



Latino & Puerto Rican Affairs Commission Earns Grant to Improve Oral Health Awareness In Connecticut

The Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission (LPRAC) has been selected to receive a two-year \$40,000 grant from the Connecticut Health Foundation (CT Health) to expand advocacy efforts promoting better oral health, with the aim of extending improved oral health from the state’s Latino community to a broader statewide population.

LPRAC plans to conduct a series of public education forums and develop public awareness initiatives with multiple constituencies. Plans are to collaborate with state legislature’s Black and Latino Caucus, other legislative leaders, and key stakeholders from community agencies including AARP, faith-based organizations, and parents, to build awareness and support for improved oral health access and services.

“This grant will help LPRAC promote the benefits of the various resources readily available for families within the Latino population in our state, which I am happy to report, has improved significantly in recent years,” said Werner Oyanadel, executive director of the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission.” “I am ready to roll up my sleeves to work with all our stakeholders to expand oral health advocacy in Connecticut – and our goal will be to improve oral health in our state.”

CT Health’s grant initiative, Strengthening the Advocacy Infrastructure to Sustain Improvements in Oral Health, seeks to expand oral health champions beyond traditional dental professionals. LPRAC was one of three organizations selected by CT Health as part of a competitive request for proposal (RFP) selection process earlier this year.



“We believe that broadening the base of oral health advocates will increase the visibility and effectiveness of advocacy efforts to expand and sustain improvements in Connecticut’s oral health landscape,” said Tiffany Donelson, vice president of program for CT Health.

As part of the implementation of the grant, LPRAC plans to work with community and education partners to review the relative success of dental health initiatives in the Latino community, with an eye towards promoting effective programs to broader constituencies through partnerships and collaborative initiatives.

“I ultimately hope our advocacy and research can help to get a better grip on the factors that contribute to persistent racial and ethnic differences in access to care and utilization,” said



Oyanadel. “We intend to develop an effective advocacy program that will join with organizations working diligently to raise awareness.”

The Connecticut Health Foundation (CT Health) is the state’s largest independent health philanthropy dedicated to improving lives by changing health systems. Since it was established in July 1999, the foundation has supported innovative grant-making, public health policy research, technical assistance and convening to achieve its mission – to improve the health of the people of Connecticut. In 2013, CT Health announced plans to expand health equity as a focus. For CT Health, health equity means helping more people gain access to better care, especially people of color. Better care includes physical, mental, and oral health.

The Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission (LPRAC) was created by an act of the Connecticut General Assembly in 1994. The 21 member non-partisan commission is mandated to make recommendations to the legislature and the Governor for new or enhanced policies that will foster progress in achieving health, safety, educational success, economic self-sufficiency, and end discrimination in Connecticut. LPRAC develops indicators of the state's progress, working in collaboration with partners including state and local government agencies, the faith community, the business sector, nonprofit organizations, advocacy groups and philanthropic organizations.