“TODO EL MUNDO:” Necesita Saber La Importancia de la prevención de las enfermedades crónicas

“Everyone:” Should Have Knowledge of the Importance of Preventing Chronic Conditions
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THE LATINO HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM, Inc.
"Helping Minorities Get Access to Medical Care, Food and to Improve Health Literacy in Massachusetts"

Dr. Milagros Abreu, MD, MPH, our founder, has a post-doctoral training in Epidemiology at Boston University School of Public Health, and is the founder and Executive Director of the Latino Health Insurance Program, Inc. (LHIP), a community-based organization, which headquarters are located in 88 Waverly Street, Framingham, MA.

LHIP originally started in East Boston in 2006, and expanded to the Town of Framingham in 2008 to serve the growing Latino population of MetroWest. Other LHIP locations include the Town of Milford and the City of Worcester, MA. LHIP's mission is to increase access to medical care and food for minority residents, connect them to medical facilities, and to improve health literacy, while reducing medical cost.
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To connect clients to the appropriate health care services (including primary care, specialty care, and dental care), and help individuals to apply for SNAP (food stamps), WIC, and referrals to local food pantries.

To promote a more effective use of preventative services (including health screenings, prenatal care, wellness visits, and health education), while reducing medical cost.

Our Mission:
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Our Vision:
We embrace the vision of access to comprehensible and affordable medical care to all the people in need and with limited income throughout the state, and to other states.

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Proud to support the Latino Health Insurance Program in their work to promote health and wellness in diverse communities.
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INTRODUCTION:

The Latino Health Insurance Program wishes to introduce the presentation of our first published magazine “Todo El Mundo (Everyone).” It has been an endeavor to organize this article. Our presentation of information is in line with the need for current information on awareness.

Our magazine will feature and discuss medical and scientific discoveries in the treatment of chronic conditions. In our first issue on cancer prevention includes articles on breast, colorectal, and cervical cancers, as well as other cancers. This first issue features information related to breast cancer and will go beyond the initial write-up on awareness and prevention, and for instance, the risk factors involved. New discoveries and research on cancers cures are changing the scope and depth of our coverage to include interviews with experts on the field of cancer, and to include first-hand testimony from cancer survivors.

It is our wish to become a forerunner in this evolution of research, new developments, and cures for cancers. The position is to educate the public on awareness, and prevention. The task is to present information and resources to support individuals with these diseases. Our mission is to help people who come for services at LHIP to be included in all of our endeavors, which reach out to define awareness, and refine prevention, and teach knowledge - conocimientos.

There will be articles written to enlighten the general public as an additional venue of awareness, prevention, and the resources available to them. It is the hope that readers will find the information helpful and most useful in the understanding that most chronic conditions can be prevented. In fact, breast cancer deaths can be prevented.

The LHIP is committed to the education of a multi-cultural public for the prevention of chronic conditions including cancer. To enhance this goal, educational seminars have been designed to encompass key questions and answers on cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, fall risks, and other chronic conditions.

Dissemination of our important purpose is through the printing of pamphlets for distribution at our sites, local cities and towns, senior centers, libraries, faith based organizations, health fairs, community events, housing developments, colleges, etc. Banners printed with details and posted on
The skilled use of social media and website for marketing and spreading the information about our services is invaluable. Presenting the ideas through an educationally presentable magazine is one of the highlights of the ideas to educate the public.

**Fostering an Awareness and Prevention of Breast Cancer:**

To introduce the concept of cancer awareness, ask the question what do you know about cancer and breast cancer awareness? That question is the important question, because it questions the main issues about prevention. However, in reality, unless one is part of an ongoing training in medical issues, and awareness of new medical information, and involvement in cancer issues, one is limited to information that is outdated in awareness of screening and prevention techniques. Ergo, one becomes eliminated from the current and more effective cures for this disease.

A brief explanation of the meaning of the concept of cancer is most helpful. “The body is made up of basically millions of cells. During younger years, the normal cells divide quickly and the person grows. When a person is older, cells replace only worn out or dead cells. A cell which is cancerous constantly renews itself. The cancer cells invade other cells and grow out of control. These cells form into tumors. In some cases, the cancerous cells can invade the blood cells and the bone marrow. Cells metastasize when they get into the blood stream and form other tumors. Eventually, enough tumors form and the cancer takes over the good cells in the body.”

**What Are some Risk Factors for Breast Cancer?**

Accordingly, another important aspect of maintaining good breast health is understanding what risk factors are involved. Although there is a great deal of current research on this subject, there is a great need for additional research. Studies are needed on risk factors for breast cancer. Currently, the following is a list of some risks factors for breast cancer awareness:

- Gender results are skewed statistically, because breast cancer is much more common in women than in men.
- Risk goes up with age.
- Inherited changes like mutations in certain genes like BRCA1 and BRCA2 can increase the risk.
- Breast cancer risks are higher among women whose family members have had the disease.
- A woman with cancer in one breast has a greater chance of getting breast cancer again.

Women who had periods early before age 12 or women who went through menopause after the age of 55 have a slightly increased risk of breast cancer.

Women who have had radiation treatment to the chest area as a child or young adult have a greatly increased risk of breast cancer.

Women who were given the drug DES (diethylstilbestrol) during pregnancy have a slightly increased risk of getting cancer". 3

**Breast Cancer Risks and Lifestyle Choices:**

It is important to consider breast cancer with choices of lifestyle, because the two are very much inter-related. The following shows lifestyle choices that create risks for breast cancer.4

- Women who have postponed having children, or who have given birth to their first child at older age, have a slightly greater risk of getting breast cancer. Having multiple pregnancies or having children when younger reduces the risk of breast cancer.
- Women who have used birth control pills or an injection for birth control called depot-medroxyprogesterone acetate (DMPA or Depo-Provera) have been shown to have a slightly greater risk of breast cancer than women who have not used them.
- Taking estrogen and progesterone after menopause that combined with hormone therapy, increases the risk of getting breast cancer.
- Statistics have shown that breastfeeding slightly lowers breast cancer risk.

**Other Risk Factors:**

Smoking may increase the risk of breast cancer. The increased risk seems to affect women who started smoking when they were young.

Certain factors have been studied and do not have a proven link to breast cancer:

- Antiperspirants
- Style of bras
- Induced abortions

Chemicals: At this time research does not show a clear link between breast cancer risk and exposure to plastics, specific cosmetics and personal care products, and pesticides (such as DDE-a toxic substance organochlorine-dichlorodiphenyldichloroethylene). Research is being done on the possible health effects of these and similar compounds.5

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3. American Cancer Society, IBID.
4. American Cancer Society, IBID
5. American Cancer Society, IBID.
Information on Mammograms:

To begin the quest for finding out more about awareness, the consumer should ask his or her doctor the following meaningful questions: (from The Official Website of the Executive Office of Health And Human Services: Breast and Cervical Cancer Screenings):

The article suggests: “Asking your doctor the following questions:

“What are my risks of getting breast/cervical cancer?
How often should I be screened?
What will happen during the screening test?
How long will it take?
When and how will I learn about the results?
When will I need to have my next screening?”

“...The answers to these questions should include: have a mammogram. A mammogram is a low-dose X-ray of the breast. Doctors use mammograms to look for early signs of breast cancer. Regular mammograms are the best test procedures doctors have to find breast cancer early. Having a mammogram is a bit uncomfortable for some women. Some women even find it painful, especially if their breasts are sensitive. But, it only takes a few minutes, and then the discomfort is over.

Here is another key question to ask: how often should you get screened for breast cancer? The answer should be that this depends on many factors, including your age, your family history, and your screening history. All women between the ages of 40 to 74 should have a mammogram every year. Some women might start mammograms earlier or have mammograms more frequently. Ask your doctor when and how often you should get screened and then make your appointment!

Additional Factors You Should Know When Getting a Mammogram Ask to see the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) certificate that is issued to all facilities that offer mammograms.

If you have had mammograms at some other place, try to get those mammograms to bring with you to the new facility so that they can be compared to the new ones. Medicare, Medicaid, and most private health insurance plans cover mammogram costs, or at least part of them. Low-cost mammograms are available in most communities. The whole procedure takes about 20 minutes. The actual mammogram picture only takes a few seconds. Before having a mammogram, tell your radiology technologist if you are breast-feeding or if you think you might be pregnant.
Always describe any breast symptoms or problems that you are having to the technologist who is doing the mammogram. Only a very small number of screening mammograms lead to a diagnosis of cancer. About 1 in 10 women who have a mammogram will need more tests, but most will only need another mammogram. All mammogram facilities are required to send your results to you within 30 days.

Using Health Care Advisors to Your Advantage:

Health care providers are prepared to answer key questions on awareness of cancer and on breast cancer. Resources like the American Cancer Society (ACS), and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH), and community based organizations, like LHIP are most helpful in the dissemination of information, which is needed to close the gap of disparity and accessibility for awareness for those persons who are poor, minorities, and underserved. The goal is to “increase equity and reduce health care disparities by informing policy, and developing, and promoting tools, and trainings resources that service the underserved”.  

The Paradox of Unfair Medical Awareness:

The paradox of the problem is that there is so much information available more and more physical phenomena every day that if one finds out about awareness, and prevention, and about cures for cancer that one can live a full lifetime, and a healthy life. The problem is that there are many inconsistencies in awareness and prevention information and disparities related to poverty that for one reason or another, a person does not find out about awareness and prevention until it is too late to cure the cancer.

We have the second major part of our task: to be able to reach out to the communities and provide outreach and education so that we can create equality in healthcare amongst all people. Creating conduits for solving this paradoxical problem is the challenge of the next decades in the history of our country as well as for the medical history that is emerging in our country. That was the original idea behind the formation of the Latino Health Insurance Program, Inc. (LHIP). Until a real cure like a vaccine, which can totally and individually eradicate all of the many types and kinds of cancers, our mission as a people currently in this country, America, a land of vast wealth and potential, is to find a way to save as many of the victims of cancer as possible. Quite possibly the disease of cancer can be eradicated in our life-time—in the 21st century, if we use awareness and preventative measures for the meantime.

The key is to implement to the public the knowledge that comes from programs that are designed by professionals in the medical field for education and awareness; this is the key phrase to keep in mind: the awareness for prevention of the disease, particularly; to teach people to be ‘in the know’ and to want to know the correct knowledge. As the Latino people express themselves in their own language, which is Spanish or Portuguese, they say: ‘conocimientos’ that would be beneficial to them.

An Interesting Article On Awareness:

In talking about awareness and cancer prevention, there was an interesting article about a former vice-president of the American Cancer Society. 


8. Michael Thun, American Cancer Society, “Overweight Or Obese Significantly Increases Your Risk Of Dying Of Cancer Regardless Of Smoke Or Had A Serious Illness”, 2014, from the American Cancer Society website publication– taken from Recent Developments in Cancer Research - Crusader for Cancer Prevent-
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The American Cancer Society’s Vice President Emeritus, Michael Thun, MD, is the author of a recent research study showing that being overweight or obese significantly increases your risk of breast cancer, regardless of whether you smoke or had other illnesses. All of us who are overweight have to keep this fact and result of a research study in mind, and make lifestyle changes to prevent breast cancer.

Commitment for The Need For Awareness:
In our commitment for the pursuit of the need for current research, awareness, prevention of breast cancer, and other cancers, we must try to re-conceptualize the new results of research. We must try to reword the information so that newer ideas, current research, and more current ideas on breast cancer is easy for the average man or woman to understand; and to understand the benefits of the current advancements so that it becomes a way of life to pursue the fruitful advancement of current medical findings.

First Step to A Healthy and Fulfilled Life: Following Statistical Data On Breast Cancer
From research we learn that breast cancer is the commonest malignant disease among Western women, and, although survival has improved with earlier diagnosis by mammography and with ‘adjuvant therapy’, it still represents a leading cause of cancer related death.9

From research findings from Stanford Medicine, Clinical Trials, (from the article entitled: NCI Cancer Information Service Partnership Program), cancer is the second leading cause of death in the United States, and a critical strategy in cancer control efforts is education.

Best advice for cancer is to detect it early when treatment is most likely to be effective, and choose the best treatment plan. “For nearly 30 years, the National Cancer Institute’s (NCI) Cancer Information Service (CIS) has been providing the latest and most accurate cancer information to patients, their families, health professionals, and the public.10

In the Quest to Eradicate Breast Cancer: Avoiding Risk Factors and Increasing Protective Factors:

In the prevention of breast cancer, one has to consider a summary of the key risk factors. The following are some risk factors that help to define the many facets of the problems involved in the prevention of breast cancer.11

These risk factors are listed as: Being female, being of older age, a personal, or family history of breast cancer, inherited gene changes, dense breasts, estrogen made in the body, combination hormone replacement therapy/hormone therapy, exposure to radiation, obesity, or alcohol.

The following are protective factors for breast cancer: less exposure to estrogen; exercise, and healthy diets, among others.

8 Michael Thun, American Cancer Society, “Overweight Or Obese Significantly Increases Your Risk Of Dying Of Cancer Regardless Of Smoke Or Had A Serious Illness”, 2014, from the American Cancer Society website publication–taken from Recent Developments in Cancer Research - Crusader for Cancer Prevention. 9 American Cancer Society, IBID.

10. Research Gate, Per Eystein Lonning, reprinted, “Aromatase Inhibitors In Breast Cancer” (Institute of Medicine, Haukeland University Hospital, N-5021), Bergen, Norway.
What Else Can Be Done to increase Awareness of Cancer and Early Detection and Awareness of Breast Cancer:

Here are five ways to do a lot of good with a little of your time, your skills, and your voice: volunteer your time at The Latino Health Insurance Program, Inc. (LHIP), or seek for many programs that the ACS offers to focus on the physical, social, and emotional needs of people facing breast cancer.12

a. Be trained and volunteer to provide health education on early screening and cancer prevention at LHIP in Framingham, Milford, East Boston, or Worcester in MA.

b. Reach to Recovery—If you have survived breast cancer, you can train to become a Reach to Recovery volunteer who provides education and emotional support to other women – and men – facing a breast cancer diagnosis.

c. Look Good Feel Better – This free community-based service teaches patients beauty techniques to help restore their appearance and self-image during chemotherapy and radiation treatments. The program is a collaboration among the American Cancer Society, the Personal Care Products Council, and the Professional Beauty Association National Cosmetology Association.

d. Road to Recovery – Volunteer drives in this program help cancer patients get to and from treatments. Last year, the American Cancer Society matched thousands of patients with volunteer drivers who donated their time and use of their e. Take Part in Research (CLINICAL TRIALS) – As a breast cancer patient you can seek out a clinical trial or sign up to be party of an ongoing research project that could help those diagnosed with breast cancer in the future.

Be on charge of your health – Although there’s no sure-fit way to present breast cancer, certain lifestyle habits are linked to a lower risk of it developing or returning it.

a. Be physically active
b. Eat healthy diet
c. If you drink alcohol, limit how much you drink”
d. Participate in “Taking care of yourself” workshop on breast cancer prevention at LHIP.13

There is no better time than in the present to make good and healthy decisions about eating right: making the right choices of food--choosing foods that are high in anti-oxidants, like fruits and Vegetables.


Not only does exercise enhance your general well-being, but it makes your muscles stronger, and it helps to lessen feelings of fatigue, and exercise is known to make you feel better.”

**In Recapping Our Thoughts:**

Recapping, through awareness we are rallying to the cause of eradicating cancer in our lifetime. Through prevention and education for awareness we are marching together in triumph against the killer disease cancer. We are marching together, then, against diseases like breast cancer, cervical cancer and colorectal cancer to mention a few of the main cancers. Let us be united for a healthy and prosperous life.

In summarizing this article, we wish to say that it is our pleasure to serve you in the capacity of your health and welfare in the prevention of cancer. Our magazine articles will enhance your education of awareness and prevention. They will feature an in-depth discussion of articles and research written about prevention finding of resources and information on how to reduce complications for chronic conditions. For certain and particularly for the breast, cervical, and colorectal cancers, there will be information that will enlighten the height of meaning for new cancer detection awareness.

“Additionally, in our dissemination of cancer information we shall endeavor to provide excellence in presenting cancer basics. We shall endeavor to go beyond the basics by providing enlightening, newly revealed cancer prevention and detection ideas, revised assumptions of signs and symptoms of cancer, refined treatments and side-effects, up-to-date cancer facts and statistics, highlighted news about cancer, and there will be expert blog for your interest.”
Did you know that 30 minutes of your time to attend a workshop on prevention and screenings on cancer can save your life?

Going to workshops can be helpful for you. Participating in workshops which emphasize cancer screening and awareness is a must, because of the benefits that result: in awareness to prevent cancer; and is a lot easier to do than you realize. The LHIP is one of three community-based organizations in the state of Massachusetts, which currently is presenting education program-workshops, called, “Taking Care of Yourself” for free. The MDPH Care Coordination Program offers the advantage of health screenings and health education on cancer prevention for MA residents. MA residents get assistance to connect with primary care services, cancer screening, and health education on breast and cervical cancer. The program offers trainings in additional awareness on colorectal, and prostate cancers. The program delineates researched age groups for screening effectiveness. The program offers assistance in obtaining a primary care physician.

Personal Experiences:
Years ago, it was suggested to me by a physician that I should go to a workshop to become more aware of cancer prevention. I found that participating in discussions, which highlighted self-examination and awareness was very interesting and enlightening as well. And, too, it was interesting to listen to the many stories that people shared about cancer in their families. From these experiences, I developed a special sense of empathy for persons suffering with the disease and a yearning to learn more about new information and cures as they are developed. It is very interesting to follow the new developments of testing equipment, which detects the early signs of cancer and which helps in the cure as well as the prevention.

Screening will teach us that it is our responsibility to care for the health and welfare of our own bodies. Screening and more technologically effective screenings has been developed for the detection of early signs of cancer; you can now take the initiative of saving yourself from the disease, because of all of these technological advances and there will be more to come. The first step to a healthy life now and for the future is to attend workshops on prevention.

Inferences from Personal Experiences:

From my own personal experience, I had learned as a young woman to go for annual checkups and to workshops on prevention. I was newly married and had learned that I would have difficulty having children, because of a serious hormonal problem. I followed the advice of my doctor and went for check-ups. Shortly after my second child was born, I went for a checkup, and it was discovered that I had the beginning of uterine cancer. The doctor said that the virus could easily spread to other organs. He suggested that I undergo surgery. I saved myself by listening to the doctor's advice.

The Realities Of Cancer Challenges Us All:

The winning side of my suggestion is: if you do not go to workshops on the prevention of cancer and if you do not go for annual physical exams, you are putting yourself at great risk. I wish to tell you the story about my husband. He was healthy all of his life. He did not even take an aspirin---he took no pills. He was not quite 70 when he developed flu-like symptoms. As he never went to doctors for an annual visit, and as he never attended preventative workshops, he did not go to a doctor for the flu-like symptoms. His symptoms did not go away, unfortunately,
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and got worse. One day, his coughing was so bad that he had trouble breathing.

He was completely drained of any strength. I called my son-in-law and my son-in-law said that I should call for an ambulance. The ambulance took my husband to the local hospital. The caretakers at the hospital diagnosed him with an illness of the liver, but wanted to see the results of further testing. Testing results revealed that he had pancreatic cancer and that he was going to die within a week.

Had my husband gone for annual check-ups, I am certain that a physician would have detected some abnormalities in his blood. I am certain that a physician could have detected some abnormalities when thoroughly examining him. Had my husband gone to workshops, he might have followed the presenter’s advice on seeking medical assistance when symptoms of cancer initially emerged. It took me and our family years to recover from the suddenness of my husband’s dying. We could have helped him. He would have given himself a fighting chance against this disease.

Recent Participation in a Workshop on Breast Cancer:
Written by Cheryl Freier

While working at LHIP, I had the opportunity to participate in a one-on-one educational presentation, which highlighted the disease: breast cancer. The materials for the program were presented by the “Taking care of yourself”, which is an education and awareness—prevention program, which is part of the MDPH. The supervisor was present besides the workshop presenter, and myself.

I thought that I knew a lot about breast cancer. There were a lot of myths and wrong ideas and opinions, which always floated to the public. However, nothing can disprove the reality of the matter that when cancer goes undetected, it is a killer. My mother’s sister had breast cancer and since the cancer had gone undetected, the cancer metastasized to her brain. My husband’s first cousin was unaware of the early detection of breast cancer and nearly died from the disease, because it was almost too late when she went for treatment.

The challenge that faces all of us is to live a full life and to live a healthy life. In order for this to occur, one has to become fully aware of the on-going need for self-education on the prevention of cancer. The state of Massachusetts has become recognizant of our needs for awareness and prevention and has generated and produced educational materials that can be used by a presenter at LHIP to enlighten members of the public on major cancer issues.

A person can accept the challenge that the disease presents by attending workshops given on the most common cancers. One should seek and find knowledge on as much information as possible on the new developments in the cure of Cancer. The challenge can be further heightened by one seeking out specifically as much education and information on the prevention and a cure of breast cancer.
And then one should tell as many people as possible of her discoveries. After my own investigation into awareness and prevention, I found it particularly interesting to listen and partake in the workshop on preventative methods in the detection of breast cancer, which was given at the Latino Health Insurance Program, Inc. (LHIP). I realized that there was always new information to learn.

A presenter who was well-trained and educated in presenting workshops presented her facts and details; she talked as she flipped a series of illustrated pages from a work book which was designed for educating and making the public aware.

The presenter included in her workshop, information on how to perform breast self-examinations by searching for changes in breast formations like any lump, or thickening, or discoloration in the breast or armpit area; any unusual change in the size of the breast, or pain or tenderness in the breast was also suspect.

The presenter cautioned, “If you should see any of the above changes while examining your breasts, it is best to consult with a physician. It was also emphasized at the workshop that women between the ages of 40 to 64 should become particularly aware of breast cancer screening tests that are currently available to the public. These screening tests are the Mammogram, the Clinical breast exam, and the Breast self-exam”. (Center For Disease Control And Prevention)

In summary:

I found the health-related workshop on breast cancer prevention given by the LHIP presenter quite informative. I could actually see the pictures of the inside of the breasts and that personalized the meaning of breast-cancer for me; As a result, I became more serious about the subject. I wanted to learn more information about self-awareness and screening for breast cancer. The workshop helped me to understand that I have a great deal of control over my own body. The workshop helped me to understand that if I used preventative measures for detection that I could help in the cure of cancer. This is most important, because, ultimately, I am responsible for the health and welfare of my own body and this is the key issue.

All of the information in this magazine which relate to breast cancer is highly informative; the information goes hand-in-hand with our mission statement purpose at LHIP; the information provides additional assurances that prevention and treatment are the keys to fighting cancer.
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Magazine And Online Articles:
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“Ha llegado el momento de su mamogramma annual?” American Cancer Society, small booklet.
“Is It Time For Your Yearly Mammogram?” American Cancer Society, small booklet.
Per Epstein Lonning, “Aromatas Inhibitors And Inactives In Breast Cancer These Potent Inhibitors Of Oestrogen Synthesis May Be Superior To Tamoxifen”, Department Of Oncology, Institute Of Medicine, Haukeland University Hospital, N-5021, Bergen, Norway.
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