SAN ANTONIO (Sept. 29, 2011) – Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez, director of the Institute for Health Promotion Research at The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, is among a handful of people named “Champions of Change” by the White House for their contributions to ending suffering from breast cancer, the leading cancer diagnosed in women today.

Each week the White House highlights “Champions” who are making an impact in their communities and helping to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

“I am honored to be named a ‘Champion of Change.’ I hope it puts a spotlight on breast cancer, the No. 1 cancer killer of Latinas,” Dr. Ramirez said. “We must conduct research to discover new and efficient methods to help Latinas overcome critical barriers to breast cancer screening and assure that Latinas across the nation and international can receive timely, high quality and comprehensive cancer treatment, and go on to live long and fruitful lives.”

Dr. Ramirez, who also is associate director of health disparities at the Health Science Center’s Cancer Therapy & Research Center and a board member for Susan G. Komen for the Cure and the Lance Armstrong Foundation, has directed many research programs focused on human and organizational communication to reduce Latino cancer health disparities in cancer risk factors, clinical trial recruitment and healthy lifestyles. Her projects have led to unique health communication models and interventions that have contributed to the reduction of Latino breast cancer rates and the increase of screening among Latinos, including testing the effectiveness of patient navigation in decreasing Latinas’ lag time between an abnormal mammogram and confirmatory diagnosis and treatment initiation.

Ramirez was nominated as a Champion of Change by Susan G. Komen for the Cure.

She and four others nominated by Komen were announced Sept. 27 and represent the full range of Komen’s work to end breast cancer, from public policy advocates to researchers and clinicians who advise Komen on the direction of research to bring treatments and answers to patients in the shortest period of time.

Other Komen-nominated champions were Elyse Gellerman of Denver, Dr. Anne Marie Murphy of Chicago, Dr. Ann Partridge of New Bedford, Mass., and Robin Prothro of Baltimore.
“These women are on the front lines of breast cancer every day as leaders of research, clinical practice and advocacy for women facing this disease,” said Ambassador Nancy G. Brinker, founder and CEO of Susan G. Komen for the Cure, in a statement. “We are delighted that they are being recognized for their passion, talent, and significant work for women and men facing breast cancer.”

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For current news from the IHPR at the UT Health Science Center San Antonio, please visit our blog or follow us on Twitter @SaludToday.

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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 $228 million in fiscal year 2010. The university’s schools of medicine, nursing, dentistry, health professions and graduate biomedical sciences have produced approximately 26,000 graduates. The $744 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 University of Texas 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 San Antonio, 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, such as education or income. Visit the IHPR online at http://ihpr.uthscsa.edu or follow its blog at http://www.saludtoday.com/blog.