

**Primary Contact:** Angelina Nasthas (gcmail@mc.duke.edu)

Rebecca Zasloff is co-leader on this project. Dr. Nosayaba Osazuwa-Peters is the mentor.

**Project Title:** LIDERES: Latino Initiative for Delivering Education and Raising Engagement on Screening for Head and Neck Cancer

**Project Summary:**

In partnership with El Centro Hispano, a nonprofit organization that provides support, resources, and advocacy to uplift the Hispanic/Latino community in North Carolina, this project will educate and empower health workers and key members in the Latino community to raise awareness about head and neck cancer prevention and early detection. The initiative includes a series of workshops to equip health promoters with the necessary knowledge and tools to educate the Latinx community, conduct screenings, and encourage early intervention. The project will culminate departmental participation in a Health Promoter Forum hosted by El Centro Hispano, offering free head and neck cancer screening and educational resources to engage the Latino community.

**Targeted Population:**

Primary Audience: This project will target individuals who participate in El Centro Hispano's "*Academia de Promotores*", a training program that equips Latino community members to become effective health promoters. These participants are both those who are receiving health education and resources as well as those who are training to become community health workers themselves, helping to spread health awareness and connect others to resources in their own communities.

Secondary Audience: The secondary audience includes at-risk members of the Latino community in Durham, North Carolina, who have limited knowledge about head and neck cancer prevention, early detection, and risk factors. This particular community faces barriers, such as language and access to healthcare, making it difficult to understand the importance of screenings and lifestyle changes in head and neck cancer prevention.

**Methods To Be Used:**

This project includes three sessions on head and neck cancer, covering its types, causes, symptoms, risk factors (like tobacco, alcohol, and HPV), and prevention methods (screenings, self-checks, lifestyle changes). Guest speakers, including oncologists, medical professionals, and cancer survivors, will provide expertise and advice tailored to the Latino community.

Community health promoters who complete the training will earn certification from El Centro Hispano and Duke's Department of Head & Neck Surgery. They will receive a toolkit with educational materials and screening guidelines to assist in outreach. A Health Promoter Forum in

September will feature workshops and a resource table with materials on prevention, screening, and services. Health promoters will also encourage attendees to sign up for future screenings and establish communication networks (via email or WhatsApp) for continued support and resource sharing. Additionally, they will be encouraged to organize local health days and outreach events.

**Expected Outcome:**

The primary outcome of this project is to measure an increase in knowledge regarding head and neck cancer within the Latino community health promoters who attend sessions, as assessed through pre- and post-surveys. Community health promoters will be trained to educate individuals about the risks, symptoms, and prevention of the disease, with an emphasis on early detection and lifestyle changes. The pre/post surveys will help quantify the improvement in understanding and are expected to show a significant shift in awareness, which will ultimately lead to greater participation in screenings and head and neck cancer-related conversations.

**Expected Impact on Community Health & Knowledge of Head and Neck Cancer:**

The project is expected to have a significant community health impact by improving early detection rates and reducing the incidence of advanced-stage head and neck cancer by reducing stigma and improving attitude toward cancer screenings. This will be achieved through increased adoption of preventive behaviors, regular screenings, and early consultations. Additionally, the initiative will deepen the understanding of head and neck cancer prevention, especially within underserved populations and will build long-term capacity for cancer education and health advocacy within the Latino community.

**Estimated Project Cost: \$1,000**

The estimated costs will primarily cover curriculum development and training materials (\$450) to ensure that health promoters receive high-quality educational resources and a toolkit to support their outreach efforts after training. Event logistics and venue expenses (\$350) will also be a significant part of the budget, funding an accessible venue at El Centro Hispano with necessary equipment and refreshments to create a welcoming environment for the forum, encouraging better attendance and engagement. Community outreach and promotion will account for a smaller portion of the budget (\$100), covering monetary incentives (gift cards) to encourage participation in the program. The remaining funds (\$100) will be allocated to follow-up data collection and support to ensure long-term community impact.

**This project does not have any existing sources of funding and is not expected to receive additional sources of funding.**