



March 10, 2010

Dear Colleague:

On behalf of the Hispanic Federation, Latino Commission on AIDS, LUCES Coalition and the AIDS Institute, we are writing to ask you to join us in a very important campaign to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS in our communities: Latino HIV Testing Month (LHTM). For the past four years, we have worked to heighten awareness of the importance of HIV testing among Latino New Yorkers, destigmatize AIDS and HIV testing, and draw attention to HIV/AIDS among Latinos as a national issue.

It is estimated that more than 110,000 Latinos are currently living with HIV/AIDS in the United States. Sadly, a recent study found that 45% of Latinos test late for HIV compared to 34.5% of Whites and learn of their HIV status later in the disease process, missing critical opportunities to receive early access to an array of life enhancing health and social services.

HIV/AIDS continues to challenge and test our communities in multiple ways, but there are growing signs of hope. Last year we witnessed a historic coming together of Latino leaders at the National Latino/Hispanic AIDS Leadership Summit. These leaders have helped develop and launch a Latino Hispanic AIDS Action Agenda, with the ultimate goal of reversing HIV/AIDS health disparities; increasing attention paid to Latino HIV/AIDS prevention and health issues; and responding to the HIV/AIDS crisis in the Latino community on a national level. This year we hope to contribute to the Agenda by making LHTM 2010 a hugely successful vehicle that promotes HIV testing in Latino communities and can be replicated nationally.

In order to achieve these goals we will involve HIV service providers, community-based organizations, churches, clinics, etc. We know that together we can make a real difference! Greater unity = greater hope. Naturally, your participation is crucial to our success. Please call us to let us know that we can count on your support [José can be reached at (212) 233-8955, Guillermo at (212) 675-3288 and Wesley at (212) 417-4746]. We hope you will also share with us campaign ideas, recommendations and activities that we may be able to replicate in other parts of the state. Please visit the LHTM webpage at: www.latinohivtesting.org.

Thank you for your continued leadership and service to the Latino community. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely yours,

José Calderón
Hispanic Federation

Guillermo Chacón
Latino Commission on AIDS

Wesley E. Badillo
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