For immediate release

Local Researcher Wins APHA Award for Health Promotion

SAN ANTONIO (Nov. 4, 2013) — Deborah Parra-Medina, Ph.D., a professor at the Institute for Health Promotion Research (IHPR) at the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio, was given the prestigious Mayhew Derryberry Award from the Public Health Education and Health Promotion section of the American Public Health Association (APHA).

The award, given annually, recognizes outstanding contribution of behavioral scientists to the field of health education, health promotion and/or health communications research or theory.

Parra-Medina has more than two decades of research and interventions in chronic disease prevention with underserved groups, including women, Hispanics, immigrants, youth and financially disadvantaged populations in diverse geographic and community settings.

She will be recognized at a lunch Nov. 5, 2013, at the 141st APHA Annual Meeting in Boston.

“I am honored to receive this award named for Mayhew Derryberry, who worked to instill in scientists the vital role of health education in improving people’s health,” Parra-Medina said. “I wholeheartedly agree that health education and promotion are key components to solve health inequalities that exist among certain populations, including Latinos.”

At the IHPR, Parra-Medina leads several projects, including:

- Training peer educators to provide navigation support and outreach/education on HPV to Latina mothers and daughters in South Texas;
- The “Be Fit with Friends” intervention to give Latina Girl Scouts options—from basic fitness equipment to volunteer opportunities to online social media, fitness video games and text messaging—to overcome barriers to physical activity in San Antonio;
- The “Y Living” program that uses e-mails, text messaging and other educational activities to help San Antonio families increase healthy living and reduce cancer risk; and
- Enlace, a promotora-led physical activity to promote moderate-to-vigorous physical activity among Latinas in South Texas.

Parra-Medina’s “Be Fit with Friends” Leader Manual also will receive an award in the “training materials” category at the APHA meeting.
“Deborah’s work is making a meaningful impact on the health of the Latino population in South Texas and beyond,” said IHPR Director Amelie G. Ramirez, Dr.P.H. “She is very deserving of this award and recognition.”

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The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, one of the country’s leading health sciences universities, ranks in the top 3 percent of all institutions worldwide receiving federal funding. Research and other sponsored program activity totaled $231 million in fiscal year 2011. The university’s schools of medicine, nursing, dentistry, health professions and graduate biomedical sciences have produced approximately 28,000 graduates. The $736 million operating budget supports eight campuses in San Antonio, Laredo, Harlingen and Edinburg. For more information on the many ways “We make lives better®,” visit www.uthscsa.edu.

The Institute for Health Promotion Research (IHPR) at The UT Health Science Center at San Antonio investigates the causes and solutions to the unequal impact of cancer and chronic disease among certain populations, including Latinos, in South Texas and the nation. The IHPR, founded in 2006, uses evidence-guided research, training and community outreach to improve the health of those at a disadvantage due to race/ethnicity or social determinants. Visit the IHPR online at http://ihpr.uthscsa.edu or follow its blog at http://www.saludtoday.com/blog.