B. PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project Name: Use of a Lay Health Advisor Model to bring Sexual and Reproductive Justice to Latinos in Milwaukee
HWPP Project Number: 2011D-53

Without exceeding this one (1) page, briefly describe your project and partnership.

Purpose: Latino families face significant barriers to information about, and access to, preventive reproductive and sexual health care. Institutional and social barriers, personal health beliefs, and a lack of culturally competent services can place Latinos at greater risk for adverse health outcomes. The primary purpose of this project is to: a) evaluate the implementation of a Lay Health Advisor Model that utilizes trained Latino Lay Health Advisors to improve sexual and reproductive health outcomes for Latino youth and adults in Milwaukee; and b) conduct a formative evaluation that assists with sustainability and replication of the model statewide. Activities are designed to increase access to culturally specific education and support, increase knowledge and communication among family members, and reduce the likelihood of unplanned pregnancies, STIs and cancer through increased intent/use of contraceptive methods and STD, HIV, and cancer prevention screening.

Plan: The project will: a) convene a partnership committee and a Community Advisory Board to oversee project elements; b) conduct a formative phase in Year 1, with interviews and focus groups with members of the Latino community, to refine the Reproductive Justice and Sexual Health Latino Home Health Party model; c) Revise and implement the Reproductive Justice and Sexual Health Home Health Party model, with the goal of increasing knowledge, increasing access, and changing attitudes and health beliefs regarding reproductive and sexual health; d) evaluate the implementation to examine replication and sustainability, and disseminate results.

Partnership: Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin, Inc. (PPWI) has been working with partners in the Latino community in Milwaukee, Dane, Waukesha, Racine and Kenosha counties to implement a home health party model that addresses reproductive and sexual health. Dr. Lechuga approached PPWI to conduct an evaluation of the home health party model that assesses outcomes and replicability. The Milwaukee community partners, CORE/El Centro Proyecto Salud, Holy Angels Old Catholic Church, and the Council for the Spanish Speaking have been working with PPWI for several years.

Evaluation: This project evaluates a model that has “evolved organically” with Latinos developing and implementing the model. The partners will evaluate partnership objectives (decision-making, leveraging of resources, etc.) as well as the project’s outcome measures including the training outcomes of Lay Health Advisors, recruitment of hosts, number of home health parties requested by each host, changes in health attitudes, knowledge and behavior exhibited by participants, and implementation fidelity of the home health party model. The evaluation will include formative evaluation, process monitoring and outcome evaluation.

Sustainability: This project identifies the strengths and possible replication of a culturally competent, community-driven Lay Health Advisor model to increase access, understanding and use of preventive health measures that can reduce reproductive and sexual health disparities among Latinos in Wisconsin. This model is based in community input and use of Lay Health Advisors to conduct outreach and education, and provides a cost effective method for effective communication about reproductive and sexual health. Partners will seek resources within public health systems and community foundations to sustain and expand the project.

Dissemination: The project proposes to disseminate the project and the knowledge gained as follows: 1) Two Latino community events, with community members/families, organizations, and others; 2) Dr. Lechuga and Maria Barker will prepare a written report to be disseminated to HWPP, other academics interested in Latino health, Latino community organizations and partners, and through the Latino media; and 3) The partners will meet with stakeholders, such as the Teen Pregnancy Collaborative Fund of United Way of Greater Milwaukee, to identify interested partners for replication.