



## News Release



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### **UNM Cancer Center Awarded \$35,000 for Hispanic/Latino Health**

*Check-signing ceremony for Ventanilla de Salud program scheduled for September 20*

**Albuquerque, NM – September 20, 2011** – The Mexican Consulate in Albuquerque has awarded \$35,000 to the University of New Mexico Cancer Center to fund *Ventanilla de Salud* (“Health Window”), an innovative partnership designed to provide New Mexican Hispanics with culturally relevant health information and referrals to low-cost providers. A check-signing ceremony and press conference will take place in the Education Wing of the UNM Cancer Center on Tuesday, September 20, at 11 a.m. Cónsul Mauricio Ibarra Ponce de León will represent the Mexican Consulate in Albuquerque and Cheryl Willman, MD, Director and CEO of the UNM Cancer Center, will represent that institution.

“We are very pleased to continue our partnership with the Mexican Consulate,” said Dr. Willman. “As the Official Cancer Center of New Mexico, the UNM Cancer Center is committed to delivering world-class care to all New Mexicans. This partnership is helping us reach our state’s large and vibrant Hispanic/Latino community to provide potentially life-saving cancer education, prevention and early detection.”

“We are delighted to carry forward *Ventanilla de Salud* (VDS) in New Mexico, and grateful to the UNM Cancer Center for their collaboration,” said Cónsul Ibarra. “This program is critical for the health and well-being of the Mexican and Hispanic/Latino community in New Mexico.”

#### **A track record of success**

*Ventanilla de Salud* is a collaborative effort of the UNM Cancer Center and the Mexican Consulate. Launched at the Mexican Consulate in Albuquerque in 2008, the program provides health education and assistance that is culturally and linguistically appropriate for New Mexico’s diverse Hispanic/Latino community. In 2009, an additional VDS site was added at El Paisano supermarket in Santa Fe, increasing access for Northern New Mexicans.

Ventanilla de Salud *partnership, cont.*

Since *Ventanilla de Salud*'s launch, more than 30,000 New Mexican Hispanics have benefited from potentially life-saving health information. The program focuses on four main areas of disease prevention and health promotion to encourage VDS clients to become active participants in their own health: cancer education and prevention, diabetes management, clinical trials education and tobacco cessation. Of particular note, *Ventanilla de Salud* facilitates the teaching and distribution of a fully translated Spanish version of the National Cancer Institute's "Cancer 101" curriculum, a gold standard of cancer education. The VDS program coordinator and primary educator, Mónica Toquinto, was named the 2010 "Community Health Worker of the Year" by the New Mexico Community Health Workers Association.

The *Ventanilla de Salud* partnership between the UNM Cancer Center and the Mexican Consulate in Albuquerque was one of the earliest programs of its kind in the US. Other VDS sites have since opened at Mexican Consulate locations around the country. *Ventanilla de Salud* in New Mexico remains a model for VDS programs nationwide; it has been recognized twice at international VDS gatherings for its innovation and excellence.

### **Commitment to community partnerships and outreach**

The UNM Cancer Center has a long history of outreach to all of New Mexico's multiethnic and multicultural communities. The Center's Office of Community Partnerships & Cancer Health Disparities, directed by Barbara Damron, PhD, RN, reaches over 12,000 New Mexicans across the state each year through its community service activities, educational programs and community-based participatory research projects. *Ventanilla de Salud* is managed through this office.

"Lowering cancer rates in high-risk populations and reducing cancer health disparities among New Mexico's multicultural and multiethnic communities is an essential part of the UNM Cancer Center's mission," said Dr. Damron. "By providing empowering health information and referrals to low-cost providers, *Ventanilla de Salud* is helping us carry out that mission and make a difference in the Hispanic/Latino community."

And the program has a multiplier effect, Dr. Damron added. "The success of *Ventanilla de Salud* has been integral to our efforts to attract national funding for addressing cancer health disparities in New Mexico," she explained. "We're able to leverage the program's service and achievements to draw in even more resources to further improve the health knowledge – and health – of Hispanic New Mexicans."

### **For more information on *Ventanilla de Salud***

A video on the program is available for viewing at:  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hP\\_4ZURLDn8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hP_4ZURLDn8).

Ventanilla de Salud *partnership, cont.*

### **About the UNM Cancer Center**

The UNM Cancer Center is the Official Cancer Center of New Mexico and the only National Cancer Institute (NCI)-designated cancer center in the state. One of just 66 NCI-designated cancer centers nationwide, the UNM Cancer Center is recognized for its scientific excellence, contributions to cancer research and delivery of medical advances to patients and their families. It is home to 85 board-certified oncology physicians representing every cancer specialty and 127 research scientists hailing from prestigious institutions such as MD Anderson, Johns Hopkins and the Mayo Clinic. The UNM Cancer Center treats more than 65 percent of the adults and virtually all of the children in New Mexico affected by cancer, from every county in the state. In 2010, it provided care to more than 15,800 cancer patients. The Center's research programs are supported by nearly \$60 million annually in federal and private funding. Learn more at <http://cancer.unm.edu>.

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