



NATIONAL HISPANIC COUNCIL ON AGING

Yanira Cruz - President & CEO

*Working to improve
the lives of Hispanic
older adults and
their families*

About NHCOA

The National Hispanic Council on Aging (NHCOA) is the leading national organization working to improve the lives of Hispanic older adults, their families and their caregivers. Today, Latino seniors represent 7% of the U.S. older adult population, and are the fastest growing segment of the U.S.'s rapidly expanding aging population. By 2050, they will make up 20% of the nation's older adults.

Hispanic older adults often live on the fringes of the larger society, due to barriers that keep them from accessing needed services, resources, and programs. This keeps them from obtaining a high quality of life in their later years, leaving them to face health inequities, economic insecurity, and scarcity of suitable housing. Compounding these problems, research on Latino elders and their families is limited and underfunded; public policies do not address their specific needs; and there is limited capacity and expertise among service providers to work with them effectively.

For more than 30 years, NHCOA has been a strong voice dedicated to securing healthy, happy golden years for the nation's Hispanic older adults. Its vision is a society in which all older adults have access to necessary resources so they can age securely, with dignity, greater self-sufficiency, and in the best possible health.

NHCOA accomplishes its mission by integrating research, policy, and practice to tackle the unique challenges Hispanic older adults face as they age, and by educating and empowering them to be better advocates for themselves. As an integral part of this mission, NHCOA incorporates a special focus on families and caregivers of Hispanic older adults in all its programmatic priorities, recognizing the paramount importance of family in the Latino community.

At the community level, NHCOA represents a Hispanic Aging Network of more than 40 community-based organizations across the continental U.S., the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, and also maintains a broader network of 7,000 individuals that reaches 10 million Hispanics each year. Nationally, NHCOA engages in advocacy activities to ensure public policy and legislative efforts targeting older Americans are inclusive of the nation's diverse elder population.

In its program and public policy work, NHCOA focuses on four major priorities: health, economic security, housing and empowerment/leadership. The first three priorities reflect the most critical issues faced by Hispanic older adults and their families. The empowerment/leadership aspect is infused into each priority so that Latino seniors, their families, and caregivers can be their own best advocates by taking charge of their health and well-being.

Dr. Yanira Cruz, NHCOA President & CEO

Dr. Yanira Cruz is the President and CEO of the National Hispanic Council on Aging (NHCOA). She also currently serves on the Boards of the Consumer Health Foundation and the American Society on Aging. Dr. Cruz has been appointed to serve on the Advisory Panel on Medicare Education (APME), which advises the Secretary of DHHS and the Administrator of CMS on opportunities to enhance the federal government's effectiveness in implementing a national Medicare education program.



She also holds an adjunct faculty appointment at The George Washington University School of Public Health. Before joining NHCOA, she served as executive director and chief operating officer of the Hispanic-Serving Health Professions Schools (HSHPS) in Washington.

She joined HSHPS after serving as director of the Institute for Hispanic Health at the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) where she led numerous public health programs to improve the health status of Latinos nationwide. Dr. Cruz received her Bachelor of Science in Biology and holds a Master's degree in Public Health and a Doctorate in Public Health with a specialty in global health from The George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services.

Her primary focus is to provide a Hispanic perspective on public health and older adult issues, to increase policy-maker and public understanding of the needs impacting Hispanics and disenfranchised sectors of our society, and to encourage the adoption of programs and policies that equitably serve everyone.

About the Empowerment & Civic Engagement Training

Sunday, September 18 & Monday, September 19, 2011

Developing leadership and fostering civic engagement in the Hispanic community is one of the most important activities NHCOA undertakes. Through leadership and civic engagement, the voices of Hispanic older adults and their families, are heard on a local, state, and federal level.

The Empowerment and Civic Engagement Training is a two-training for grassroots leaders, including *promotores de salud*, outreach workers, and volunteers. This hands-on-training will provide community leaders with the tools to empower and mobilize Hispanic older adults, their families, and communities to create positive change at the local level by demystifying community advocacy and giving them the ability to conceptualize the basic rights of U.S. democracy.

Participants will also engage in important political discussions affecting Hispanic families such as Social Security, Medicare, the Reauthorization of the Older Americans Act, and the implementation of the Affordable Care Act.

About the Assembly of Grasstop Leaders

Monday, September 19, 2011

The world and U.S. populations are aging rapidly. Starting in January 1, 2011 each day 10,000 baby boomers will become senior citizens at a time when our country faces serious economic challenges. The question is will our older adults be able to retire? Hispanics are the fastest-aging population, and aside from the physical and cognitive changes that occur with the aging process, they face many other challenges related to indicators of well-being that prevent them from aging in good health, dignity, and with economic security.

The aging population boom calls for strategies to prepare for this demographic shift. NHCOA strongly believes we can work together to improve the lives of Hispanic older adults, their families, and caregivers through collaborative research, public policy, and programs that contribute to the well-being of all older adults in the U.S.

The Assembly of Grasstop Leaders will convene leaders of grassroots organizations to discuss the current state of Hispanic older adults and caregivers, including challenges and opportunities to work together to better serve them. Grasstop leaders will have access to innovative tools and resources to enhance the services and outreach community-based organizations and non-profits provide within their respective communities. This day-long leadership session will also focus on current public policy debates on topics critical to Hispanic older adults and their families, including Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.

About the National Summit

Tuesday, September 20, 2011 - National Press Club

The NHCOA National Summit is the only event that focuses exclusively on Hispanic aging issues. This venue will provide a unique opportunity to network, gain insight, and share information with professionals, academics, researchers, providers, health practitioners, federal workers, policy makers, and leaders who work for and represent Hispanic older adults, as well as aging experts and Latino seniors and caregivers regarding the challenges they face at the local level and how we can be active players in constructing America's future by working together to improve the lives of our older adults, their families, and caregivers.

NHCOA National Summit Plenary Sessions

Health Plenary - Achieving Health & Well-Being for Diverse Elders & their Families

Accessing and affording health care is vitally important at all stages of life, especially for Hispanics who disproportionately lack health insurance. In 2009, almost one-third of Latinos were uninsured. However, Medicare keeps more than 36 million older Americans healthy, including many Hispanic older adults who solely depend on this federal program for their health care needs. Therefore, any restructuring of the Medicare and Medicaid programs will critically affect millions of seniors across the country.

In this health plenary session, we will explore the current health status of Hispanic older adults and their families. We also discuss proposed changes to Medicare and Medicaid, such as turning them into a voucher system and block grants. Ultimately, we to develop positive solutions, including ways to eliminate health inequities as well as practical steps local leaders and older adults can take to ensure that changes to these programs truly reflect the needs of Hispanic older adults and all diverse seniors.

Economic Security Plenary - Building Prosperity: Reaffirming our Commitment

At the height of the Great Depression, the United States created Social Security, one of the most important and successful programs in our nation's history. Despite tough economic circumstances, our country made a commitment to keep the elderly out of poverty. Today, it is time to reaffirm that commitment. The reality is that people over 65, regardless of race and ethnicity, who fall into poverty least likely to emerge from it, compared to other age groups.

Hispanic older adults particularly experience higher rates of poverty and economic insecurity than the general population. Social Security is a key program that keeps many Latino seniors out of poverty, accounting for as much as 90% of their fixed monthly income. Without it, the elderly Hispanic poverty rate would increase from roughly 1 out of 6 (17.9%) to 1 out of 2 (50.7%).



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In this plenary session, we will discuss the importance of Social Security in the Hispanic community, as well as proposed cuts, common misconceptions, and effective ways to strengthen it. We will also explore ways to create income security for Hispanic families and build prosperity in the Latino community.

Voting Trends Plenary - The Power of the Latino Vote

As the United States continues to become increasingly diverse, we are seeing emerging voting blocs that are shaping and deciding elections. In the Latino community alone, more than 500,000 Hispanics become eligible to vote each year. The population is also aging rapidly. For the next 19 years, about 10,000 people will turn 65 each day.

Within this age demographic, Hispanic older adults are among the fastest growing age groups in the nation. The large and rapidly growing Latino community will continue to increase in political power with each electoral cycle.

This plenary session will concentrate on Hispanic demographics, voting trends, and ways to mobilize the Latino community to vote and be politically active. Finally, we explore what key issues Hispanics will be focused on for the next election, particularly Latino seniors. We will reflect on the perspectives of Hispanic older adults and their families, which were collected at a series of regional events NHCOA hosted across the country this year.