

## Amelie Ramirez wins 'Health Care Heroes' award from business journal

Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez, Director of the Institute for Health Promotion Research (IHPR) at The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, today was named one of the 2009 Health Care Heroes by the *San Antonio Business Journal*.



The awards are given annually by the *Journal* to recognize outstanding achievements of individuals and organizations in the health care field.

Dr. Ramirez, who is receiving an award in the *Journal's* Health Care Provider (non-physician) category, is being honored for her three decades of outreach, research, speaking engagements, and training to eliminate health disparities – differences in the burden of disease among Latinos and other groups compared to non-Hispanic whites.

"I'm extremely honored to receive this prestigious award," said Dr. Ramirez. "I would like to thank my supportive family and colleagues, without whom I couldn't have done nearly as much to improve people's health."

Dr. Ramirez, a tireless advocate for Latino health, launched the [IHPR](#) at the Health Science Center specifically to tackle health disparities among South Texans, and she directs two national research networks.

[Redes En Acción](#), funded by the National Cancer Institute to focus on Latino cancer prevention and control, has generated more than \$100 million in funding for cancer research, conducted more than 1,000 community events to promote Latino health, and trained or mentored about 200 students and health professionals in hopes that more become involved in finding solutions to Latino cancer issues.

[Salud America!](#), funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, is uniting and increasing the number of Latino researchers seeking environmental and policy solutions to address Latino childhood obesity. The network will be awarding \$1.5 million in pilot funding in 2009 to address the epidemic.

Among Dr. Ramirez' other projects are a patient navigation program that helps Latinos access cancer care services; the development of culturally appropriate educational materials and public service announcements that empower Latinos to get cancer screenings or stop smoking; and several other grants to increase Latino participation in clinical trials and partake in genetic testing.

She also authors many scientific journal articles and often speaks at conferences across the nation to about the latest in health disparities research.

“Without question, Amelie’s forte has been her ability to link people, institutions, and resources together to form successful partnerships to meet the health needs of U.S. Latinos,” said Kipling J. Gallion, MS, Deputy Director of the IHPR.

Gallion said Dr. Ramirez has a distinct passion for caring for people who need help the most – those with inadequate access to high-quality health care, low literacy, and low income. Latinos often fit into this category, especially in parts of South Texas.

“As a Latina who was raised in Laredo, Amelie witnessed the lack of parks, healthy food, medical care, and other resources available to Latinos, often resulting in dire health consequences,” Gallion said. “She was able to get an education and a doctorate of public health, yet she didn’t race off for a career at a distant institution. She remained in South Texas so she could help the very population in which she grew up.”

At the Health Science Center, Dr. Ramirez also is a Professor of Epidemiology and Biostatistics and has two endowments to support her research and that of the IHPR – the Dielmann Chair in Health Disparities Research and Community Outreach and the Max and Minnie Tomerlin Voelcker Endowed Chair in Cancer Healthcare Disparities and Outreach at the Cancer Therapy & Research Center (CTRC) at the Health Science Center.

Dr. Ramirez and the other Health Care Heroes award recipients will be recognized at a special awards event and reception at 6 p.m. May 13 at the McNay Art Museum.