiting, training and promoting people of different cultural backgrounds will not only improve communication with patients, it will also bring fresh ideas to the hospital staff.

As with any service-oriented business, the needs of the customer have to align with the needs of the service provider. If they do not, you end up providing a service that no one wants, because someone else can provide it better. And that is true even in a business as critical as ours. Patients have more and more choices, especially in a city like New York. So any health care professional not focused on the needs of their patients probably won't have those patients for very long.

Beth Israel's Latino Health Institute is an example of how the patient-centric business model works in health care. We understand the needs of the Latino population, and we have developed a way of providing quality health care service tailored to the unique needs of this diverse community. That's good for Latinos. And that's good for Beth Israel.

Sincerely,

David J. Shulkin, MD
President and CEO
Beth Israel Medical Center

Hector Castro, MD
Medical Director
Beth Israel Latino Health Institute

El Curativo

NEWS FROM THE LATINO HEALTH INSTITUTE

Our Mission

Improve the health status of New York City's Hispanic community by providing culturally competent services, improved access at all levels of care, education about healthy life choices, and solutions to the problem of ethnic and racial health disparities.

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LATINO HEALTH INSTITUTE / PHYSICIAN PROFILE

Marguerita E. Gonzales, MD, FACOG

Diversity is not just a human condition. It is also a character trait, particularly when you consider someone as fascinating as Dr. Marguerita Gonzales, Assistant Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Albert Einstein College

of Medicine at New York's Yeshiva University. In addition to teaching and practicing obstetrics, she is a tri-athlete, animal lover, scuba diver, photographer, sailor, community volunteer, skier, and as a college student even made the Olympic trials in rowing.

Born and raised in Connecticut, where her mother was a dean of students and her father was an engineer for Pfizer, Dr. Gonzales' dream was to become a veterinarian. She always had an affinity for animals of all kinds. But her work in a sports medicine clinic during her senior year at the College of Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts inspired her to go to medical school.

She earned her MD at Temple University in Philadelphia in 1989. Dr. Gonzales then interned at Strong Memorial Hospital, which is part of the University of Rochester's Department of Medicine in Rochester, New York. She remained at the university's Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology for her residency.

A Galloway Fellowship at Memorial Sloan-Kettering in 1993 gave her a taste of New York City. But the following year Dr. Gonzales took a position in the New England Medical Center's Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology in Boston. She went on to become an Assistant Professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Tufts University's School of Medicine in Boston before taking positions at St. Vincent's Hospital and Fallon Health care System in Worcester and Milford, Massachusetts, respectively.

In 1997, Dr. Gonzales became a Clinical Assistant Professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of North Carolina School of Medicine in Chapel Hill. But she moved to New York in 2000 to start her work at Beth Israel Medical Center. Before becoming an Assistant Professor at Yeshiva's Albert Einstein College of Medicine in 2006, she spent two years as the college's Site Director for Medical Students.

Dr. Gonzales is very active in clinical research and on the lecture circuit. She has received numerous awards and honors over the years, including the APGO Teaching Award of Excellence and the CREOG Faculty Award for Excellence in Resident Education from the Beth Israel Medical Center as well as the Clinical Science Teaching Award from the University of Massachusetts Medical Center in Worcester. She is also a member of the Association of Professors of Gynecology and Obstetrics and the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

For someone who has achieved and accomplished so much, Dr. Gonzales retains a strong commitment to giving to those in need. For example, she has spent time as a volunteer on an Indian reservation near Lander, Wyoming, where she provided free medical services to members of the Shoshone and Arapahoe tribes.

In the future, Dr. Gonzales hopes to develop her own non-profit organization, similar to Doctors Without Borders but with a focus on women's health issues. The disparity of care is far greater for women in most underdeveloped countries, and she hopes to be able to start to close that gap by recruiting other physicians and health care workers to volunteer their time and services in women's clinics throughout Latin America and other areas in need.

Hispanic Students *Continued from page 1*

Since 2007 the LHI has conducted a monthly health workshop for students in the Emily N. Carey Harbor School in East Harlem. "In addition to teaching the children about proper nutrition, disease prevention, and first aid, we decided to begin educating them about the excellent career opportunities for them in our field," explained Sharon Voytush.

A highly motivated group of 15 high school students from Emily N. Carey signed on for a field trip to the Phillips Beth Israel School of Nursing (PBISN), one of the top schools in the northeast region. They were greeted by the PBISN Dean, Dr. Janet Mackin, who provided a compelling overview of what modern nursing is all about. The day's agenda also included a presentation from Associate Dean, Dr. Marilyn Parker, who spoke about academic preparation for a career in nursing. The students also heard from several current PBISN nursing students and from a professional nurse who graduated from PBISN.

"We are looking to speak at other high schools around the city this fall," Ms. Voytush noted. "For young Latinos and other minority groups, we want to open eyes and open doors."

Beth Israel Medical Center's Diversity Council Celebrates Anniversary

Cultural Diversity at Work is Good for Business, Say its Advocates

A priority of the Diversity Council is to ensure that all employees are supported in their career development and have the same opportunity to contribute to the hospital's success.

When Beth Israel Medical Center formed its Diversity Council last year, the altruistic benefits were obvious. The council's goal was to develop a Diversity Program that would foster a more inclusive work environment as well as deliver quality medical care to diverse communities, including the Latino population. And working closely with organizations like the Latino Health Institute, they are moving forward on both fronts.

The council, which celebrates its one-year anniversary in October, is chaired by John M. Samuels, Administrative Director of AIDS Research and Administrator of the Robert Mapplethorpe Residential Treatment Facility at Beth Israel Medical Center. It is part of the larger Continuum Diversity Program initiated by Stanley Breznoff, President and CEO of Continuum Health Partners.

"Value isn't solely measured in dollars, particularly in health care," explained Mr. Samuels. "Communication and trust is just as important – if not more important – which is why providing a consumer service that overcomes language and cultural barriers is so critical."

But what may not be so apparent to the public is the benefit of diversity to the bottom line. Penetrating new markets is good for business. That is especially true in a city like New York, where ethnic and racial minorities make up an increasingly larger percentage of the population.

"We're focused on diversity because it's the right thing to do for our patients, community and staff, and because it makes sense from a business standpoint," said Debbie Visconi, Senior Vice President for Administration and Executive Sponsor of both the Beth Israel Medical Center's Cultural Diversity Council and the Latino Health Institute.

Ms. Visconi pointed out that a policy of diversity has enabled Beth Israel to become the health care provider of choice for Latinos, Asians and New York's many other ethnic and cultural groups.

"Our commitment to diversity helps us attract and retain an ethnically diverse workforce of the highest caliber, which allows us to better serve everyone," she added.

Meeting monthly, the Diversity Council has formed committees to focus on specific areas, such as education, leadership development, communication, research, and recruitment/retention. It has also formed a committee to address gender and sexual diversity, in addition to ethnic and cultural diversity.

"A priority of the Diversity Council is to ensure that all employees are supported in their career development and have the same opportunity to contribute to the hospital's success," Ms. Visconi said.

As part of the hospital's wide-ranging Diversity Program, Dr. Hector Castro, Medical Director of Beth Israel's Latino Health Institute, was asked to speak about cultural competence in health care to future physicians and specialists training at Beth Israel Medical Center. He addressed the many non-medical influences on health in the Hispanic community and offered advice on how to reach out to and better serve the health needs of Latinos and the city's other racial and ethnic groups.

"People of different cultures really are different, and in ways that matter to the hospital's performance," noted Dr. Castro. "We help Beth Israel Medical Center recruit Latino staff and reach out to the Latino community, which is why we play such a vital role in the Diversity Program."



DEBBIE VISCONI, Senior Vice President for Administration and Executive Sponsor of Beth Israel Medical Center's Cultural Diversity Council and the Latino Health Institute



BIMC Diversity Council – left to right Minerva Dajay, Surafeal Asgedom, Miguel Arenas, Philip Gong, Althea Dowie, Irma Rosenblatt, John Samuels, Hyacinth Hamilton-Gayle, Brian Marren, Lisa Allen, Ayeisha Kirby, Vai Fa'gata (not pictured: Nancy Vandespool, Stephen Haveson, MD, Nancy Osorio, Joanne Loewy, Stacy A. Williams, Cari Harewood and Kim Renee Parker-Maneja)

Wishful Thinking

Recently the Latino Health Institute got a call from Leslie Dunbar, the manager of community outreach at Make-A-Wish Foundation® of Metro New York. She asked if it would be possible for this newsletter to remind readers about her organization and what they do.

We said, “No problemo!”

The Make-A-Wish Foundation grants the wishes of children living in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, Staten Island or Nassau County, who have life-threatening medical conditions.

Many people mistakenly believe that the organization works only for children with terminal illnesses, or cancer; this is incorrect. A child with a progressive, degenerative or malignant medical condition that has placed his or her life in jeopardy is eligible to have a wish granted.

Since 1983, the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Metro New York chapter has granted 7,000 wishes, which fall into four categories: I wish to go... (e.g. to DisneyWorld®); I wish to be... (e.g. a firefighter for a day); I wish to have... (e.g., a new computer, a princess bed); I wish to meet... (e.g., Michael Jordan, Jennifer Lopez).

If you know of a child who may be eligible to have a wish granted through the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Metro New York, please call Leslie Dunbar at 516-944-6212, extension 127. Outside of the five boroughs, please call (800) 722-WISH (9474) or visit www.wish.org.

Mr. Castro Goes to Washington

While the focus of Beth Israel's Latino Health Institute remains on the needs and welfare of New York City's Latino community, its Medical Director, Dr. Hector Castro, finds himself increasingly called to places like Washington, DC to share the lessons he's learned with others hoping to replicate the organization's success in their own urban environments. And though Dr. Castro's latest trip to our nation's capital lacked the plot twists of the 1939 Frank Capra movie *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, the outcome will hopefully prove to be the same: a change for the better.

In April, Dr. Castro was invited to speak to a national audience at two back-to-back conferences in Washington, DC. The first presentation was at the Fifth Annual Health Disparities Leadership Summit, which was sponsored by the National Minority Quality Forum and the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Inc., in collaboration with the Congressional Black Caucus. He talked about the challenges minorities face with increasing health care costs and service disparities and what the Latino Health Institute is doing to close these gaps.



The Latino Health Institute's Sharon Voytush (l) and Dr. Hector Castro flank Elena Rios, MD, president and CEO, National Hispanic Medical Association.

The second forum was the National Hispanic Medical Association, where Dr. Castro was asked to talk about new models for successful health care practices. He participated in a panel that discussed patient-centered care and business models – like the Latino Health Institute – that generate revenues for practices catering to lower-income Latinos.

Dr. Castro went on to attend meetings on Capitol Hill to discuss the Hispanic health care disparity as well as current and future legislation. He and Latino Health Institute Executive Director Sharon Voytush met with the chief health policy aide to Senator Chuck Schumer from New York as well



The Capitol Building, Washington, DC

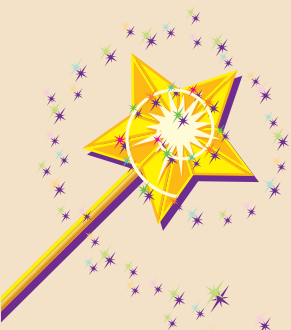
as the chief of staff for Congressman Charles Rangel from New York. They also met with the Robert Wood Johnson Health Policy Fellow advising Senator Jay Rockefeller from West Virginia, who is the Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Health care.

The Capitol Hill discussions covered three bills related to minority health disparities, two bills related to health information technology and one bill related to Medicare physician reimbursement levels.

“I enjoyed the opportunity to share the lessons we've learned with health care leaders from around the country,” said Dr. Castro. “And it was an honor to be able to meet with policy makers on Capitol Hill and be given a chance to discuss the health care disparities Latinos face, how Beth Israel's Latino Health Institute is working to overcome them, and what Congress can do to help.”

Call Us to Find a Doctor

For first-rate service, carefully tailored to your health needs, we encourage you to call Beth Israel Medical Center's Physician Referral Service, **1-800-420-4004**, Monday through Friday, from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. We will help you identify an excellent doctor who is right for you.



LHI Community Outreach Digest

Community outreach is one of the pillars of the Latino Health Institute and at the heart of our mission. We are committed to improving the health and wellness of all New Yorkers, regardless of age, ethnicity, or economics. That's why we participate in or create a variety of events in New York City neighborhoods all year long. Below you'll find a sampling of some of our recent activities, which also spotlight the Beth Israel physicians and health care experts who have generously shared their knowledge and expertise with the people of New York.

How Healthy Are Your Joints?

In May Dr. Eddys Disla gave a lunchtime lecture in Spanish about arthritis to a group of seniors at the Seward Park Community Center on the Lower East Side. The event was organized by Vision Urbana, a non-profit group that provides education and



Rheumatologist Eddys Disla, MD

enrichment programs for children, families and the elderly in the neighborhood. Dr. Disla, a distinguished member of the Rheumatology Division at Beth Israel Medical Center, discussed arthritis symptoms, risks, treatments, myths and supplements that work.

Heart-Healthy Living



Cardiologist Rose-Marie Carrera, MD

In June Dr. Rose-Marie Carrera, a respected Beth Israel cardiologist, gave vital health advice to approximately 75 Latinos attending a health seminar in the headquarters of the Hispanic Federation in Lower Manhattan. Speaking in Spanish, Dr. Carrera discussed how the heart works, signs of heart trouble, stress management, nutrition and exercises for heart health. Ana Goines-Ramirez from Karpas Health Information Center administered blood pressure screenings to seminar attendees before and after Dr. Carrera's presentation.

Get Up! Get Moving!

In mid-summer the Hispanic Federation and the National Alliance for Hispanic Health sponsored ¡Vive tu Vida! Get Up! Get Moving!™, a healthy lifestyle event for Hispanic families at the Henry Street School for International Studies in the Lower East Side. The event promoted Latin dancing as a fun form of exercise, and it featured a variety of health workshops and screenings. Physicians and educators from Beth Israel Latino Health Institute were joined by Spanish-speaking colleagues from Karpas Health Information Center and Friedman Diabetes Institute to give Latinos attending the event practical advice on how to avoid chronic diseases and make active lifestyle choices.



Left to right: Pamela Flores, Friedman Diabetes Institute; Julie Winslow and Ana Goines Ramirez, Karpas Health Information Center; Jenny DeJesus, Friedman Diabetes Institute

Beth Israel

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