

Salud para su Corazón: A Model for Heart Health

Closing the Gap, Hispanic Agenda for Action • October 1998

Salud para su Corazón (Health for your Heart), an innovative community-based outreach initiative of the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), aims to increase awareness, knowledge, and promote heart-healthy lifestyles among low income, low acculturated, and less educated Latinos 18-54 years of age.

“We targeted Latinos because their current lifestyles and poor access to health information, services, and screening increase their risk for developing heart disease—the number one killer of Latinos, as well as all Americans,” according to Matilde Alvarado, RN, MSN, of NHLBI’s Office of Prevention, Education, and Control.

Salud was shaped by social marketing principles, core cultural values of Latinos, and formative research. In addition, an alliance of community business and health leaders was integrated into all aspects of the initiative. Program strategies included the development of educational materials for both print and mass media distributed through various community channels such as mass media, churches, clinics, doctor’s offices, health fairs, parents’ groups, and public health programs.

“These strategies were selected with the understanding that activities would be organized and carried out where people live, work, socialize, and worship in order to have the greatest impact for encouraging behavior change,” Alvarado said. *Salud* was pilot tested in metropolitan Washington, DC’s Latino community. There, the initiative significantly raised the awareness, knowledge, and intention to change behavior among intended audience, she added.

Materials and strategies are available to replicate, and the toll-free phone number may be publicized in order to bring heart health to Latino communities across the nation.

For more information, contact the NHLBI Information Center at (301) 251-1222. Visit the Latino Cardiovascular Health Resources at the NHLBI Web site at <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov>. Or for a complementary copy of a set of eight easy-to-read bilingual brochures on heart health, call 1-800-282-9126❖

