Latino Leaders Rally Against AIDS

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In press conferences in major U.S. cities on June 24, Latino leaders and health officials called for improved federal policies aimed at HIV/AIDS prevention and early treatment for the Latino community, NorthJersey.com reports (northjersey.com, 6/24). Latinos constitute 15 percent of the U.S. population, yet they account for 25 percent of HIV diagnoses and 19 percent of people living with AIDS.

“[Latinos] access medical care only when needed, when they’re very sick, in the late stages,” said Catherine Correa, director of the Ryan White Grants Division of the Paterson, New Jersey, Department of Human Services. “They also believe that there’s no real treatment for HIV, so they think ‘Why get tested?’”

Leaders attribute high infection rates among Latinos to language barriers—particularly for new immigrants—and cultural stigma surrounding HIV that discourages testing.

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