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**National Latino/Hispanic AIDS Leadership Summit - Day 1
Community Forum
Latino/Hispanic AIDS Action Agenda
January 29, 2008**

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GUILLERMO CHACON: Thank you so much Dr. Robert Jansen, Director Division of HIV/AIDS prevention for the CDC and we are very proud to have a lot of local government, representatives from NASTA, the Latino Advisory Board and of course the delegation from the CDC.

Moving late but, you know, our apologies but that's reality. I'm going to invite three members of the National Steering Committee, Catalina Sol, the Director of the AIDS program of La Clinica del Pueblo, [applause] a very important provider here in the Washington D.C. area, and Oscar de la O, CEO and President of BIENESTAR, Los Angeles, Southern California and Dennis De Leon. Each of them will do a very brief presentation officially putting to all of you this historic national delegation. And Catalina will begin and will be followed by Oscar and then Dennis and then a quick community forum plenary for all of you to give brief comments and reactions. Un grane enor presentate [misspelled?][Spanish Spoken], Catalina Sol. [Applause]

CATALINA SOL: Buenos dias, Catalina Sol. I have been asked to basically describe how it is we got here after we listened to so many inspiring words of why we are here and why we should be here.

This agenda process has really been a process and I think that's a really key message that we want to transmit here

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because this is a process that did not start today and will not end today. The idea for developing a national agenda occurred around the time that USCA was held in 2006 and there's been a series of different levels of participation that people have been able to participate in from that point until today. There was a face-to-face meeting in New Orleans for the HIV Prevention Leaders Summit. There was small group work around the eight core areas of the agenda that occurred all throughout the summer. There was a second face-to-face meeting at USCA in Palm Springs. There was a call to action that was held around National Latino AIDS Awareness Day in October and there's been a momentum that's been building through the participation of every person that's given their input at various levels until today.

This has been a participatory process with different levels of participation. Some people were involved from the very beginning, some people got involved in the middle, and there are people who have been participating at the end. There's been what feels like thousands of conference calls in which you people come and everyone is welcome. It seems somewhat amazing that what sometimes feels chaotic can lead to something as organized and as wonderful as this today.

And I think that I would like to say two things about our process. One is that there is a momentum that has been built on its own by just saying we need to do something about

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the disproportionate burden that HIV has in our Latino community and that it's had for all of these years. Not only has there been the momentum that brought every one of you here, but also the momentum that has built within some our national partner agencies. And as an example of that I would highlight the work of the executive committee within the CDC and its very early on meetings with some of the members of the steering community and other people in the Latino community to say how can we partner in this together, how can we have an agenda setting process that doesn't just involve community but all of the partners that need to be at the table. And the second thing that I would like to say is that this agenda setting process is only as representative as the people who are involved in it. So thus far what we see is representative of the people who've been involved at different levels.

Hopefully, today everybody has come here with the desire to work on the content, what is our agenda, what will our agenda be for the next couple of years and at what level. I would really hope that everybody who is here despite the fact that the work will really begin after lunch will not be silent. That every single person here will remember that they are in representation of a geographical location, of a population, of an age group, of people from the past and people from the future, and that this agenda will continue to be as representative of the people who we involve in the future in

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discussion to it. And I believe that reaction is better than no action. I also believe that we need to build this agenda on the efforts of the past as well as on a very clear understanding of the nature that we are living in today, the sociopolitical moment that we are living in today. We need to read it correctly. We need to recognize that it is a diverse view and that it will have different impacts at different levels. Let's embrace our diversity and also work united. [Spanish Spoken] Muchos gracias. [Applause]

OSCAR DE LA O: Buenos dias, familia. Me nombre is Oscar de la O. [Spanish Spoken]. For BIENESTAR and for me it has been a privilege to have had discussion with Dennis back in 2006. Our discussion was around, and I'm going to be very honest, about the concern of the void of a Latino national agenda and that the ones that were speaking for our community perhaps were not the best entities to be doing it. That we believed that our voices and our movement should come from our own community and it should be a genuine indigenous movement. [Applause] So we said that the Latino Commission on AIDS, an excellent organization on the East Coast and BIENESTAR on the West Coast, should begin to have conversations about creating that national voice and bringing in other partners. And at the same time we recognized that it wasn't the first time that we were doing this. That since the very beginning of HIV/AIDS there have been many, many efforts to create a national agenda

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and that we cannot ignore or we cannot examine what had been done before and not take the lessons learned so that our new efforts didn't fall to the mistakes or the challenges that were done before. All of us here need to recognize and remember and honor the work that has been done by others in the effort to bring us here.

And I want to acknowledge one person. There are many, many leaders in the audience, but I want to honor someone that I have the utmost respect for, that's Charlene Torreja Ortiz, thank you very much [applause], a woman that has been working in the field for over 25 years and someone that we should be learning from.

We have two challenges as we come together and I love the way our elected officials spoke to us. But many times and those of us that have done advocacy know that you can go into a 15 minute meeting with them and come out elated and thinking they understand, they finally understand the need of my community and things will change. And a month later you're saying what happened? So for us here we have two challenges. The first one is to be very, very clear how we're going to sustain this effort past Wednesday. How we're going to engage not only our elected officials and people in public policy but also our media, our faith based community, our businesses so that they realize the importance of our issue.

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And the second is how do we remain united? You know we're here and we're celebrating our unity but we need to create the mechanism for all of us to feel part of our work. We need to celebrate the diversity that exists here in this room. And we cannot let the diversity separate us or the diversity in our effort to ensure that we see our faces in the document prevent us from taking a more general approach and that the flavor and the needs of our specific community will come when we take that document and we advocate and represent the document. But I am concerned that many times in our effort to be very inclusive it doesn't allow our community to move forward because the true work we all know is done at the local communities. Each of you I am sure is making a great contribution at the local level in creating change. For me at BIENESTAR, an organization that soon will be celebrating 20 years of existence and has been able to create 12 community centers throughout Southern California. We know that we make a difference but our desire is to be part of and partners in the national voice. The great work, the document, will be to influence, educate our local officials. And in some jurisdictions we're very, very fortunate that we have people that are already in partnership with us, that we have really accomplished some of our vision and in Los Angeles we are privileged to have as the Director of the Office of AIDS Programs and Policy not only a friend but a Latino and someone

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that supports us and is here today, Mario Perez. Gracias,
Mario. [Applause]

So we don't have a national voice, we are creating it. The Coalition, the Latino AIDS Coalition, allows us to build that. Let's remember not to allow the perfect to be the enemy of the good. Let's create a good document. Let's remember that it's a fluid document that can be changed, that the flavor and the specifics will be done at the local level or from the point-of-view that your organization is representing. And lastly, for me how I will measure the success of our gathering will not be by a document but will be by our ability to create trust, to create support among each other because that has been one of our biggest challenges that we have had. That we come together, we create a document, an agenda, a policy paper, but we fail to realize that every one who were participating can come to Washington later on and follow up on it. And if we don't know each other's agendas and be able to trust to say oh, if that organization is currently in D.C., then we feel back home a level of trust and support that they're advocating on behalf of all of us. That's going to be very important. So I encourage all of you to get to know each other, to understand that we are all one thing and that is [Spanish Spoken].

[Applause]

DENNIS DE LEON: I also want to recognize Charlene.

Charlene taught me basically that we're so prone in the social

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sciences to talk about our community in terms of deficits. The deficits of the family, the deficits of the gender role, the deficits. And she taught me a very important lesson to see these things as positive things and learn how to use them in a positive way. So we learned a lot when we worked together and I'm really glad she's here.

What happens after we leave here? Several things need to happen. Number one, we're hoping that different localities will actually take the initiative and develop agendas in their own areas. For example, Chicago did it prior to this summit, North Carolina is in the process of doing it right now because while this document talks in terms of access to care, prevention, there's also another document to be written locally about the impact on men who have sex with men, on intravenous drug users. So we hope that that kind of process is initiated and supported on a local basis.

Secondly, we intend to break into groups along the lines of the focus areas in the agenda. So for example, there will be conference calls afterwards among the group that worked with Access to Care and people can change. People can say I'm going to go to Access to Care, I'm going to be involved in prevention, but we hope that the implementation then becomes a discussion and people do a very important thing. They have the guts to prioritize because you can't just take 60 recommendations for research and say you know we're going to do

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it all. You need to prioritize and we really have to begin that process today and continue it into the conference calls in the groups that follow.

And then we need to thirdly use the national gatherings as an opportunity to regroup, to us USCA. I'm sorry Paul if you're here, I don't know where you are, but we need to work with USCA. We need to have at HPLS, use them as opportunities to regroup around some of these critical issues because those become our opportunities to have face-to-face meetings.

So the combination of face-to-face plus conference calls become a way that we're going to sustain this process after the initial release because one key thing also that needs to be happening is we have to, as Oscar mentioned, see beyond our own fences. We all have to become Puerto Rican. We all have to become Cuban. We all have to become Mexican. We all have to become Central American. We have to begin to see the reality through the eyes of different Latino populations some of which have unique issues and some of which feel left out of the national dialogue. So if we can do that over the next two years we'll have accomplished a lot to where every Latino in the nation sees what's happening in Puerto Rico as their issue, sees what's happening at the U.S./Mexico border as their issue, sees what's happening in Washington D.C. with the Central American community as their issue. We have to begin to embrace the issues of other communities and to see it that way.

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What happens next after this period? We hope to reconvene this group or a group to assess how we did with this agenda in January 2010. That'll be two years, we'll have two years of seeing how well we prioritized, seeing how well we actually were able to coales [misspelled?] around different actions, seeing how well we were able to work together nationally because that's very important. So we have to begin now putting our eyes ahead to 2010 because unless we do that, unless we are able to come together again and measure our progress, you know it's going to be just a gathering. It sounds like a long way, way away, but trust me it's around the corner.

And we'll have a new President of whatever party and we hope to basically promote and key whatever priorities you make with the new administration. And we hope to continue and we have to continue our partnerships with federal agencies. Now we've enjoyed a great deal of support from the CDC. We need the same kind of support from the Office of AIDS Research. We need the same kind of support from HRSA, Health Resources and Systems Administration. We need the same kind of support from SAMSA, we need the same kind of partnership that we've enjoyed with CDC to happen with other agencies. So not limiting our view to the most obvious target that people think about is the CDC because you see they are more pervasive in the that kind of community. And they represent prevention, which is one of our

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major goals, but healthcare has to be a major goal from this point forward. Too many of our people are dying at much greater rates. The death rate, by my estimation, I know the Department of Health in D.C. calculates it differently, but by measure it's probably the highest in the nation. Second is Puerto Rico where people are dying at three times the national rate and we have to pay attention to that. That's important. And we should make it our issues, also.

So I've outlined a process for going forward so you know we're not just launching into a void. We have to become media savvy because we're going to have to spread this agenda, or pieces of it, through the media and quite frankly we're going to be controversial. We're talking about very tough issue, immigration and migration for starts. I mean these are not easy issues for our elected officials or even the governmental bureaucracies, governmental leaders to digest. So we hope that we can kind of begin to maintain our eyes on the prize and not be afraid of advancing difficult issues in a smart way, because if you do it in a smart way, you're going to get people to buy into it. If you do it in a stupid way, people are going to say you're stupid, you know. So we just have to keep our eye on that.

And I'm very happy that we have time this afternoon to discuss, I hope we have some time right now to get people's reaction to all the different speeches you heard this morning

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and begin to share some of your observations about the process. We have a short period, we had hoped for an hour, but I think we have half an hour to 15 minutes.

GUILLERMO CHACON: Thank you. Unidos! Unidos! Unidos!

GROUP: Unidos!

GUILLERMO CHACON: Unidos!

GROUP: Unidos!

GUILLERMO CHACON: United we can!

GROUP: We can!

GUILLERMO CHACON: United!

GROUP: We can!

ALBERTO SANTANA: What we're going to do now is we're going to open both mikes up. So for people to provide feedback for this morning's panelists as well as what you think about what the three people who were just up here said and any other messages or anything that hasn't been included, anything that hasn't been said here's the opportunity to say that. I ask folks to be brief, 15 to 30 seconds. I will time you and we will cut you off so that we can give other people the opportunity to speak.

GUILLERMO CHACON: It's free of charge, don't be shy.

PATRICIA CANASA: Hi, Guillermo. This is Patricia Canasa from Southern Latina. I am a member of the steering committee and I think this has been a great, great event. I really celebrate the work that everybody has done in the South

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Central, competence course and exchanges that we have had and obviously the promotion and the big support that we have gotten from CDC to go ahead with this.

My addition to all the conversation that we have had is capacity building. And I think that we need to start to look into capacity building as a culturally competent piece. We have responded all these times to all these offers and opportunities for application that they speak about boxes. Boxes that we need to develop that are very similar and very alike across the United States and it's time to say no. Latino's need a very special capacity building process. We need to enhance our capacity to serve our population and we need to start to look at our networks. As larger networks everybody who serves a Latino in the United States needs to learn how to serve those Latinos including culturally competency and quality of care. Thank you.

ALBERTO SANTANA: We're going with Megalina.

MEGALINA LION: Good morning. My name is Megalina Lion and I want to congratulate you on all the work that you have done. This is really an impressive gathering. I'm really quite humbled by all the people who were here.

What I'd like to say is that I think with all the work that's been done on developing this agenda that it would be important to develop a strategy to be able to influence this Presidential election that's coming up not after the President

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has been elected but in the process, through the nomination process up until the conventions because I think it's then that you have a better opportunity to get these folks to commit to addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic among the Latino community in the United States. So I'd like to see some focus on during the breakout sessions on strategies to begin to influence the political process. Thank you. [Applause]

GUILLERMO CHACON: Thank you.

ALBERTO SANTANA: Thank you and I believe that tomorrow afternoon after we get through the recommendations and the prioritizations, there's going to be an opportunity to talk about strategy and I invite you to please join us so that we can have that discussion because I think that's very important.

MALE SPEAKER: [Inaudible] from Oakland, California. First of all I want to congratulate the organizers. For us who have been in the struggle for many, many, many years it's really wonderful to see that those efforts still continue. So I applaud those efforts and also know that we've been here before.

What I'd like to bring also into the room, it's important that we unite but we also need to bring our own voices into the room because I think that if we lose the passion that we used to have around this issue, then we cannot move the masses that we represent. Because if we have anything to our advantages are we have the masses. You just have to see

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the May 1st event, you have to see all those and how to link all those issues together because healthcare, education, housing all those things go across the board and impacts individuals living with HIV as well as impacts the prevention efforts that we can do effectively in our community. So I'd like to bring that voice back into the room, that passion and also remind some of us that if the passion's not there, then it's time for us to step aside and let the new ones come in. Thank you.

[Applause]

FEMALE SPEAKER: [Spanish Spoken] HIV prevention, gracias, si. [Applause]

SOCRATES COBB: Buenos dias, familia unos dia. My name is Socrates Cobb and I'm out of the Bronx, New York. First, let me thank the spearheads, Mr. Dennis De Lion and Mr. Oscar de la O for kind of getting together and bringing everyone else together. Leadership is real important in this.

What I want to talk about real quick is the rising number of the Latinos that we're trying to kind of organize into this national agenda, we need to just take a step back and take a look at our formerly incarcerated and our incarcerated Latino population which in the next two or three years actually coming home back to our communities HIV infected or negative when they came in and positive when they're going out. It's a big number that we have now. Can you imagine the influx or what's going to happen once they come back home? I'm probably

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talking out loud right now or just thinking off the top of my head, but it's something that we need to take a quick look at it or hard look at. Thank you. [Applause]

GUILLERMO CHACON: Thank you. We're going to take only the people that are standing up. No, no, no. Stay right there. Only the people there because that will make us go right on time. We go here.

JOSE ORTIEZ: Hi, my name is Jose Ortiez from Washington, D.C. I have two points. I have the same point of Megalina Lion that we need to do something before November. We have the results of the agenda, try to check with the people who are running for the presidency. And the second thing is I would like to see involved another national organization such as ENMAC, NAPRA, National [inaudible], LULAC and other huge organizations that we have in the Washington D.C. area. Thank you. [Applause]

GUILLERMO CHACON: Okay, very good. Bambe?
[misspelled?]

FEMALE SPEAKER: [Spanish Spoken] Muchos gracias, por favor. [Applause]

GUILLERMO CHACON: Gracias, Bambe.

RAPHAEL PONSET: Good morning. I'm Raphael Ponset from New York Health, Office of Health. I just wanted to kind of thank Dr. Rios because you mentioned about homophobia. I think it's important to really continue that discussion among Latinos

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and I think the other part I wanted to make a point is on the prevention issues, they are mentioned about bisexuality, they are mentioned about MSM, but I think as a gay man there's a gay culture that we need to kind of talk about. How much are gay identities are important in order to create a system to help other young gay men to feel proud of themselves. I think when we use the term MSM we completely throw away many, many years the gay men fight for being recognized. Thank you. [Applause]

GUILLERMO CHACON: Thank you.

RICHARD ZELDER: Good morning. Richard Zelder. I'm the President and Executive Director of the Wallace and Morias [misspelled?] Project in Los Angeles. I was looking at some of the recommendations and I just wanted to provide some kind of input. We heard some testimony or invocations this morning from two incredible Reverends. And I think that that's what's really missing and part of our HIV prevention as far as Latinos. In Los Angeles, we are working with the Pentecostal, the Evangelical, the Protestant, the Roman Catholic community thanks to a grant through the County Office of AIDS Programs and Policy. And I think it's extremely important not to write off faith-based community. I think they're there. They're waiting. They want something culturally competent. Something that they can go back to their congregations and work with. So we can keep that in mind and second of all because I didn't hear any recognition, I'm so proud to be an Angelino and

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because of the tremendous work that we have done, I want to give thanks and acknowledge one of the highest-ranking Latino Directors of AIDS Programs. I don't know if you recognize him, but Mario Perez from the Office of AIDS Programs and Policy from the county of Los Angeles. Give him a round of applause for Mario Perez. [Applause]

GUILLERMO CHACON: Thank you.

DAVID WINGATE: My name is David Wingate and I am representing the Momentum Project in New York City. My concern is the MICA clients, the mentally ill clinically addicted clients that are HIV positive. There is not enough housing for this population on the local, on the state or definitely the national level. And I bring this to you hopefully as a point that we can cover throughout maybe not even the summit but once we leave here this is something that we really have to be aware of. All of the other ancillary services really begin to take effect once a person has stable housing; someplace that they can really call home and I would truly bring to all of our attention that there is a need, a pressing urgency for this in the Latino community. I service a population that is predominantly, let's say 37-percent of my clients are MICA clients and it's sad to say that the majority of them do not have a place to stay. SROs are not homes. Thank you.

[Applause]

GUILLERMO CHACON: Thank you.

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ENGRECO REYA: My name is Engreco Reya and I'm representing Tri-County Community Health in North Carolina originally from Brooklyn, so I understand some of the strategies that are actually being done from one culture shock to another. And right now I'm hoping there are some strategies I can work on with the incarcerated immigration in which I'm working with now. What can I do? What steps I need to take beyond because they're being lost in the system and being put aside. And the Latinos also in the migrant camps that I also do outreach work for and in the nursing field as well for preventive education and allowing them to be educated some sort of way for this disease that's actually spreading. So I'm hoping there are strategies in which I can endure and bring back in the sticks that I'm living in.

GUILLERMO CHACON: Beautiful. I love Raleigh. I was there last week. Thank you. Thank you so much. We have a couple of minutes. We are going to go into lunch and then we are going to go to eight different work groups. Throughout the eight work groups you're going to have facilitators, note takers, recording the whole nine yards because we need to do it right, but we need to raise the three important issues throughout the overreaching national topics that we have identified, Puerto Rico, District of Columbia, U.S. Virgin Islands. Also, very important we need to put out tomorrow, as Alberto was saying, a 100 days timeline to put together an

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impressive approach to present our agenda to the candidates, whoever they will be, probably we will know after Super Tuesday, but the bottom line we need to also to work very, very hard to make visible what we are going to develop today and tomorrow is a national agenda, national agenda. Attention shoppers. Attention shoppers. Thank you. Very important. We need to go back to our cities and our states and develop a very specific population oriented agenda. Very, very important because as we go with the mentality to develop a local agenda through the work groups this afternoon, it's not going to click and we must click in order to move forward.

Also, I want to take this opportunity to really recognize Abbott Laboratories for a tremendous contribution for this summit. Number two I want to recognize Oren Schurr, the CEO in the Governmental Relations person is here. We're very proud and a very close friend of Denny's and I Deborah and I would really like to recognize NIH who also supports us. Also, I'd like to recognize the Gill Foundation, but most important is each of us. The last 40 seconds are for Alberto, one second.

ALBERTO SANTANA: Lunch.

[END RECORDING]

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