

The logo for the Ryan White ACTION Campaign. It features a red square with the text "Ryan White" in white at the top, "action" in a large, bold, white, italicized font in the middle, and "Campaign" in white at the bottom.

AIDS CARE AND TREATMENT
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**LATINO COMMUNITY CALLS FOR INCREASED FUNDING AND
TIMELY REAUTHORIZATION OF RYAN WHITE CARE ACT**

Latino AIDS Awareness Day Town Hall Event
Highlights Growing Impact of HIV/AIDS On Hispanics

LOS ANGELES, CA (October 14, 2005)— Leaders of Los Angeles' Latino community today urged Congress to renew the Ryan White CARE Act, which they called a "critical safety net" for providing care and treatment to HIV/AIDS patients in their community. Members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and local government leaders joined local health care providers, service agencies and patients at a "town hall" meeting hosted by The Ryan White ACTION Campaign and Bienestar Human Services Inc. as part of this week's Latino AIDS Awareness Day activities.

Representative Hilda Solís, Chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus' Health Task Force, noted during the town hall: "It is important that Congress pass a comprehensive and fully funded Ryan White CARE Act as soon as possible. After Medicaid, the Ryan White CARE Act is the largest payer of care and treatment services for AIDS patients in the U.S. The CARE Act provides a critical safety net for the Latino community, who are disproportionately represented among the uninsured and underinsured."

Representative Grace Napolitano, Chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus commented, "The reauthorization of the Ryan White Act is critically important to the Hispanic community. It's our opportunity to really help Latinos who are suffering from this devastating illness."

"The Ryan White ACTION Campaign was delighted to co-host this important Town Hall meeting held in Los Angeles with Bienestar Human Services," said Dr. Gene Copello, Executive Director of The AIDS Institute and a spokesperson for The Ryan White ACTION Campaign. "As an effort related to National Latino AIDS Awareness Day," Copello continued, "the Town Hall meeting brought consumers, providers, elected officials and concerned community members together to discuss the importance of the Ryan White CARE Act to the Latino community." He concluded: "Clearly, the discussion confirmed the need for an improved and better funded Ryan White CARE Act to serve the needs of uninsured and underinsured people living with HIV/AIDS."

Each year, the Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resource Emergency (CARE) Act provides care and treatment for more than half a million uninsured and underinsured individuals living with HIV/AIDS. The law expired on Sept. 30 and Congress has not yet introduced a bill to renew it. The Latino community represents the largest category of uninsured persons nationwide, and an estimated 20 percent of those served by the CARE Act. In fact, Latinos have the second-highest AIDS case rate of any racial/ethnic group in the U.S. According to 2003 statistics, Latinos make up 13.9 percent of

the population, yet accounted for 19.8 percent of U.S. AIDS cases, and 43.3 percent of those reported in California. AIDS is the sixth leading cause of death among Latinos between the ages of 25 and 34.

“With more Latinos and Latinas living with AIDS in the City of Los Angeles than any other ethnic group, reauthorization of a strong and responsive CARE Act is more important than ever to this community, said Stephen Simon, AIDS Coordinator for the City of Los Angeles.

“Securing adequate federal funding for HIV/AIDS is an issue of great impact to the Latino community,” said Oscar De La O, Executive Director for Bienestar Human Services. “Securing policies that allow the provision of comprehensive services is just as important,” he added.

Juan Carlos Ricaurte, MD, Medical Director of the AIDS Healthcare Foundation Hollywood Healthcare Center commented: “Latinos and other minorities living with HIV and AIDS face barriers to care because of lack of insurance, cultural and linguistic insensitivities in the healthcare system, or simple lack of information. Increased funding for AIDS care and treatment is required to respond to the growing crisis among Latino communities.”

National Latino AIDS Awareness Day, October 15, is a national day of awareness and prevention against HIV and AIDS in the Latino community. It salutes the more than 76,000 Latino AIDS survivors in the United States and the efforts of people living with HIV and AIDS, volunteers and professionals who combat AIDS each day.

About the Ryan White ACTION Campaign (www.ryanwhiteaction.org)

The Ryan White ACTION Campaign is a national campaign designed to raise awareness about the importance of the Ryan White CARE Act, which expired on September 30th, and why it needs to be reauthorized and adequately funded. Launched by a coalition of medical providers and HIV/AIDS advocacy organizations, including The AIDS Institute, American Academy of HIV Medicine, HIV Medicine Association, and National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors, the campaign includes the involvement of a number of prominent advocates on HIV/AIDS, including Jeanne White-Ginder and former Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher.

About Bienestar Human Services, Inc. (www.bienestar.org)

Bienestar Human Services is a Latino-based non-profit organization committed to enhancing the health and well-being of the Latino community through community education, prevention, mobilization, advocacy, and the provision of direct social support services.

Media Notes: To request interviews with any of the participants, contact Jennifer N. Devlin at 703-876-1714 or Jennifer.devlin@cox.net.

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