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**NIH AWARDS TWO MIAMI-BASED UNIVERSITIES \$6.8 MILLION GRANT TO
ADDRESS HEALTH ISSUES IN HIGH-RISK LATINO COMMUNITIES**

The UM School of Nursing and Health Studies and FIU Robert Stempel College of Public Health and Social Work partnership shows continued excellence in health disparities research

CORAL GABLES, Fla. (October 12, 2017) – Together, the University of Miami (UM) and Florida International University (FIU) have been awarded \$6.8 million from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to lead a newly-funded Center for Latino Health Research Opportunities, called CLaRO. The award comes from NIH’s National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) under its Specialized Centers for Health Disparities Research program. This award is the culmination and recognition of the successful 10-year collaboration of two NIMHD Centers of Excellence at UM and FIU: The Center of Excellence for Health Disparities Research: El Centro, at the UM School of Nursing and Health Studies, and the Center for Research on U.S. Latino HIV/AIDS and Drug Abuse: CRUSADA, at FIU’s Robert Stempel College of Public Health and Social Work.

“The ‘O’ in CLaRO stands for opportunity, and that is very fitting because we will have a unique opportunity to simultaneously advance the science of health disparities, the well-being of our community, and the careers of young researchers” said Victoria Behar Mitrani, professor and associate dean for research at the UM School of Nursing and Health Studies. “It is an exciting and promising next phase of the work of our UM and FIU Centers of Excellence.”

CLaRO’s two principal investigators, Mitrani and Mario De La Rosa, social work professor for FIU’s Robert Stempel College of Public Health & Social Work, director of CRUSADA and co-director of FIU’s Health Inequities and Disparities Program, will work together to lead a center that unites the intellectual and material resources of UM, FIU and community agencies

throughout Miami-Dade to advance health equity for vulnerable Latino groups and advances the science of health disparities.

“Through our previous work together, we are well-versed in the community’s needs,” said De La Rosa, “Thoughtful interventions are at the core of our efforts.”

The cooperative agreement with NIH funds CLaRO to research intervention approaches to address substance abuse, psychological trauma and HIV/AIDS among highly vulnerable Latino communities in Miami, including sexual and gender minorities, farmworkers, immigrants and economically disadvantaged and underserved groups. Researchers from UM’s Miller School of Medicine and School of Education and Human Development will collaborate on CLaRO research as well.

Over the next five years, CLaRO will conduct two research projects to test interventions previously developed in the two existing [NIMHD Centers of Excellence](#), El Centro and CRUSADA, that will now be adapted for vulnerable Latino groups. These interventions capitalize on the impact of Latino family bonds as a key protective factor. UM’s Daniel Santisteban, professor of educational and psychological studies at the School of Education and Human Development, will conduct research on a computer-assisted family intervention to treat self-harming behaviors and prevent suicide among adolescent Latinas and sexual/gender minority youth. FIU researcher Patria Rojas, assistant professor at the Department of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention at FIU’s Robert Stempel College of Public Health and Social Work, will lead “HOMBRES de Familia,” a father-son intervention to prevent HIV, substance abuse and violence among migrant farmworkers. UM’s Guillermo “Willy” Prado, dean of the Graduate School and professor of public health sciences at the Miller School of Medicine, will lead a pilot projects program with seed funding for early-career researchers at UM to build research programs on the CLaRO’s theme.

Community partners will continue to play a role in sharing and guiding CLaRO’s research agenda and priorities in underserved Latino communities, as well as advance neighborhood capacity-building to promote healthy behaviors. Community efforts will be led by CLaRO’s Community Engagement and Dissemination Core, led by FIU researcher Elena Bastida, chair of the Department of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention at FIU Robert Stempel College of Public Health and Social Work.

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ABOUT THE SCHOOL OF NURSING & HEALTH STUDIES

Established in 1948 as South Florida's first collegiate nursing program, the School of Nursing and Health Studies at the University of Miami has a distinguished tradition of preparing nurses to provide compassionate quality care to local, national and international communities. Nursing students at the undergraduate and graduate levels are educated by renowned scholars, and exposed to a broad range of clinical experiences and cutting-edge research. Since its inception, the program has provided diverse educational opportunities for over 6,000 nursing professionals at the undergraduate, masters and doctoral levels. The curriculum includes degree programs leading to the BSN, MSN, DNP and PhD degrees, as well as the BSHS (Bachelor of Science in Health Science) and BSPH (Bachelor of Science in Public Health). The School is also home to one of the nation's first, 5-story/41,000 sq. ft. Simulation Hospitals. For more information, please visit the school website at www.miami.edu/sonhs.

ABOUT FIU'S ROBERT STEMPEL COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL WORK

The Robert Stempel College of Public Health and Social Work inspires groundbreaking discoveries through interdisciplinary education in public health, dietetics and nutrition and social work from within a rigorous academic environment at Florida International University (FIU). The college's three fully accredited disciplines blend course work, research and practice so students develop the skills they need to become future leaders. With an expansive network of more than 8,500 alumni, Stempel College is strengthening communities and influencing policy that promotes healthy lives for all—especially the most underserved.

Stempel College is located at FIU, 11200 SW Eighth St., AHC5, Miami. For more information, visit stempel.fiu.edu, email stempel@fiu.edu or call 305-348-4903.

ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

The [University of Miami's](http://www.miami.edu) mission is to educate and nurture students, to create knowledge and to provide service to our community and beyond. Committed to excellence and proud of our diversity of our University family, we strive to develop future leaders of our nation and the world.

ABOUT FIU

Florida International University is classified by Carnegie as a "R1: Doctoral Universities - Highest Research Activity" and recognized as a Carnegie Community Engaged university. It is a public research university with [colleges and schools](#) that offer [bachelor's, master's and doctoral](#) programs in fields such as business, engineering, computer science, international relations, architecture, law and medicine. As one of South Florida's anchor institutions, FIU contributes almost \$9 billion each year to the local economy. The university received honors in all categories of The Chronicle of Higher Education's "2017 Great Colleges to work for." FIU graduates are consistently among the highest paid college graduates in Florida and are among the leaders of public and private organizations throughout South Florida. FIU is Worlds Ahead in finding solutions to the most challenging problems of our time. FIU emphasizes research as a major component of its mission with [multiple state-of-the-art research facilities](#) including the [Wall of Wind Research and Testing Facility](#), [FIU's Medina Aquarius Program](#) and the [Advanced Materials Engineering Research Institute](#). FIU has awarded more than 220,000 degrees and enrolls more than 54,000 students in two campuses and centers including FIU Downtown on Brickell, FIU@I-75, the Miami Beach Urban Studios, and Tianjin, China. FIU also supports artistic and cultural engagement through its three museums: [Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum](#), the [Wolfsonian-FIU](#), and the [Jewish Museum of Florida-FIU](#). FIU is a member of [Conference USA](#) and more than 400 student-athletes participating in 18 sports. For more information about FIU, visit <http://www.fiu.edu/>.