Latin American Health Alliance Celebrates
One Year Anniversary of the Hector Reyes House
March 26, 2010
Assumption College

Rev Dr. Sarai Rivera, Invocation, Christian Community Church

Francesco Cesareo, PhD, President, Assumption College

Matilde Castiel, MD, Executive Director of the Latin American Health Alliance

Rosalie Torres Stone, PhD, Board of Directors

Hortensia Amaro, PhD, Associate Dean of the Bouvé College of Health Sciences, Northeastern University

Francisco Rivera, Lead Counselor, Hector Reyes House

Jose Colon, House Manager

John O’Brien, President & CEO, UMass Memorial Health Care

Leonard Doerfler PhD, Vice President, Board of Directors

Michael Botticelli, Director of Massachusetts Bureau of Substance Abuse Services

Jose Encarnacion MPA, Program Director

Senator Harriette L. Chandler

Mayor Joseph O’Brien

Rabbi Seth Bernstein, Convocation, Temple Sinai

Video of Hector Reyes
Hector E. Reyes was born in Ciales, Puerto Rico. His family was one of the first families to immigrate to Worcester in 1960. His entire life was devoted to community work.

He was appointed the first Executive Director of Asociaciacion Latina Para Progreso Y Accion (ALPA) in 1971, where he worked with the community and staff, to advocate for social issues and social justice. He initiated one of the first successful bilingual education programs in the area; as program that ensured Hispanic children were educated in subject and age appropriate classes.

With ALPA he spearheaded the free breakfast program for schoolchildren. He worked with his daughter to start the first Latino radio station WCIN. He worked on the Model Cities Construction Clearinghouse advocating for workforce diversity so that Latino men could work in construction trades. He was also instrumental in helping create Centro Communale Inc, the organization that founded Centro Las Americas. After retirement, he worked with the Mass Senior Action Council advocating for quality of life issues for Latino senior citizens. One of his passions was helping those in the community who were suffering from addiction. In 1974 he helped find Primera Parada the first Latino program to address these issues. He continued for many years to advocate for treatment and met with different community and political leaders until this was accomplished. He worked with other community leaders to create the Latin American Health Alliance, and on April 1 2009 opened the first DPH funded Latino treatment facility in Central Massachusetts. In recognition of his work in the community, and his advocacy for culturally sensitive treatment for those suffering from addiction the facility was named The Hector Reyes House in his honor. He was an inspiration to all of us!

Dr. Amaro is Associate Dean of the Bouvé College of Health Sciences at Northeastern University, Distinguished Professor of Health Sciences and of Counseling Psychology in the Bouvé College of Health Sciences and Director of the Institute on Urban Health Research. She received her doctoral degree in psychology from the University of California at Los Angeles in 1982 and was awarded an Honorary Doctoral Degree in Humane Letters by Simmons College in 1994.

Over the past 27 years, Dr. Amaro’s work has focused on improving the connections between public health research and public health practice. Her research has resulted in over 115 scientific publications. Her work has focused on studies of alcohol and drug use and addiction among adolescents and adults; the development and testing of behavioral interventions for HIV/AIDS prevention; substance abuse and mental health treatment for Latina and African American women and incarcerated men; alcohol and drug use among college populations, and behavioral interventions for HIV medications adherence.
She has served on the editorial board of prominent scientific journals such as the American Journal of Public Health, four Institute of Medicine committees, and on review and advisory committees to the National Institutes of Health, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and the Centers for Disease Control. Dr. Amaro’s research has gone well beyond the significant scholarly contributions evident in her published work. She has also been uniquely successful in translating research findings to practice and thereby improve the system of behavioral health care in community-based organizations.

After joining Northeastern in 2001, Dr. Amaro established the Institute on Urban Health Research (IUHR) to promote interdisciplinary and community-based research that leads to a better understanding of the causes of disease and racial and ethnic health disparities, and to develop and test strategies that improve health in urban communities.

John G. O’Brien is the President and CEO of UMass Memorial Health Care, Inc., central Massachusetts’ largest not-for-profit health care delivery system with 1,500 physicians and over 12,500 employees. UMass Memorial is the clinical partner of the University of Massachusetts Medical School.

John began his career at The Cambridge Hospital in 1976 as a financial manager and worked his way through the ranks to become its Chief Executive Officer in 1986. He also served as the Commissioner of Health for the City of Cambridge from 1995-2002. During his tenure as CEO of the Cambridge Health Alliance, he led a team of people that transformed a once ailing small city hospital into a premier academic public health care system.

Since joining UMass Memorial Health Care in September, 2002, John has led a significant turnaround that has brought the UMass Memorial system to be seen as one of the leading academic health care systems in the Northeast. John has recruited and led the team of clinicians and executives that, together, have transformed UMass Memorial in terms of its clinical reputation, its quality and safety record and its overall performance. Since coming to UMass Memorial, John has ensured that each year has been built upon the successes of the previous year and that patient care, fiscal responsibility and margin creation have always driven the strategy of both he and his team.

John is involved in a variety of health advocacy and civic activities locally and nationally, and is the recipient of numerous awards for his work. He is a past member of the American Hospital Association Board of Trustees, and past chair of both the Board of National Association of Public Hospitals and the Board of the Massachusetts Hospital Association.
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