Improving Quality of Care for Latinos Project
Community Health Worker/Promotoras Network

CONTEXT
In virtually all Spanish-speaking countries around the world, Community Health Workers (CHWs), or Promotoras, have long been active in local communities working to improve the quality of life of their residents. Although CHW/Promotoras serve many different roles, they tend to view health care as one element of the larger fabric of community well-being. For Latinos in the United States, especially new immigrants, they represent a culturally appropriate way to provide health care outreach and to address health care quality issues.

GOAL
To improve the quality of care received by Latinos in California by supporting Community Health Worker and Promotora programs as viable community health systems, increasing their awareness of health quality, and building their capacity to address health quality problems in their communities.

ACTIVITIES
This project is building a statewide network of CHW/Promotoras through which these health workers will be encouraged to explore health care quality issues and identify roles they can play in improving the quality of care in their communities. The network will also allow Promotoras to exchange information about outreach and service delivery strategies, local and statewide issues, and lessons learned and best practices. At the core of the network are six regional collaboratives that will develop regional action plans for social and policy change. Efforts will also be made to build awareness among health providers and public health officials about the critical value of Promotoras in reaching underserved Latino communities.

“All Promotoras are the missing link in the professional circle of Western medicine. For centuries, they have served the needs of individuals and communities and are continuing their vital work to this day with or without outside support. Now that public health issues such as AIDS and quality of care problems have become so visible in our communities, these vital community links are more important than ever.”

— Maria Lemus, Director

ORGANIZATION
The Community Health Worker/Promotoras Network and the Ernesto Galarza Applied Research Center at the University of California Riverside are joining efforts in a community/university partnership to improve community well being by supporting the work of Community Health Workers and Promotoras. This partnership provides an academic and community forum for discussion, evaluation and dissemination of information. The Ernesto Galarza Applied Research Center was established in 1993 and conducts research on public policy and its effects on Latino communities in the United States.

For More Information
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