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# Activity Calendar 2005–2006

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For more information regarding these and other programs, please visit [www.uic.edu/depts/mcam/hcoe](http://www.uic.edu/depts/mcam/hcoe) or call Norma Campos at (312) 996-4493.

## **Medicina Scholars Program 2005–2006**

Application deadline: August 31, 2005

For more information, visit [www.uic.edu/depts/mcam/hcoe](http://www.uic.edu/depts/mcam/hcoe).

## **HCOE Annual Leadership Development Conference**

May 12–13, 2006

Applications due February 28, 2006

## **HCOE Summer Medical Student Fellowship Opportunity**

May 31–August 9, 2006

Applications due January 31, 2006

## **iESCUCHA! Network Grand Rounds**

Saturday, January 21, 2006

Saturday, February 4, 2006

Saturday, March 4, 2006

All meetings held 10:00 a.m.–Noon

Location TBD

## **HCOE Recognition Reception**

Friday, May 19, 2006

Location TBD



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**UIC** UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
AT CHICAGO

iESCUCHA! Network (MC 591)  
Hispanic Center of Excellence  
College of Medicine/Department of  
Medical Education  
808 South Wood Street, Room 990  
Chicago, Illinois 60612-7333

Phone (312) 996-4493  
Fax (312) 996-9922  
[www.uic.edu/depts/mcam/hcoe](http://www.uic.edu/depts/mcam/hcoe)

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# *iAdelante!*

Summer 2005

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## **Executive Training for Future Leaders and Doctors The 2005 Annual HCOE Leadership Conference**

The sirens are blaring. Images of war-stricken communities flash overhead, while once thriving and healthy communities crumble before our very eyes. Doctors scramble meticulously through hordes of injured people, treating some while making the imminent end for others more bearable. Blood and organ transfers are crucial to the survival of many victims. It is the responsibility of the medical staff to ensure the proper transfer and sterilization of organs and blood during this time of crisis. The demand for qualified Latino doctors has never been more evident than during a time of crisis when citizens of all backgrounds become victims.

This isn't a scene from the latest box office thriller about one of many possible ends to humanity. It is a bioterrorism exercise led by Graduate College associate dean, Jose Perales, at the 2005 Annual Leadership Seminar. This year, forty students were specially selected to attend the seminar and take part in the exercise, which involved transporting organs (represented by cotton pom poms and balloons) with paper tubes and feathers, making sure not to contaminate the organ by dropping it, cross contaminating it with other organs, or bringing it into contact with any other objects. Students from the UIC College of Medicine graduate and undergraduate programs, along with students from Loyola, DePaul, Northwestern, and other Chicago universities were selected from dozens of applicants to attend the day-and-a-half-long seminar at the McDonald's Hamburger University in Oak Brook on May 13 and 14.

Highlights of the seminar not only included this bioterrorism exercise, but also a keynote address by Dr. Consuelo Maggi, an alumna of the UIC College of Medicine. She previously worked as interim executive director of the Chicago and Cook County Community Health Council, where she provided oversight of six multicultural districts for preventive medicine and health initiatives. Her current position in Stanislaus County in northern California is as county assistant public health officer and medical director for California Children's Services. She is board-certified in preventive medicine and public health.



Guest speakers include Dr. Juanita Mora from Rush Medical Center, who opened up about humble beginnings in Pilsen, a Latino neighborhood of Chicago. UIC College of Medicine; faculty speakers included Dr. Marisela Dominguez, associate professor in family medicine; Dr. Felipe Perez, program director of geriatric medicine; Dr. Glenda Rios, clinical assistant professor in family medicine; and Dr. Jesus Garcia-Martinez, associate professor of physiology and biophysics. Dr. Jorge Girotti, dean and director of admissions and the Hispanic Center of Excellence presented on "Latinos in the US: Intersect between Demographic Health Care Realities," which introduced students to realities of the demographic of Latinos in the U.S. During the lecture entitled "Financial Medical Matters," Vicky Salinas, business manager for Caverio Medical Group, spoke to students regarding opening a private practice, certification and insurance implications, and how to run a thriving practice.

After a day and half of team-building exercises, lectures, networking, and learning, students felt motivated with a refreshed outlook on medical school prospects, residency programs, and newfound leadership skills. Only through a grant funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that HCOE can offer this type of training for students. For more information on this and other HCOE programs, please contact our office at (312) 996-4493 or visit our Web site, [www.uic.edu/dpets/mcam/hcoe](http://www.uic.edu/dpets/mcam/hcoe).

## ¡Adelante!

is a quarterly publication of the Hispanic Center of Excellence (HCOE), in collaboration with the ¡ESCUCHA! Network. HCOE represents an integral part of the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Medicine's efforts to recruit and graduate underrepresented Latinos in Medicine. All HCOE programs are made possible through a grant awarded by the Division of Health Professions Diversity, Bureau of Health Professions, Health Resources and Services Administration, United States Department of Health and Human Services.

**THANK YOU!**  
*For Your Contributions*

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**Stephanie Medina**  
Loyola Undergrad Student  
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# What's Clicking?

#### High School Resources:

**Hispanic Scholarship Fund:** [www.hsf.net](http://www.hsf.net)

#### Mercedes-Benz USA Scholarship Program

**DRIVE YOUR FUTURE:** The Mercedes-Benz USA Scholarship Program will award \$1 million in scholarships to students in each state across the country as well as scholarships for select youth organizations. Scholarships will be awarded based on academic achievement, financial need, leadership, and participation in school and community activities. In February 2006, interested students may visit [www.mbusa.com/drivefuture](http://www.mbusa.com/drivefuture) to access the new application materials.

#### MIT School of Engineering: Minority Introduction to Engineering, Entrepreneurship, and Science (MITE2S) Program

MITE2S (Minority Introduction to Engineering, Entrepreneurship, and Science) is a rigorous, six-week, residential academic enrichment summer program for promising high school juniors who are interested in studying and exploring careers in science, engineering, and entrepreneurship. Applications for summer 2006 are released in October 2005. For more information, visit <http://mit.edu/mites/www/>.

#### Fiesta Del Sol Scholars:

Graduating seniors and continuing college students. For scholarship application and requirements, please visit: [www.fiestadelsol.org](http://www.fiestadelsol.org).

Application Deadline: Postmarked by 2:00 p.m., Friday, August 26, 2005

#### Hispanic Center of Excellence Medicina Scholars Program

A unique three-year program to train future Latino physician-leaders. The program will provide early and longitudinal exposure to a career in medicine, public health policies, and Latino health-care issues. For more information, including application and requirements, please visit [www.uic.edu/depts/mcam/hcoe](http://www.uic.edu/depts/mcam/hcoe).

Application Deadline: August 31, 2005

#### Undergraduate Resources:

##### Fiesta Del Sol Scholars:

Graduating seniors and continuing college students. For scholarship application and requirements, please visit [www.fiestadelsol.org](http://www.fiestadelsol.org).

Application Deadline: Postmarked by 2:00 p.m. Friday, August 26, 2005

##### Monetary Award Program (MAP) grants:

<http://www.isac1.org/ilaid/map.html>

#### Pell Grant:

<https://www.cod.edu/cod/LoginPage>

#### Illinois General Assembly (GA) Scholarship:

Covers tuition for students who are enrolled at Illinois four-year public colleges and universities. You should contact your state senator or state representative to be considered for this scholarship. Your tuition and the general activity fee is credited by this scholarship.

#### Hispanic Center of Excellence Medicina Scholars Program

A unique three-year program to train future Latino physician-leaders. The program will provide early and longitudinal exposure to a career in medicine, public health policies, and Latino health care issues. For more information, including application and requirements, please visit [www.uic.edu/depts/mcam/hcoe](http://www.uic.edu/depts/mcam/hcoe).

Application Deadline: August 31, 2005

#### Medical Student Resources:

##### U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Health Resources and Services Administration

The Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students Program provides scholarships to full-time, financially needy students from disadvantaged backgrounds who are enrolled in health professions and nursing programs. Participating schools are responsible for selecting scholarship recipients, making reasonable determinations of need, and providing scholarships that do not exceed the cost of attendance (tuition, reasonable educational expenses and reasonable living expenses). For eligibility and application information, please visit <http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/dsa/sds.htm>.

##### National Medical Fellowships:

National Medical Fellowships is dedicated to improving the health of low-income and minority communities by increasing the representation of minority physicians, educators, researchers, policymakers, and health-care administrators in the United States; training minority medical students to address the special needs of their communities; and educating the public and policy makers to health problems and needs of the underserved populations. Since 1946, National Medical Fellowships has awarded over \$38 million to more than 23,000 recipients.

For more information on need-based scholarship programs and fellowship opportunities, visit <http://www.nmf-online.org/>.



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# Thank You HCOE Friends and Volunteers

Over 100 HCOE friends and volunteers attended the Annual HCOE Recognition Reception on Friday, May 20, held at Rumba's on Hubbard. Dr. Jorge Girotti, dean and director of admissions and the Hispanic Center of Excellence awarded the Volunteer of the Year award to Juan Luis Vega, UIC undergrad and 2006 COM applicant. Juan attended all iESCUCHA! Network meetings and demonstrated his volunteerism and dedication towards a career in medicine.

HCOE thanked another year of iESCUCHA! coordinators for their hard work, dedication, and early Saturday mornings during the school year. iESCUCHA! coordinators Maritza Alvarado, Mario

Ben Fernandez, Cleo Garcia, Maritza Griselle Gonzalez, Stephanie Medina, Alejandro Mercado, Maricsa Sanchez, Sylvia Treviño, and Vanessa Villacorta planned monthly meetings and the annual seminar, wrote for the Adelante newsletter, and coordinated the reception and overall implementation. They all did a wonderful job to insure a successful programming year.

HCOE thanks the UIC faculty and physicians and community doctors who have dedicated time and contributions in support of the HCOE and our programs. It is through this extreme generosity that HCOE can continue providing the resources and support to Latino premed and medical students.

## ***Thanks to the following donors for their contributions:***

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**Teresita M. Zdunek, MD**



## The Hispanic Center of Excellence would like to congratulate the 2005 UIC College of Medicine Graduating Class:

**Susan Atkin**

**Don Arnold**

**Oscar Fischer**

**Carmela Boxley**

**Ramon Barajas**

**Erika Garcia**

**Natalie Caldero**

**Dorian Guerra**

**Gregory Cordero**

**Katya Hernandez**

**Orlando Cruz**

**Christiane Gur Lin**

**Carlos Feliciano**

**Anibal Loza**

**Anthony Fernandez**

**Alicia Mandujano**

**Victor Munoz**

**Rolando Nunez**

**Annemarie Orescanin**

**Paul Pacheco**

**Paul Ramirez**

**Carlos Rodriguez**

**Victor Romo**

**Dane Salazar**

**Ivan Santiago**

**Elisa Valero**

Congratulations to Anthony Fernandez who was inducted into the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society. Alpha Omega Alpha is the only national medical honor society in the world and was started at the University of Illinois College of Medicine in August 1902. Its aims are the promotion of scholarship and research in medical schools; the encouragement of a high standard of character and conduct among medical students and graduates; and the recognition of high achievement in medical science, practice, and related fields. Alpha Omega Alpha elects outstanding medical students, graduates, faculty and honorary members to its rank.

Congratulations to Erica Garcia for winning the 2005 Excellence in Emergency Medicine Award for excellence in the field of emergency medicine.

Congratulations to Jonathan Cohen for winning the Granville A. Bennett Award for significant contributions to medical education.

Congratulations to Evelyn Rodriguez for winning the Tom C. Reeves Award for demonstrating promise for excellence in the medical profession.



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# Medical Student Feature: Cristina Thorsen, M2

Stephanie Medina, ¡ESCUCHA! Student Coordinator, Loyola University



The path that has led Cristina Thorsen to medical school is not a traditional one. As an undergraduate at Northwestern University, she found the sciences to be interesting, but her fascination with social policy led her to major in political science.

During these years, she became involved in the community by dedicating time to tutoring and coaching in the Special Olympics. Early on, Cristina demonstrated leadership skills as a resident assistant and as the student leader of health aids, which consisted of a group of students trained by health services to assist other students with health issues. Her passion for social justice and policy helped her decide that philanthropy was what she wanted to dedicate her life to. Combined with her interest in the sciences, she came to the conclusion that as a physician she would be able to pursue her philanthropic goals and directly help people.

After graduating, Cristina was hired by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a policy research institute in Washington, DC. There she spent a year doing research on social policies concerning Medicaid and children's health insurance programs. She also researched how budgeting and laws affect people's ability to obtain health insurance and proper care. This opportunity has had a profound effect on Cristina, because it has enabled her to look at health care from not only a physician's perspective, but from a perspective of policy. The work she did allowed her to advocate for low-income individuals and families, which is ultimately Cristina's goal as a physician.

When it came to applying to medical school, Cristina found that being organized and prepared can go a long way. Cristina

says her biggest obstacle has been managing her time. She is overcoming this by rating her priorities and sticking to them. Now an M2, Cristina has been doing a little more than studying for her classes. Last summer, she was privileged enough to work with Dr. Richard Warnecke as an HCOE summer research fellow conducting research on health disparities in cancer diagnosis and treatment. She is the project development and communication coordinator in the Community and Public Health Committee and Co-President of UIC's chapter of American Medical Student Association (AMSA). "AMSA is great for inspiration and support, because you meet people who are also passionate about social justice and who have done amazing things for health care" says Cristina. She is also involved in NNLAMS where she was community service cochair. In this organization she found support and a community that has been helpful.

Cristina is not sure which field she would like to pursue, but she has an interest in pediatrics because of her love for children. Cristina believes that as pediatrician and an advocate for her patients she can have an influence on them and even impact their lives. Nonetheless, she is open to learning about other areas of medicine.

The advice Cristina has for prospective medical students deals with overcoming obstacles. She says it is important to have a passion that inspires you to become a physician. Obstacles can be overcome by remembering this passion. She also recommends that premed students, "make a real impact in a few [specific] things rather than participating [lightly] in several things." Cristina is also very supportive of nonscience majors, because it is often a misconception that only science majors can go to medical school. Her experience as a nonscience major has allowed her to have a different perspective of several issues. Finally, her last advice is to have a mentor. She expresses how important this is because a mentor will provide support and knowledge.

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# National Network of Latin American Medical Students (NNLAMS) Midwest 15th Annual Regional Conference

*Contributing Writer: Rebeca Sandoval, NNLAMS Regional President, M2, UIC*

On February 12, 2005, NNLAMS Midwest held its 15th annual regional conference, "Liderazgo y Tradicion: Preparing for the Changing Face of Medicine," at Loyola Stritch School of Medicine. Over 100 Latino medical and premedical students from throughout the region attended. Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin, Ohio, and Illinois were some of the States represented. Dr. Teresa Ramos, secretary of the National Hispanic Medical Association and Internal Medicine Residency Program director at Advocate Illinois Masonic in Chicago, opened the event by addressing the need for culturally proficient physicians in health care. Other speakers included Dr. Fidencio Saldana, cardiology fellow, Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, and community leader Carmen Velásquez, executive director of Alivio Medical Center in Chicago. Students also participated in workshops such as "Preparing for the

Stress of Medical School" and "From Medical School to Reality: What's Important to You?" Attendees learned about herbal medicine and other health related traditions in the Latino culture. Recruiters for residency programs and medical schools were also present. In addition, attendees benefited from the opportunity to network with one another and share their advice and experiences with their future colleagues. The NNLAMS Midwest Conference was a very memorable event for all of those that were able to attend. It provided a forum for students to be proactive in their education and learn about Latino Health issues.

Look for the next NNLAMS-Midwest Conference in February 2006.





# Colon Cancer Among Latinos: How Gastroenterologists Can Make a Difference

*Sylvia Treviño, M2, ¡ESCUCHA! Student Coordinator, UIC*

Did you know that colorectal cancer is the nation's second leading cancer killer? Did you know that if detected early, the chance of survival exceeds 90%? Unfortunately, it appears that many Americans, particularly Latinos and women, are less likely to get screened for this deadly disease.

Myths contributing to the lack of prevention include beliefs that colorectal cancer is rare, it is prevalent only in white men, and screening is only necessary once you have symptoms. The truth is that 147,000 people have currently been diagnosed with colorectal cancer, and it is killing more than 56,000 in the United States annually. According to the American Cancer Society (ACS), it is the third most frequently diagnosed cancer in Hispanics. It is also the third leading cause of cancer death among Hispanic women and the second deadliest cancer among Hispanic men.

Latinos and African Americans are more likely than whites to be diagnosed with colon cancer for a number of reasons. For instance, many Latinos live in geographic isolation, and this in turn leads to poor access to health-care information, including prevention. Insurance coverage and lack of access to health-care services are also powerful predictors of whether or not an individual receives a colorectal cancer test. Cultural factors also contribute. For example, Latinos may find it uncomfortable or embarrassing to talk about colorectal cancer and its symptoms due to the sensitive nature of the disease. Obesity is also on the rise among Latinos and is associated with an increased risk of several chronic diseases, including colon cancer. Finally, in a recent study by the ACS, the most common reason for not being screened was that doctors are not reminding Latinos to have an exam. The language barrier is an obvious problem.

Some consider colorectal cancer to be a "silent killer," due to the fact that some people with colorectal cancer may not experience any symptoms at all. By the time symptoms occur, the cancer may be advanced. Screening for colorectal cancer depends on an individual's age, current health, and family health history. People without increased risk factors, such as family history, should get their first test at age 50. However, if you or someone in your family has had colon, breast, uterine or ovarian cancer; colon polyps; or inflammatory bowel disease, you should start getting tested at age 40.

Screening is a vital part of preventing this disease and can save lives. This may include fecal occult blood tests, flexible sigmoidoscopy, colonoscopy, or a double contrast barium enema. As of 1998, all Medicare beneficiaries are entitled to regular colorectal cancer screening.

According to the American College of Gastroenterology, a complete colonoscopy is the most effective screening method for colon cancer. A gastroenterologist is a physician who specializes in the management of gastrointestinal diseases and has received special training in colonoscopy. They have performed more colonoscopies by far than any other specialty. Nongastroenterologists are five times more likely to miss colorectal cancer during colonoscopy than gastroenterologists (Rex DK, Gastroenterology 1997).

A gastroenterologist must first complete a three-year internal medicine residency and is then eligible for a 2–3 year fellowship in gastroenterology. Gastroenterology fellowship training is an intense, rigorous program. The most critical emphasis during the training period is on detail and incorporation of their comprehensive knowledge of the entire gastrointestinal tract to provide the highest quality of care. The final product is a highly trained specialist with a unique combination of broad scientific knowledge, general internal medicine training, superior endoscopy (upper endoscopy, sigmoidoscopy, and colonoscopy) skills and experience, and the ability to integrate these elements to provide optimal health care for patients.

The University of Illinois Medical Center offers 1–3 fellowship positions each year. It provides fellows with the opportunity to learn all diagnostic and therapeutic procedures, an intensive exposure to all aspects of clinical hepatology, including transplantation; exposure to clinical, bench, and transitional research opportunities; and the ability to obtain additional formal education including a Masters of Public Health.

If you are interested in a GI fellowship at UIC and would like more information, you may contact Ben Stickan, coordinator of marketing and promotion at the Department of Digestive Disease and Nutrition, at (312)996-0141 or by e-mail at [bstickan@uic.edu](mailto:bstickan@uic.edu).



continued from page 7

## Depression: Prevalence in Latinas

### Web sites with helpful health information and support:

#### UIC Mental Health Center for Women

<http://www.psych.uic.edu/clinical/women.htm>

#### Mujeres Latina en Acción

[www.mujereslatinasenaccion.org/](http://www.mujereslatinasenaccion.org/)

#### National Coalition Hispanic Health & Human Resources

[www.cehn.org/cehn/resourceguide/nchhhs.html](http://www.cehn.org/cehn/resourceguide/nchhhs.html)

#### Hispanic Salud

[www.hispanicsalud.org](http://www.hispanicsalud.org)

#### MANA

[www.hermana.org](http://www.hermana.org)

#### National Latina Health Organization

[www.clnet.ucr.edu](http://www.clnet.ucr.edu)

### Resources:

1. Frisch, Noreen Cavan, & Frisch, Lawrence E. **Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing: Understanding the Client as Well as the Condition.** 2002. Delmar. Albany, NY.

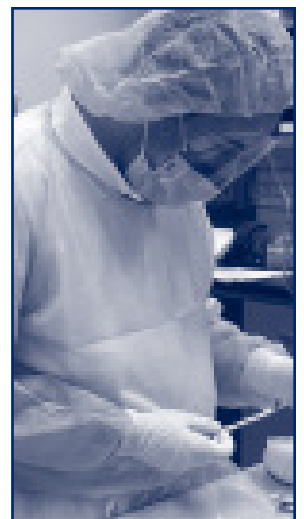
2. Guzman, Sandra. **The Latina's Bible.** 2002. Three Rivers Press. New York, NY.
3. Mann EdD, RN, Allison, & Garcia PhD, RN, Alexandra A. Characteristics of Community Programs to Decrease Depression in Latinas. **Public Health and The Environment.** (Nov 6-10, 2004). Washington, DC.
4. Ostir, G. V., Eschbach, K., Markides, K.S., & Goodwin, J.S. Neighborhood composition on depressive symptoms among older Mexican Americans. **Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health.** 2003;57: 987-992.
5. Sáez-Santiago, Emily & Bernal, Guillermo (2002). **Depression in Ethnic Minorities: Latinos and Latinas, African Americans, and Native Americans.** Chapter 19 (pp 1-24). University of Puerto Rico.
6. Tarkon, Laurie. (2004), December 7). Tracking Stress and Depression Back to the womb. **New York Times: Science Times.** (D5).
7. Tsai, Jeanne, Pole, Nnamdi, Levenson, Robert W., & Muñoz, Ricardo F. The Effects of Depression in the Emotional Responses of Spanish-speaking Latinas. **Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology.** Vol 9, No. 1 (pp 49-63).

## HCOE Medical Student Summer Research Fellowship National Medical Research for UIC Students

The University of Illinois at Chicago is currently one of the top fifty research institutions in the nation. There are many opportunities for medical students to get involved with important medical research either in Chicago or out of state. Through a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Bureau of Health Professions, a Division of Health Professions Diversity, and the Hispanic Center of Excellence offers Latino medical students the opportunity to conduct research with a matched preceptor. Students build and enhance their research skills and learn techniques that provide long-term benefits to their medical education.

This summer 24 medical students were awarded the HCOE Medical Student Summer Research Fellowship and will be

conducting research in New York, California, Rockford, Champaign, and Chicago working on in various projects that affect health and polemics of Latinos globally. Some research projects include diabetes, cancer, and respiratory illness, obesity, and kidney disease. The fellowship aims at not only improving the student's experience in medical research, but also improving the quality of health care.





# LaRaMA Banquet 2005

## “Cuidando a Nuestra Comunidad”

*Ben Mario Fernandez, M2, ¡ESCUCHA! Student Coordinator, UIC*

“Cuidando a Nuestra Comunidad” was the underlying theme of LaRaMA’s 22nd Annual Banquet, which took place on March 19 at Garden Terrace West. Members and their families enjoyed a program that emphasized the role of Latino health-care professionals in the care of their fellow Latinos. In addition, the organization recognized senior medical students whose careers were just beginning and on whom the future of Latino health care will rely. Our hats off to all the Latino medical students in Chicago, Rockford, Peoria, and Urbana.

Aide Perez, copresident, kicked off the evening with a warm welcome followed by a brief history and mission statement of the organization by Irene Dehghan-Paz, secretary. Ms. Dehghan-Paz elaborated on the adoption of the National Network of Latin American Medical Students name discussing the importance of creating a unified front that is “committed to representing, supporting, educating, and unifying Latino medical students throughout the country.” NNLAMS/LaRaMA’s commitment to Latino health-care issues, such as culturally competent care and mentorship, was embodied by the theme “Cuidando a Nuestra Comunidad.”

Jose Bello, copresident, congratulated graduating seniors by saying, “These individuals have persevered and now rise triumphant after four long years of hard work and dedication.” Of the organization itself, Bello said, “One of the main goals of our presidency was to solidify and strengthen the bonds between NNLAMS/LaRaMA and

our partner organizations.” He then discussed the cooperation of numerous entities, such as the Student National Medical Association, Urban Health Program, Hispanic Center of Excellence, ¡ESCUCHA! program, and the Health Oriented Latino Association, in the recruitment and retention of minorities in the medical field. Also mentioned were the affiliations with Hispanocare and Alivio Medical Center that served as bridges into the community where members can exercise their growing knowledge with hands on volunteerism at health fairs and community health-care initiatives.

Awards presented during the banquet included NNLAMS/LaRaMA Member of the Year awarded to Raymond Lujano, who despite holding no executive board positions remained one of the most active members of the organization volunteering his time for every event and standing out as a key contributor in fundraising efforts. The 2005 Dr. Jose Ignacio Choca Scholarship was awarded to Cesar Marquez, Lane Tech High School; Mynor Raguay, North Side College Preparatory; Rosalba Hernandez, University of Illinois at Chicago; Gabriella Delgado, Loyola University Chicago; and Marco Antonio Rodriguez, Loyola University Chicago.

Delgado and Rodriguez plan on attending UIC College of Medicine.

Dr. Ausencio Nunez, University of Illinois at Chicago College of Medicine alumnus and cofounder of LaRaMA, gave a riveting and at times humorous keynote address. He recounted the story of the initial founding of LaRaMA with the help of his medical school peers after realizing the need for an organization relevant to Latinos in medicine and the Latino community in general. Dr. Nunez discussed the trials and tribulations of his journey through medicine and encouraged those present to keep an open mind when evaluating the several paths encountered in their lives.

The evening concluded with the distribution of recognition certificates to Latino medical school graduates handed out by Dr. Jorge Girotti, dean of admission for the College of Medicine and director of the Hispanic Center of Excellence. For some graduates, it was the first of many upcoming accolades acknowledging their four-year journey to better the lives of others. For several family members, it was the gratification of seeing their loved ones accomplish life long goals that elicited their tears of pride.



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## H.O.L.A. Reaches Out

*Alejandro Mercado, ¡ESCUCHA! Student Coordinator, UIC*

A delegation of seven University of Illinois students from HOLA (Health Oriented Latino Association) enjoyed a different kind of spring break this year. In previous years HOLA has participated in many community-based and academic activities, such as health fairs, MCAT reviews, tours to medical schools, and coordinating lectures with reknowned speakers and physicians. This year, HOLA decided to use their spring break to volunteer at the New York Hospital in Queens.

With funding and support from LARES, the Latino Cultural Center, and CHANCE, HOLA members embarked upon a week long volunteer mission to New York City at the New York Hospital in Queens. The goal was to take the HOLA mission national and introduce members to needs of patients from a different area. Students worked in various units in the hospital from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The New York Hospital was chosen because of its predominantly Latino demographic. Students felt they could offer their services because they too shared common backgrounds and language. More importantly, students witnessed first hand the need for more Latino physicians and health-care professionals to improve cultural competence. Additionally, students felt the opportunity to observe various specialists would prove valuable when in the future, they select their own specialty.

HOLA hopes volunteer experiences such as this will attract more students to become members. While membership has dwindled in recent years, HOLA has pressed on with its mission to encourage Latinos to seek careers in health-care while providing amazing



exposure to students in various disciplines in medicine. Through HOLA, students have the opportunity to conduct research in medicine, volunteer for the community organizations and clinics, increase awareness of health disparities in Latino communities, and coordinate blood drives and health fairs. Membership is not limited to premedicine students but also includes students in pharmacy, nursing, therapy, dentistry, etc.

HOLA recognizes this volunteer mission was only a week long; however, this event will change their careers forever. This experience enhanced the participants in a positive and unique way. With HOLA becoming a more active organization, they look forward to more volunteer opportunities and increased membership. For more information about HOLA membership and events, contact Maria Herrera, president, at [mherre1@uic.edu](mailto:mherre1@uic.edu).

## HCOE Medicina Scholars Program Preparation for Latino Leaders in Medicine

Medicina Scholars is a new program beginning this fall 2005 for undergraduate Latino students on the road to becoming physicians. It is a unique three-year program to train future Latino physician-leaders. The program will provide early and longitudinal exposure to a career in medicine, public health policies and Latino health care issues. Students will follow a specially designed curriculum varying from professionalism and ethics in medicine to practicum at a community based clinic. The program promises an amazing

opportunity for exposure in topics that ordinarily would not be addressed for undergraduate students. Students working toward a medical school career showing above average capacity and demonstrated dedication to becoming physicians are encouraged to apply. Requirements and applications can be found at [www.uic.edu/depts/mcam/hcoe](http://www.uic.edu/depts/mcam/hcoe) or call Norma Campos at (312) 996-4493.



# Depression: Prevalence in Latinas

*Maritza Gonzalez, ¡ESCUCHA! Student Coordinator, UIC*

The World Health Organization (WHO) ranks depression fourth among respiratory infections, diarrheal diseases, and prenatal conditions as one of the most serious health problems around the world. By the year 2020, depression is expected to be the second most serious health problem affecting the world's population. Major depression is defined as a psychological disorder that can generate a considerable impairment in a person's functioning, comparable to, or sometimes worse than that caused by a chronic medical condition (Cross-National Collaborative Group 1992).

Depression can be successfully treated 80–90 percent of the time. However, only one in three individuals seek treatment, and among those who do, the disease is not well-recognized and treated, which results in a poor prognosis for depression victims. The Cross-National Collaborative Group suggests that the following ecological and social changes are associated with the increased rate of depression: high mortality rates; infertility; mental illness; alcohol and other drug abuse; job/work stress; urbanization; changes in family structure; and possible toxic or infectious agents.

When evaluating prevalence by gender it is found that depressive symptoms are more common in women than men, by an approximate ratio of 2:1. The ratio of depression is even greater in persons who are separated, divorced or widowed, are poorly educated, or are unemployed. Early research does not establish a significant relationship between ethnicity/race and depression (The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 1994). However, recent research in this area clearly supports the relationship.

The 2000 U.S. census indicated that Latinos are the fastest growing ethnic group in the United States, representing about 12.5 percent of the U.S. population. Although there are differences among the Latino subgroups living in the U.S., they do share socioeconomic similarities. Poverty, inadequate housing, high proportions of single-parent families, acculturative stress, and discrimination are common among Latinos living in the U.S. Latinos in the U.S. have the second highest prevalence of depression, higher than that of Latinos' Caucasian counterparts. Social disorder mediates the association between neighborhood poverty and depression. (Ostir) Knowing that historical and socio-demographic variables play a role in a person's psychological adjustment, we must focus



on prevention of depression in Latinos. The earlier we can prevent the better.

Preliminary research indicates that during a mother's pregnancy stress or depression can effect the child's development. Stress and depression can also have early and lasting effects on a child's life. Infants from a stressed or depressed mother have a significantly increased risk of developing learning and behavioral problems and may be vulnerable to depression and anxiety as they age (Tarkan 2004).

There are several avenues of preventing depression, according to author of *The Latina's Bible*, Sandra Guzman. Latinas can help cope and prevent stress and depression by declaring a "me day." It is a way of taking care of your soul. The first step is by putting yourself on the to do list. Dedicate a whole day at least once a month to yourself. Declaring "me days" is difficult at first because of the fear of breaking family tradition and the guilt that comes with it. However, women must take action towards improving their health. Additional preventative measures can be found in the form of support groups. Women express clear preferences for women-only counseling groups. The important thing is to find support and get help.

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