

# **Script – Broadcast – Working to overcome obstacles facing the Hispanic population**

## **INTRO**

Graciela Botello needed a new doctor. Her long-time physician was retiring soon, and the 77-year-old Mendota, Illinois, resident was looking for someone who could not only address her pulmonary fibrosis and other health issues, but who could speak her language – Spanish.

She found that in Maritza Estrada-O'Brien, MD, who is not only Hispanic, but quite familiar with the struggles many of her Hispanic patients experience when it comes to their well-being. Dr. Estrada-O'Brien works at OSF HealthCare Saint Paul Medical Center in Mendota, a small town in northern Illinois, where 26% of its 7,000 residents are Hispanic. The hospital has five Hispanic physicians and nurse practitioners, some of whom were born and raised in Mendota.

## **((SOT))**

"We're fortunate enough that we have a lot of Spanish speaking providers, and I do think that providers who practice in a community should reflect the population in this area – we do have a higher percentage of Spanish speaking patients. I think that has us better equipped to take care of the population. Language barriers as simple as making a phone call to make an appointment can be challenging. Getting your results by being more understanding of your medical conditions is much harder if you don't understand the primary language that your provider speaks. So just being able to speak even a little bit of Spanish is better for patients because they have a better understanding of their medical conditions before they become a problem." (:45)

## **VO**

But a language barrier is just the tip of the iceberg. Dr. Estrada-O'Brien is well versed in the challenges facing those of Hispanic heritage. In fact, she researched many of the issues during her residency program and has been involved in many projects regarding disparities among Hispanics since becoming a physician.

She says Latinos or the Hispanic population are at a disadvantage from a health equity standpoint, from a health status standpoint, more so because of access and disparities in health care. It puts Latinos at higher risk for a lower health status. It's mostly because of social determinants of health – access, quality of health care, insurance coverage, language, immigration status, all of which present obstacles with attaining health care."

## **TAG**

Among common health issues for the Hispanic population are diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol, which can lead to heart disease, cancer and stroke. For example, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Hispanics are 50% more likely to die from diabetes or liver disease than non-Hispanic whites. And the number of Hispanics who have died from Alzheimer's disease has risen in the past decade. Genetics, diet, obesity and Type 2 diabetes are thought to be significant risk factors for the spike in Alzheimer's cases.

Experts say problems arise due to a combination of factors including diet, lifestyle and genetics. And if these problems aren't addressed early, they can cause severe complications down the road. That's why early detection and screenings, such as cancer and bone density, are so important.