

Alzheimer's Disease Projected to Increase 600 Among Latinos by 2050

Written by Robert ID4492

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Alzheimer's Association Joins Celebra Hispanic Health Education Campaign to Build Awareness About Impact of Alzheimer's and Resources Available for Latinos

The Alzheimer's Association has teamed up with Celebra La Vida Con Salud, the largest national Hispanic health education campaign, to build awareness among U.S. Latinos about the impact of Alzheimer's disease on the Hispanic population and resources available to assist families caring for a member with the disease. There are currently 200,000 Latinos in America with Alzheimer's and that number is projected to increase to 1.3 million by 2050(1), a growth rate of 600%.

"Latinos are twice as likely as the general population to be living in multigenerational households that include grandparents(1)," said Belinda Benavidez, Program Specialist with the Alzheimer's Association STAR Chapter in San Antonio. "The Alzheimer's Association is constantly looking to improve the lives of those living with the disease and their families. We have proactively developed resources that provide necessary education."

To help educate Hispanics about ways to identify symptoms that may indicate the onset of Alzheimer's disease, its impact on the brain and behavior, and assistance available to care for family members afflicted with the disease, the Alzheimer's Association is sponsoring an educational exhibit as part of the Celebra health festival. Now in its seventh year, the Celebra health education campaign and festival tour provides free medical screenings and interactive, culturally-relevant, health education exhibits in major Hispanic markets around the country in an effort to educate Hispanics about specific actions they can take to improve their family's health.

"This collaborative effort with the Alzheimer's Association is proving very effective in reaching thousands of Hispanics with this important information about an illness that is so profoundly impacting Hispanic families," said Carmen Ramos-Watson, Executive Director of Celebra La Vida Con Salud. "For reasons not yet known, the onset of Alzheimer's occurs seven years earlier, on average, among Hispanics which makes this information so valuable to Hispanic families in learning about assistance available to aid them care for family members with the disease."

As the largest and fastest growing minority group in the country Hispanics represent approximately 14% of the current U.S. population, yet they suffer disproportionately high rates

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of preventable illnesses and diseases such as HIV/AIDS, diabetes, heart disease, obesity, stroke and some cancers — including breast, prostate and cervical cancer — several of which are preventable.

The Alzheimer's Association exhibit at the Celebra festival includes memory brain games that engage festival participants and demonstrate how to keep the mind active, visuals depicting the difference between a normal aging brain and one afflicted with Alzheimer's disease, brain models and cues to identify the difference in behavior associated with normal aging and memory loss and that which may indicate the onset of Alzheimer's. At each festival Alzheimer's Association representatives provide direct intervention by answering questions about the disease and providing information on resources available for families. The Alzheimer's Association exhibit was presented at the Celebra festivals in San Antonio and Boston.

"We celebrated the biggest Latino health event in the chapter's 28 year history," said Gerald Flaherty, Vice President, Medical & Scientific Programs, Alzheimer's Association Massachusetts/New Hampshire Chapter, who participated in the outreach effort at the Celebra Boston festival.

The Alzheimer's Association exhibit will next be presented at the Celebra health festival in New York on August 17th at Corona Park in Flushing Meadows.

The Celebra festival will continue in the fall of 2008 in Houston, San Jose, San Diego and Miami.

About the Alzheimer's Association

The Alzheimer's Association is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's research, care and support. Our mission is to eliminate Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research, provide and enhance care and support for all affected, and reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health. Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's. For more information, visit <http://www.alz.org> .

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(1) These figures are derived by applying the estimate of prevalence of Alzheimer's disease over the age of 65 from D. A. Evans et al, "Estimated Prevalence of Alzheimer's Disease in the United States" *The Milbank Quarterly* 68:2 (1990) 267-289 to Census figures on total number of Hispanics in the U.S. age 65 and over in 2000 and projections for 2050. US Census 2000 PHC-T-8 Race and Hispanic or Latino Origin by Age and Sex for the United States, 2000, Table 8. US Census Bureau. Projections of the Total Resident Population by 5 Year Age Groups, Race, Hispanic Origin with Special Age Categories Middle Series, 2050 to 2070 (NP-T-4-G), found at www.census.gov