

“NLM Medline Plus En Español: Reaching and Empowering the Latino Community”

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July 31, 2007

Executive Summary

The “NLM En Espanol: Reaching and Empowering the Latino Community” was a project funded by the National Library of Medicine (NLM). The purpose of the project was to measure the accessibility and acceptability of the Medline Plus en Espanol program and related educational materials i.e., prescription pad and book mark. To achieve this goal, a series of focus groups which include various groups within the Latino population as well as physicians and other providers have been convened. A discussion guide was developed to structure the focus group sessions so that substantive feedback on health literacy, knowledge and accessibility of the web site and use of the web site can be obtained. This information has been analyzed and a series of comments and recommendations have been provided for the further development and possible modification of the marketing materials and web site.

From July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007, seven focus groups were convened including: 1) Latinos age 18-25; 2) Latino older adults; 3) family caregivers/ health care advocates of Latino older persons; 4) Latino monolingual foreign born populations receiving health care in a clinic; 5) health and social service providers in the Latino community; and 6) Latino monolingual/foreign born; and 7) Physicians serving a patient base that is primarily Latino. Participants who were drawn from the Greater East Los Angeles area, ranged in age from 18-85, and represented various Latino ethnic groups including Mexican American, Guatemalan, Puerto Rican, and Salvadorian,

A secondary goal of this project was to develop a tool for assessing the awareness and extent to which the Medline Plus (En Espanol) web site is utilized by physicians serving populations that are primarily Latino. To achieve this goal, a postal survey was developed. The survey contains items that capture physician’s awareness of Medline Plus and Medline Plus (En Espanol) and whether or not they have prescribed it to their patients. The survey also contains information that directs physicians to where they can access the web site. The survey can be utilized by NLM to assess Physicians’ awareness and use of Medline Plus en Espanol, both regionally and nationally.

Taken together the results of the seven focus groups find a highly positive response to the NLM Medline Plus en Espanol program. The participants unanimously felt that it was a program that would benefit the Latino community and needed to be better marketed so that Latinos knew about the program. It was the general consensus that if Latinos knew about the program they would utilize it. Physicians were identified by the majority of focus group participants as key figures to include in the marketing of the program. We assessed physician knowledge of the program and the extent to which they have/ and or would recommend it to their patients, through a focus group. Physicians found the NLM materials accessible and acceptable and felt the program would be major benefit to Latinos in improving their health. As such they recommended that the program be marketed through physician’s offices, pharmacies and community health education programs.