Éxito! Program Has Early Success in Increasing the Field of Aspiring Latino Cancer Researchers

SAN ANTONIO (Jan. 23, 2013)—Cancer has surpassed heart disease as the No. 1 killer of Latinos in the United States.

Yet, as the Latino population surges, there aren’t enough Latino researchers who are working to uncover new ways to treat cancer or pave way for novel studies of cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic issues to prevent Latinos from suffering worse cancer outcomes.

But there is good news.

The number of Latino cancer researchers is starting to grow, thanks to Éxito! Latino Cancer Research Leadership Training, a program that encourages master’s-level students and professionals to pursue a doctoral degree and careers studying how cancer affects Latinos differently.

Éxito! participants attend a five-day summer institute that enhances understanding of: the power of research to affect change; research methods, theory and interventions; cancer control; and networking and skills to successfully apply to a doctoral program. Participants also are eligible to apply for paid internships. Participants also get a network of support.

In 2011 and 2012, the program has had 37 participants.

Many have applied to doctoral programs, and eight already have been accepted:

- Maria Brietzke – PhD in Global Public Health, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- Roger Figueroa – Illinois Transdisciplinary Obesity Prevention PhD/MPH Program, University of Illinois
- Marivelisse Soto-Salgado – DrPH in Social Determinants of Health, University of Puerto Rico School of Public Health
- Mary Vanellys Diaz-Santana – PhD in Epidemiology, University of Massachusetts Amherst
- Lizette Rangel – DrPH in Health Promotion and Behavioral Sciences, University of Texas School of Public Health, Houston

Go here to learn about the exciting progress Éxito! alumni are making in the fields of doctoral study and Latino cancer research.
Several Éxito! alumni—Aditi Wahi, Alyssa De Santiago, Lizbeth Del Toro, Jenny Castillo, Delana Gonzales, Becky Adeigbe, Helen Palomino and Cristina Valdovinos—also completed internships studying various aspects of Latino cancer.

“It is individuals like these who will pursue a doctoral degree and perhaps help stop cancer—from the inside, embracing culture as a vital piece to cancer control and prevention,” said Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez, who directs the program, which is funded by the National Cancer Institute and is led by the Institute for Health Promotion Research (IHPR) at The UT Health Science Center at San Antonio.

Go here to learn about Éxito! interns and see the progress other alumni are making in the fields of doctoral study and Latino cancer research.

Apply here for the 2013 Éxito! program. Applications are due March 1, 2013.

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