

Salud y Bienestar Program **Reducing Disparities in Diabetes Prevention and Care Services for Older Hispanic Adults**

Diabetes continues to be one of the most serious healthcare burdens afflicting Hispanics, especially Hispanic older adults, in the United States. According to national statistics, Hispanics are almost twice as likely to have diabetes as non-Hispanic whites. Moreover, it is estimated that there are about 2.5 million Hispanics, aged 20 years or older, who have diabetes. Fortunately, government agencies and nonprofit organizations are working together to develop initiatives that are not only culturally- and linguistically-appropriate, but also age-sensitive, in order to reduce the burden of diabetes among Hispanics older adults and their families.

The CDC-funded diabetes initiative *Salud y Bienestar* is one such program. *Salud y Bienestar* is a four-year program designed to improve diabetes prevention and control among Hispanic older adults and their families through the development of culturally- and linguistically-appropriate and age-sensitive educational intervention. This is accomplished by working to close the often-existent cultural, linguistic, and educational gap between Hispanic healthcare users and the healthcare providers who treat them.

The program components directed toward the healthcare user involves focused outreach, education, and enablement at the grassroots level by staff members and *promotores de salud* of community-based organizations who are members of the National Hispanic Council on Aging's (NHCOA's) national network of service providers. The program components aimed at healthcare providers is focused on the development of a state-of-the-art, web-based cultural competence training course designed to engender and enhance culturally-competent practices and attitudes in healthcare providers.

Through addressing the cultural barriers between health care providers and users, *Salud y Bienestar* works on a local level to build up the relationship between providers and users, creating a new relationship marked by increase cultural sensitivity on the part of the provider and a greater level of knowledge of the healthcare system on the part of the user. In doing so, the overall goal of *Salud y Bienestar* is to reduce diabetes health disparities between Hispanic and non-Hispanic adults in the U.S. The program achieves this by delaying the onset of diabetes among high-risk Hispanics; preventing the development of diabetes complications in those with the condition already; and improving the quality of healthcare for Hispanic seniors with diabetes.