

Cambio Center Proposal to the Missouri Foundation for Health

Title: “Promotoras de Salud”

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Project Summary

“Promotoras de Salud” (Community Health Workers) is a social intervention model based on the development of partnerships between providers of health care services and community members. Promotoras are members of the targeted community who are fluent in and sensitive to the languages and culture of the audience that healthcare programs/providers want to reach with positive health messages. The Promotoras de Salud will serve as the bridge between the providers of health care services and the targeted Latino community. The University of Missouri Cambio Center will collaborate with Centro Latino to recruit for, implement, and evaluate a Promotoras de Salud program. Promotoras will work at Centro Latino and serve as the connectors between health care consumers and health care providers to promote health literacy and healthy behavior among groups that have traditionally lacked access to adequate health care and information. Latino newcomers to mid-Missouri are difficult to reach because of differences in language, habits, customs, and values. The Promotoras de Salud program is an appropriate health literacy program for serving this community because Promotoras will be bilingual, trusted members of the target community with access to those who need the services. They will be working through Centro Latino, a trusted resource in the Latino community, and will collaborate with a range of healthcare providers and community educators to develop health literacy resources, provide a framework for accessing resources, and linking to health services. The program will include resource development and training around 10 key areas, creating linkages between the target community and community resources through the Promotoras. Training modules developed around the key program areas will not only create a support system for the Promotoras so they can construct an effective bridge between Latinos and community resources, but will be available for the entire community to use. The Promotoras de Salud project is comprised of three main components: 1) Developing Resources and Training, 2) Linkage to Community Resources, and 3) Developing a Support System. Resources and training will be developed around 10 program areas: Health Literacy & Medical Interpreting, HIV Education and Prevention, Healthy Lifestyles and Obesity Prevention, Family Planning, Diabetes Testing and Education, Medline Plus, Latino Link, Parent Link, Social Work & Mental Health, and Public Speaking and Outreach Planning.

The Promotoras de Salud program’s success will be measured on several levels including extent of outreach, increased health literacy, and community response to the intervention. The results and any materials produced, including videos, training modules, and implementation guides will be disseminated to stakeholders and community groups via the Cambio Center’s Cambio de Colores Conference. The packaged product will be made available to community members as well, and used by Centro Latino to reach larger numbers of those it serves through a sustainable, ever-expanding Promotoras de Salud network.

Organization Description

This project is a joint effort between the Cambio Center at the University of Missouri and Centro Latino in Columbia, Missouri. The Cambio Center was established to respond to the effects of globalization in local communities, both rural and urban; support sustained research to understand the immigration process in Missouri in particular and the Midwest in general; and develop knowledge and best practices to facilitate a smooth integration of economically vulnerable newcomers to Missouri and the Midwest, and prepare all citizens for a diverse society. The vision of the Cambio Center includes communities where newcomers are integrated into the social and economic fabric of the community. One of the challenges for newcomers is to understand how services are accessed, networks are constructed, and needs are met in their new surroundings.

Centro Latino serves working class low income, uninsured Latinos families that also have also low levels of literacy and education. The mission of Centro Latino is to empower Latinos and Latino families through provision of services and guidance in navigating the health, education, and cultural resources of mid-Missouri. Centro Latino is based in Columbia, Missouri and was established as a nonprofit tax-exempt organization in 2000. Its comprehensive health services include referrals to health care providers, health screenings for diabetes and hypertension, HIV counseling and testing, health education, interpreting services for local health agencies serving Spanish-speaking individuals, and dental screenings in cooperation with volunteer dentists.