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

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GUILLERMO CHACON: Let me introduce and please welcome a good friend of all of us, Guadalupe Pacheco, a Special Assistant to the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Minority Health. [Applause]

GUADALUPE PACHECO, M.S.W.: Buenos dias. Good afternoon, buenas tardes, pardon. This is a surprise to me but I have the honor of introducing my boss, Dr. Garth Graham, and he's Assistant Deputy Secretary Office of Minority Health and I've been with OMH since October of 1994 and so I've seen a lot of directors come and go. [Laughter] But when Dr. Graham came on board, he just brought in some energy, a new vision for our office and it's really been an honor to have worked with him the past almost five years, I think, when he got appointed and he's always been there for me. He's always been there for folks with HIV/AIDS and the whole movement. And he's been very supported of Dennis Rivera and his staff and his project. So he's going to provide you with some words of wisdom and some visionary comments. So here's Dr. Graham. [Applause]

GARTH GRAHAM, M.D., M.P.H.: Thank you Guadalupe. We'll work on the visionary part as we move forward. Welcome folks, I want to thank you all. You know when I came in here I said that wow, interestingly enough everybody is here, let me put it that way. The whole entire family is here so I'm glad that we could get together. I want to say a couple of things.

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First, I want to recognize my colleagues who have been hand and arm in this fight, in this movement, as Guadalupe was pointing out, my colleagues from the Department of Health and Human Services. Chris Bates, who you all know very well. [Applause] Friar who represents the Office of Women's Health and obviously the rest of my staff from the Office of Minority Health heading all the way there in the back who have been working with us. Like I said to you before we've been working through this and we will continue to work with you.

I want to say a couple of things first. The other person that I want to recognize before I move forward, I want to recognize Dennis and his staff. Dennis is kind of like a good high school friend to me because I feel like I owe him money but he is somebody who I will always have a tremendous amount of respect for because he brings his heart, his soul and his mind as well as his own vision in terms of what he thinks we need to accomplish and we're in full agreement with Dennis.

I want to say two things. One, Guadalupe talked about the movement that we're in around HIV/AIDS in terms not just from a Latino perspective but an overall country. I can tell you right now we're at a pivotal point. We're not making the progress that we would like to make. We have not seen the numbers that we would all liked to have seen. When we look back in terms of the past 15 to 20 years we've seen the disparity persist. But I think that is of grave concern not

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only to us in terms of the fellow government, but I know it's of grave concern to you. I'll tell you one thing in terms of vision. We can't treat our way out of this disease. We know right now that we have effective treatment but that's not going to be the solution. We can potentially educate our way out of the disease. We can potentially come together in terms of how we move forward, but I'm going to tell you that right now it's going to take our collective efforts. It's going to take us working with Dennis. It's going to take many of you all continuing to work with Dennis. It's going to take, not just Dennis' efforts, not just the Latino Commissions efforts; it's going to take efforts from the public sector. It's going to take efforts from the private sector. It's going to take efforts from the religious community. We're going to have to fight issues around stigma. We're going to have to realize that this is a disease that affects our brothers, our sisters, our aunts, uncles, our mothers and fathers as well as our little baby boys and girls.

So this is really truly a community effort. So from our perspective we will continue to work from the Office of Minority Health standpoint, from the Department of Health and Human Services standpoint, from all of our colleagues here who are representative of that overall team. We're going to work with you. But we need for you to continue to put forward that energy that you all have been doing over the past couple of

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years. We're going to need you to pull in that community that is here, also that community that is not here, as I mentioned before because as I articulated earlier this is not just a Latino problem. This is not just an African American problem. This is a true American problem overall. And like I said to you earlier we haven't seen the progress that as Americans we would have liked to have seen so it's going to take a true effort on behalf of folks on the right, left, middle, folks in the back, folks in the front, folks sitting in the pews, folks sitting in the congregation, folks sitting in the board rooms, folks sitting in the classrooms, folks sitting in the community based organizations as well as folks sitting right, to the left and to the right of Dennis. And Dennis, we're to the right of you and we're to the left of you. But most of importantly we're behind you in your overall efforts to tackle this issue as it pertains to the American community overall.

So thank you, thank you, thank you. Thanks, Guadalupe. You all know Guadalupe's been doing this for years and will continue many, many, many years, many years. He's still a young guy. So thanks Guadalupe for all that you do, Dr. Beato and all our other colleagues that have been working with us on this particular issue. [Applause]

GUILLERMO CHACON: Thank you Dr. Garth. And we're very happy, as I mentioned to you and honor and pleased. I just want to really ask you for a tremendous round of applause for

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Kaiser Family is going to be doing a web cast. It's going to put us in the worldwide universe. Thank you Kaiser. This is very, very important. And again it's a tremendous approach of partnership, collaboration and reaching but in somebody that embodies all of that in partnership, collaboration, vision and commitment is a very good friend, as Dr. Garth was saying, for many of us, Christopher Bates, Acting Director of Office of HIV/AIDS Policy, Department of Health and Human Services, was the first person that registered for this summit. I just wanted to tell you that. We were meeting and we gave away the forms and he came back to me and said put me on, sign me on. And I think in his service as Acting Director of the Office of AIDS Policy he has been bringing leadership. He has been bringing a tremendous energy. Right now it's a powerful national community movement promoting testing and awareness. And I really want you to please, please welcome our friend and hermano, Christopher Bates. [Applause]

CHRISTOPHER BATES, M.P.A.: They told me I had eight minutes and I prepared a 30 minute speech, so get prepared to suffer me.

I'd like to bring greetings from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Secretary and particularly my unit, the Office of Public Health and Science. I'd further like to extend to you greetings from the hundreds of employees and colleagues of mine in the department who work

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as your partners every day doing this work. And I want to commend all of you, and I repeat that. I want to commend all of you for staying in the struggle, for coming to this struggle, for being in this struggle and dealing with this issue we call HIV and AIDS. This has been a nightmare for not only America; this has been a nightmare for this globe, this planet. And at some point, hopefully, in our lifetimes we will see an end to this surge.

I'd like to thank the summit organizers and especially for the opportunity to speak to you here today. I'm one of those people in the department who gets an opportunity probably as much as the secretary to go out and talk both at the very local, local level sitting on the back steps of churches, synagogues and mosques and talking to people and having a dialogue and learning and listening about where we are in this epidemic and how it's impacting people. And I thank God for that opportunity.

This body that has been convened here today in our nation's capital has come together to acknowledge the challenge that's before you called HIV and AIDS. With Hispanic population being just over 14-percent of the U.S. and the population of folks infected with HIV from this community being well over 20-percent, this is not an easy place to sit. All of you should be squirming in your seats because we have great challenges before us. There have been 70,000 Hispanic Latino

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deaths since this epidemic began. And there are now 200,000 Hispanic Latinos in America living with this disease. This is no picnic.

I am told that you have come to Washington to meet and summit, to herald your disparate leadership into an alliance of leadership to change the course of this epidemic for the Hispanic Latino community. This better not be a lie. This better be a solid and as told and a truthful truth [applause]. I am told you are here to hone leadership alliance to chart a new course of action, to foil the HIV epidemic among Spanish speaking people.

In this conference cultural differences will serve to strengthen you not divide. National origins will serve to inspire you not to stifle you. And the common enemy of HIV and AIDS must become the focus of your collective efforts. It must not be a distraction and you must not, you must not, you must not, you must not look back. [Applause]

In Proverbs 29:18 it says where there is no vision the people perish. Clearly the organizers of this conference, this summit, were inspired by vision. And you have come because you understand the importance and the power of collective strength and unity. Each of you must understand the power of this unity and the power that this unity has to move a mountain. You have come here to move that mountain.

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So you may ask what is this mountain, who is this mountain and what is it to be moved? I challenge you to say that mountain is every individual's fear in America, every individual who is afraid to take the HIV test. We must move that mountain. For every individual who is afraid to reveal their status to their loved ones, their family and in their community we must move that mountain. And for every, every person working in this epidemic who does not respect the rights and the dignity of everybody impacted by this epidemic we must move that mountain! [Applause]

Martin Luther King said that the ultimate measure of a man or a woman is not where he or she stands in a moment of comfort but where he or she stands at a time of challenge and controversy. Addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic in America is definitely still a challenge and it is still a controversy. I call on you to lead. I call on you to lead. I call on you to lead and as leaders change the course of this epidemic.

I say take with you from this meeting this opportunity to set an agenda, to commit to the agenda and to see that agenda through because I won't come back here again in five years and start this conversation anew. I won't come back for this conversation. I come back for that celebration.

[Applause]

In closing, this is your moment. Time will not wait for you. You must act now. We, and I put me in the mix with

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you as my family, we must unite in common. We must rally around the beliefs that we share. We must rally around our collective struggle to respond to this epidemic in a way that brings dignity, comfort and renewal. We must bury this epidemic not people.

For a moment I'd like to take a pause and acknowledge all the people who have died from HIV and AIDS. I'd like for you to join me in that moment of silence. [Pause]

Thank you. We are great people. This is a great country. You are fabulous and thank you for your attention. [Applause]

GUILLERMO CHACON: Thank you Chris. Thank you so much. And I think the theme is very clear. It's about unity, united we can and our time is now. We really must do what we need to do to move forward as a community, as a united community to respond to this crisis. A very, very powerful speech by Chris Bates, thank you Chris.

And also we need to remind ourselves that this is fighting with the global pandemic and it's important to know that the transnational issues related to HIV/AIDS are dealt day after day by many, many entities, many cities, many angels across the nation but somebody that also has been on the front line fighting the fight and bringing talent and bringing ambition and energy is Dr. Christina Beato, Deputy Director of Pan American Health Organization, PAHO. And Dr. Beato has been

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an important voice in bringing an important perspective and energy to really respond to continent wide, to the Caribbean and so on and we are very, very delighted and happy to have such an important Deputy Director of Pan American Health Organization. Dr. Beato, please join us. [Applause]

CHRISTINA BEATO, M.D.: Muchos gracias, that's really more than I deserve but when I got here I felt like I was coming home. All these great old friends it felt like coming back home.

For those of you that may not know I have an incredibly great history with Garth and Christopher and Guadalupe, Bonnie here, Scott, all kinds of people. And Dennis, you've put an extraordinary group of people together and I want to say thank you. Miguel, I don't forget you because Miguel has always been, and Luigi, I mean I could just go on and on. But it's wonderful to be surrounded by friends and it's wonderful to have so many committed people and what a success just by seeing how many of you are in this room because many times we get people together and we do not have this kind of energy. So thank you very much for caring and for being here with us.

I am going to switch hats a little bit going from the domestic agenda, which is indeed very critical and important, to more of a hemispheric agenda in the global sense. We are all very proud of all of the great strides that have been made in Africa and we continue to want to make strides there, but

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for our Hispanic Latino community I think it's going to be hard for us to really deal with this epidemic here in the United States at home if we don't understand the cultures of our countries or a lot of our immigrants or a lot of our parents and grandparents came from and how migration is affecting not just our communities here in the United States but also our home countries from previous families. So I think that's very important.

We all seem to have some sort of a basic knowledge of this epidemic existing in the Caribbean and in some countries in Central America and in Brazil but let me tell you it's happening in rural mountain areas. It's happening in the indigenous population. We have great, great disparities in this hemisphere. As you can imagine it is the most disparate hemisphere in the world. And it's mostly in our indigenous population and in our poor populations where that disparity exists.

Migrants are also very much at risk. We have a real issue not just in our border but in many borders in this hemisphere. And they're not very dissimilar from the issues that we're facing here in the border United States. Issues associated with poverty, lack of education, stigma, discrimination, lack of access to basic healthcare, much more lack of access to antiretroviral therapies and the lack of awareness of the issue of testing, of knowing your status and

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then the stigma of discriminatory practices unfortunately in many of our communities still in people that are homophobic and people that don't accept. Accept the people in your community as brothers and sisters.

I always had a saying in folks that worked with me. You don't look at the gender and you don't look at the color of the person. You see the human being. You see the face and the eyes. And I used to say that a lot to the medical students that I taught. I don't think you have any business in medicine if you just can't look at the person. The packaging people come in, you know that packaging changes and it can become very mangled and it can be burned up and it gets very old, very, very old, hopefully. But it's the human being and that dignity and that respect that each individual deserves does not change from what community you come from or what country you happen to be living in.

Twenty-five years ago this disease was first detected and it continues to spread in our Americas. The community response is the only hope we really have. And that means governments, faith based leaders, private enterprises, how we deal with this in the work place but most importantly how we deal with it in our own families and in our own communities. We need to eliminate the stigma of HIV, period. We need to empower women to negotiate sex and safe sex if that's what they need. We need to do that. [Applause]

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We also need to be aware, and I'm a firm believer on the ABC model as people who work with me, but for centuries we haven't been able to control teenagers in many ways or in things and we need to start educating not just teenagers but families in general because teenagers being teenagers are not really going to tell you the parents, or the aunts and uncles or the grandparents everything that they're up to. And one of the biggest problems of why they're more at risk, not just because of their age, but because of the association with alcohol abuse and with drug use. And because of the association, especially young women, with the issue of violence and domestic violence and I cannot tell you specifically in the Americas most of the teenage pregnancy you're seeing in Guatemala, in Nicaragua and in Honduras 12, 13 and 14 year old girls are not teenage boys. They're men over 21, many of them their own family members.

So I cannot tell you the depth of the barriers that we're facing but I have no doubt I wouldn't be standing here today and doing the work I've been doing or continue to do and will continue if I did not believe that this can be stopped. And the key has to be prevention, knowing your status, acceptance of our fellow human beings and honesty in human relationships. I don't care if it's gay men, lesbian women, transgender or heterosexual couple you need to be honest with your partner. [Applause]

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I want to talk about and I think most of you know the challenge here in our communities in the United States. It's not just housing. It's not just the issue of prison systems. It's also the issue of people having hope. And that hope means education and ability to find a job and most of all an ability to be accepted. And I don't think that without those key ingredients any project or any amount of money is going to change how this disease is going to develop. And I think it encumbers on us as leaders to really bring in everybody. I think faith based is a critical issue. I remember when we started and Chris was instrumental and Miguel, one of the first things I did when I got to the Department of Health and Human Services and found with women because we have incredibly strong women leaders and most people think about them in faith based institutions come together they have an incredible role to play. If we follow a loving god, which I believe most of us in faith do follow, then you have to love and respect your fellow human being. That means compassion. That means no discrimination and that means no stigma. And I really cannot emphasize how critical that is before you start working on any technical projects or you start working on any kind of programs. We need to have that as an ingredient that we cannot give up.

For women specifically, and I tend to be a little biased, I wonder why, please any young girl that you see ask

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about domestic violence and abuse. Please, if you don't ask, you never give permission for that young person to be able to really share what's happening in her life.

And there is absolutely no excuse why in this hemisphere any baby is born with HIV. With a treatment that costs less than \$1 a day, no baby should be born with HIV.

[Applause]

And in order to be honest yourselves about where you stand, take the test. Take the test. I really get amazed, though. Young people, oh, but we're a couple. Well, how long have you been going out with him? Two weeks. That's a long-term relationship for some kids, believe it or not. Oh, gee honey, that doesn't work that way. Where's that full time commitment? I'm sorry, unless you have a very, very, very long-term full time commitment, I'm talking years and years and years, you better make sure the love glove gets worn.

You know I used to be able to speak a lot before Chris and we used to have this race going on who would give better speeches and I got to say today I'm stepping down and Christopher gets the award because the passion he spoke with, the conviction he spoke with is what I wish for every heart in this room today. More importantly, for everybody that's making decisions at levels that affect the people that we love and care about. God bless you all and thank you for having me here today. [Applause]

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GUILLERMO CHACON: Thank you, thank you Dr. Beato. I just want to quickly, housekeeping and the binder on top three is all the rooms assignments where we will be going at 1:15. Enjoy the lunch [inaudible].

[END RECORDING]