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Health conference targets Hispanic population

By Caryn Wilson
DEMOCRAT WRITER

Nearly 12,500 Hispanic residents live in Leon County, and on Friday community organizations are working together to hold the 2010 Hispanic Health Care Conference. It's designed to address issues facing the Hispanic community and health care.

Dr. Jose Rodriguez, the conference's keynote speaker and the medical director at Neighborhood Health Services, said the event is about community education.

"In an area like this one that does not have a large Hispanic population, there are patients and people everywhere that can learn from this event," Rodriguez said.

Rodriguez, also an associate professor at Florida State University's College of Medicine, said insurability, being comfortable with health-care providers and disease prevalence are three issues the conference plans to tackle.

"The Big Bend area has about a 5 percent Hispanic population, however 10 percent of our patients are Hispanic. Most are uninsured," Rodriguez said. "Many people in the community only want to speak to a Spanish-speaking provider as a comfort factor."

The conference is hosted by Tallahassee Hispanic/Latino Professionals & Entrepreneurs (THLPE: "THaLPe") and speakers will include Florida Surgeon General Ana Viamonte-Ros, Ernest Lamadrid, the director of HIV/AIDS services in Alachua County and Monica Hayes, the assistant director of the minority health office in the Florida Department of Health.

Alex Bello, the president of THLPE and a consultant for the Department of Health bureau of HIV/Aids, said, "The conference will bring together the public and private sector, with a focus on obesity, HIV/AIDS, the digital divide, careers in health care and health care information technology."

IF YOU GO:

What: 2010 Hispanic Health Care Conference

When: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Friday

Where: Neighborhood Health Services, 438 W. Brevard St

For more information: <http://hhc.thlpe.org/register>

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