

# Johns Hopkins Medicine to Establish Center of Excellence for Latino Health

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## Family-Centered Approach to Promote the Health of Latinos in Baltimore

Building on a decade of providing health services to the Latino community, Johns Hopkins Medicine is creating a Center of Excellence for Latino Health, to be based at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center. The Center will emphasize a family-centered multidisciplinary approach to health, and will bridge multiple fields, including medicine, pediatrics, gynecology and obstetrics, and psychiatry. It is scheduled to begin formal operations in August.

Johns Hopkins officials say the Center will focus on enhancing the health of Latinos in Baltimore and beyond by combining coordinated clinical care with advocacy, education and research. The initiative was made possible by a gift from the Aaron and Lillie Straus Foundation and matching funds provided by leaders of Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, The Johns Hopkins Health System and Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center.

"Addressing the health care needs of Latino families in a comprehensive way will be our number one priority," says Tina Cheng, M.D., director of the Center, citing a rapidly growing Latino population in Baltimore, particularly in the area around Johns Hopkins Bayview. Cheng also is professor of pediatrics, and director of the General Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine Division at the medical school. In addition to her leadership role with the Center, Cheng has been named director of pediatrics at Johns Hopkins Bayview, and vice chair of the Department of Pediatrics at the School of Medicine.

An expert on health disparities in minority populations, Cheng will work with Sarah Polk, M.D., Sc.M., M.P.H., assistant professor of pediatrics and adolescent medicine at Hopkins; and Kathleen Page, M.D., and Adriana Andrade, M.D., both assistant professors of medicine and infectious disease specialists at The Johns Hopkins Hospital.

"Partnering with Drs. Polk, Page and Andrade, we plan to enhance our efforts by learning from the Latino community about their health needs, then developing programs to address those needs, incorporating cultural awareness education and training of our health care professionals, and research on health disparities," Cheng says.

Nationwide, according to published data, Latinos comprise the largest minority group among children in the United States—23 percent of them. Compared to the overall U.S. population, Latinos also have reduced access to quality care, limited health literacy, low parental satisfaction with care, greater unmet medical needs, and higher rates of injuries and preventable complications of illness.

With several Latino health programs developed over the past decade, the Johns Hopkins Bayview campus was a logical choice to base a program designed to address such health disparities, Cheng notes. Those programs include a Latino Family Advisory Board and parenting classes (Crianza y Salud) based at Johns Hopkins Bayview's Children's Medical Practice, and a Hispanic community mental health clinic. Also, faculty established the Hopkins Organization for Latino Awareness, or HOLA, with the mission of improving the quality of and access to care for Latino families. Ongoing community work by the Center's faculty includes a bimonthly health column published in a Latino periodical; a Spanish language radio program on El Zol, the largest Latino HIV outreach program in Baltimore; and pro bono provision of care at La Esperanza Center.

"We're very excited and grateful to the Straus Foundation for supporting our work," says Page. "This is prime time for us to figure out how to best serve our Latino families, and what we learn here may be applicable to other areas of the country."