



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**PROGRAM FOR LATINA WOMEN HONORED
BY HHS FOR PROMOTING HEALTHY LIFESTYLES**
Latinas en Acción Received National Award

OMAHA, Neb. – Omaha’s Latinas en Acción program has been chosen as a national Innovation in Prevention Award winner by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for its efforts in promoting healthy lifestyles in its community.

Operated through Douglas County Health Department (DCHD) and Interfaith Health Service with partial financing from the Alegant Catalyst Fund, Latinas en Acción is being recognized for its efforts in promoting healthy lifestyles in Omaha’s emerging Hispanic community. The award was presented today during the Innovation in Prevention Awards Luncheon in Washington, D.C.

The awards are part of President Bush’s ongoing *HealthierUS* initiative and HHS’ continuing focus on highlighting preventive health and recognizing organizations that implement innovative approaches to address chronic diseases and promote healthier lifestyles. DCHD, along with Interfaith Health Service, a coalition of churches and community organizations who serve the health and wellness needs of Southeast Douglas County, has been named as the recipient of the Non-Profit award for its success in promoting healthful habits in immigrant Latina women and their children.

“Latinas en Acción exemplifies a positive, sensitive and effective health care approach,” HHS Secretary Mike Leavitt said. “Their community program designed for Latina women and their children is a common sense approach to creating healthy communities.”

Latinas en Acción is a physical activity/health education program specifically targeted to immigrant Latina women and their children who have limited transportation and speak limited English. Four churches, many within walking distance of the participants’ homes, provide easy access to aerobics classes featuring salsa music and on-site child care with age appropriate health education.

Super Kids Club takes place during the summer, providing school-age children with activities and nutritional education while their mothers exercise. Latina Community Health Workers from the Health Department and Interfaith manage the program and provide a welcome to the participants that only someone who has lived in the culture can understand. The program has demonstrated significant results. During a six-month period in 2006-2007, the group’s average resting heart rate decreased from 78 to 70, the group’s average blood pressure decreased from 120/74 to 114/70, and the total group weight loss was 123 pounds.

“This isn’t only about weight loss. It’s about change and growth in body, mind and spirit,” said Patty Falcone, a community health educator. “What happens in the gym is impressive. What they take away from Latinas en Acción is inspirational.”

The Innovation in Prevention Awards Luncheon was part of the 2007 National Prevention Summit.

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Note: All HHS press releases, fact sheets and other press materials are available at <http://www.hhs.gov/news>.