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Latina Health Project Offers Outreach, Educational, Clinical and Counseling Activities

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Three grants from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) (1996–1999) partially funded the health outreach, educational, clinical, and counseling activities of the Latina Health Project of the Planned Parenthood Association of Mercer Area (PPAMA), in Mercer County, N.J.

Called Cuidandote (Take Care of Yourself), the program is the only effort in Mercer County specifically devoted to overcoming the linguistic and cultural barriers that place Latinas at high risk for reproductive health problems such as HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted disease, and cervical and breast cancer.

Key Results

The program is staffed by two full-time Latina staff and is carried out primarily at two sites: Trenton, where more than 60 percent of Mercer County's Latinas live, and Hightstown.

Approximately 1,000 Latinas are served yearly, often through multiple visits. Half of all visits are for PPAMA health services.

Cuidandote has four components:

Community outreach: This component includes presentations by PPAMA's Latina staff at local churches, schools, and community centers or fairs; public service advertisements in buses and on billboards; and an annual free, daylong conference on Latina health issues. PPAMA's partners in its outreach efforts include the Mercer County Hispanic Association, Latinas Unidas, and the YWCA. (See the [Bibliography](#) for details.)

Education: Cuidandote conducts a series of six-week programs in homes, in community centers, and at its Trenton and Hightstown clinics. The programs focus on sex education, HIV/AIDS awareness, communication, self-esteem, negotiating and decision-making skills, nutrition, and parenting techniques.

Clinical services: All of Planned Parenthood's services are provided for Latinas, with a bilingual/bicultural staff member available to interpret and advocate. Services include reproductive health care, family planning, maternity and newborn care, nutritional counseling, social services, and screening for HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, cervical and breast cancer, hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, and other conditions.

Personal counseling: Latina clients meet one-on-one with a Latina social worker to discuss a range of concerns, including HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault, and interpersonal relationships.

Funding

RWJF provided three grants to Planned Parenthood Association of Mercer Area, Inc. totaling \$104,590.

Additional Funding

Additional funding during the grant period came from the New Jersey Department of Health (\$75,000), the Curtis W. McGraw Foundation (\$25,000), the Mary Owen Borden Foundation (\$17,500), the Planned Parenthood Federation of America Prenatal Care Network (\$17,500), the Princeton Area Community Foundation (\$8,500 estimated), and the United Way of Greater Mercer County (\$7,579). RWJF has awarded a renewal grant (ID# 036127), providing support for the Latina Health Project through September 2001.

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