Group That Empowers Latinos Is Awarded a $2.5M HIV Grant

The federal SAMHSA funding helps minorities at risk for HIV and substance use disorders.

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A Houston-based organization that empowers Latinos has been awarded a $2.5 million federal grant to help minorities at risk for HIV and substance use. Specifically, the prevention and counseling division of the Association for the Advancement of Mexican Americans (AAMA) will receive $500,000 a year for five years from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), a Department of Health and Human Services agency.

The grant is part of SAMHSA's Minority AIDS Initiative (MAI): Substance Use Disorder Treatment for Racial/Ethical Minority Populations at High Risk for HIV/AIDS. You can read details about SAMHSA's MAI grants here.

"Houston is one of the most diverse cities in the country," said AAMA board member and University of Houston professor Luis Torres, in an AAMA press release. "It is also a city with great health inequities and disparities in access to high-quality, evidence-based, culturally grounded treatment. This is especially true for members of racial and ethnic minority groups who struggle with substance use disorders and are at high risk for HIV. AAMA has a long history of engaging and working with these communities and is poised to make a significant impact in expanding access to treatment."

According to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in 2017 gay and bisexual men made up about 66% of all HIV diagnoses in the United States; in the same year, Latinos accounted for 26% of new diagnoses.

AAMA's mission is "to inspire and empower Latinos to pursue their potential and achieve success. Our efforts are focused in the areas of education, workforce readiness and leadership development." Learn more at AAMA.org.

In related news, read about the city of Houston's "I am Life" campaign to educate the LGBT community about pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and treatment as prevention (TasP), which is also known as undetectable equals untransmittable, or U=U. And don't miss the article "The South Suffers a Lack of HIV Care Providers."

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