

Lifelines

from the National Cancer Institute



HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTIONS ON THE FRONTLINES HELPING TO RESEARCH CANCER DISPARITIES IN LATINOS

By the National Cancer Institute

For many Hispanic and Latinos in the U.S., the network of more than 200 Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) throughout the country can be a gateway to higher education and a better life. These same institutions of higher learning can also help play a major role in solving health problems that affect Latinos much differently than other population groups – like cancer.

The [impact of cancer on the Hispanic population](#) is often one of diagnosis when it may be too late to treat the cancer effectively, and it is also often one of cultural challenges such as language barriers, along with other issues familiar to minority communities, such as access to quality care.

A number of Hispanic-Serving Institutions are part of a group of Hispanic colleges and universities that partner with the National Cancer Institute (NCI) and several regional cancer centers to address cancer health disparities that affect the Latino community. They are part of the NCI's Partnerships to Advance Cancer Health Equity (PACHE), a grant program run by the NCI's [Center to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities](#). The PACHE initiatives are joint partnerships between schools serving underrepresented populations and NCI-designated cancer centers, and they are designed to build cancer research and training capacity. Through PACHE, NCI also creates stable, long-term relationships between cancer centers that are located in many of the communities where racial and ethnic cancer disparities exist and educational institutions that serve underrepresented populations in these communities. Additionally, PACHE is focused on improving research effectiveness and promoting best practices in cancer disparities research.

PACHE helps bring trusted educational institutions in the Latino community into the broader cancer disparities research fold. It also helps to create a pipeline for young scientists who are members of underrepresented groups to enter the cancer research field.

For members of the Latino community, knowing that HSIs are involved in cancer research benefitting the Latino community is critical to building community-wide trust with cancer researchers investigating cancer disparities.

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HSIs participating in the PACHE program are involved in some promising collaborations:

- Researchers at the University of Puerto Rico and the University of Texas (Houston) M.D. Anderson Comprehensive Cancer Center have formed what is called the [Partnership for Excellence in Cancer Research](#) as part of PACHE. Among the goals are expanding cancer outreach programs in Puerto Rico; sharing clinical, research, and management expertise; building infrastructure and developing and sustaining a training and mentoring pipeline for Hispanic students and investigators. A long-term goal is to assist UPR Cancer Center regain its NCI-designation within the NCI cancer centers network.
- Researchers at the Ponce School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Puerto Rico have joined forces with the Moffitt Comprehensive Cancer Center (Tampa) in an academic [partnership](#) under PACHE to improve cancer outcomes for Hispanics in Puerto Rico and Florida through enhanced cancer care, personalized medicine, and clinical trials participation.
- A focus of the PACHE [partnership](#) between New Mexico State University at Las Cruces and the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center (Seattle) is to develop opportunities for young researchers from underrepresented communities — especially Hispanic and Native Americans — to train for careers in cancer disparities research.

Finding answers as to why Latinos experience a greater burden from some cancers than other racial/ethnic groups in the United States will require input from the best and brightest minds in the research field, and that includes the top minds working at Hispanic-Serving Institutions across the country.

These researchers have special insight and knowledge that is critical to resolving some of the mysteries of this disease and how it affects the Latino population, and they can also inspire a new generation of Latino researchers who can advance cancer health disparities research in the coming years.

To learn more about PACHE, see the full listing of PACHE institutions at:

<http://crchd.cancer.gov/research/pache/pache-current-partnerships.html>

NCI leads the National Cancer Program and the NIH effort to dramatically reduce the burden of cancer and improve the lives of cancer patients and their families, through research into prevention and cancer biology, the development of new interventions, and the training and mentoring of new researchers. For more information about cancer, please visit the NCI web site at www.cancer.gov/espanol (or m.cancer.gov from your mobile device) or call NCI's Cancer Information Service at 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237). More articles and videos in the culturally relevant Lifelines series are available at www.cancer.gov/lifelines including a [video](#) about skin cancer for people with darker skin.

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