

# Support Statements

## The Bienvenido Program

---

I am pleased to have this opportunity to express my support and appreciation for the work of the Northeastern Center and Gilberto Pérez through their Bienvenido training program. The Bienvenido instruction is an innovative and effective tool to increase awareness about addiction and mental health in the rapidly-increasing Latino community in Indiana.

Bienvenido helps clinicians with strategies that let Latinos know efficacious treatment for addiction and mental health needs is available in safe and confidential settings. The program teaches treatment providers methods to help engage Latino clients in treatment and to show them ways to live a healthy lifestyle.

The Northeastern Center hosts an annual Latino Behavioral Health Summit during which tenets of the Bienvenido Program are shared with participants from around the country. The Northeastern Center, through Gilberto Pérez and the Bienvenido Program, have been a valuable partner with the Division of Mental Health and Addiction and treatment providers statewide in giving a voice of hope to understand an underserved community.

**John Viernes Jr.**

**Deputy Director**

**Indiana Family & Social Services Administration**

**Division of Mental Health and Addiction**

The Bienvenido Program is an innovative and empowering curriculum-based program geared towards helping Latinos obtain the necessary skills and knowledge to cope with the challenges of integrating in a new and sometimes adverse environment. Focusing on a person's own goals, The Bienvenido Program supports personal growth, self-mastery and awareness for dealing with distress and emotional conflict. I commend the developers for offering a valuable tool set that can aid Latinos in preventing and managing their mental health and substance abuse problems.

**Margarita Alegría,**

**Professor of Psychology at Harvard Medical School**

**Director of the Center for Multicultural Mental Health Research at Cambridge Health Alliance**

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, I am excited to support the Northeastern Center's Bienvenido Program in Indiana in their proposal to train behavioral health professionals, community lay leaders, and Latino immigrants in the Bienvenido curriculum. Because Indiana is a rural state, it can be challenging to obtain this kind of mental health training for behavioral and mental health lay professionals. Thus one of the many goals of this project will provide education about mental health to clients and enhance quality of life which introduces the potential of hope for a better standard of living which supports the health of the communities.

Sincerely,

**Josephine Hughes, MSW, LCSW**  
**Executive Director**

The National Latino Behavioral Health Association (NLBHA) enthusiastically supports the work of the Northeastern Center (NEC) Bienvenido Program, developed by Gilberto Perez, Jr. MSW, ACSW and supported by the administration of NEC. Recent research has shown that recent Latino immigrants in Fresno, Los Angeles and other areas have been found to be healthier than their second, third and subsequent generation counterparts in America both in terms of physical and behavioral health. Second, third and later generation immigrants from Mexico and other parts of Latin American in the United States have higher rates of mental health diagnosis, substance use and abuse and unhealthy physical conditions than first generation immigrants.

The Bienvenido Program is a forward thinking approach to helping recent immigrants with their transition to life in the United States. In addition to providing education about American systems and morés, Bienvenido helps people examine their own transitions and those of their children, thus intervening at a critical time in people's lives—as they adapt and attempt to guide their children adapt to life in a country different from their country of origin. Participants learn to embrace the healthy parts of their culture of origin and those of the culture in which they have chosen to live.

The Bienvenido Program is one of very few prevention and early intervention models especially in that it targets recent Latino immigrants. The early outcomes of Bienvenido participants, in terms of reduced likelihood of substance abuse, domestic violence and reduced parent-child conflict, are highly favorable. Thus the program is unique both in its approach and in its initial achievements.

NLBHA congratulates Bienvenido for the success it already has enjoyed and looks forward to other accomplishments to come. ¡Bien hecho, Bienvenido!

**C. H. Hank Balderrama, MSW, LICSW**  
**Executive Director, NLBHA**