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National study on Latinos' health enrolls Hialeah residents

By YUDY PINEIRO
ypineiro@MiamiHerald.com

The University of Miami has spearheaded a study about health and disease issues in Hispanic and Latino populations across the United States, and Hialeah has been chosen as one of the sample areas.

The goal of the study is to examine health and risk factors for chronic disease in Latinos and compare the groups of Hispanics such as Cubans in Miami to Puerto Ricans in New York and Mexicans in San Diego.

"It's kind of like taking a picture of the health status of Latinos," said Brendaly Rodriguez, recruitment and outreach manager for the UM's Study of Latinos.

Rodriguez visited the Hialeah City Council meeting on April 28 to inform elected officials and the handful of residents present about the study.

She said researchers plan to recruit Hialeah residents who live anywhere from Okeechobee Road north to West 49th Street.

Among the other cities that will be polled in the next three years: Miami, the Bronx, Chicago and San Diego. They are looking for 18,000 people nationwide.

Hialeah participants will be selected at random. They will receive a letter by Saturday with information about the study. Then researchers will call or visit them to determine eligibility.

Those chosen will visit a clinic for a thorough examination. They will then be followed for two years, receiving frequent phone calls interviewing them about their health.

So far in Miami-Dade, 4,124 houses have been visited and 598 participants have been chosen from outside the Hialeah area.

Rodriguez hopes spreading the word about the study will convince people this is for research only.

"Nobody is going to try to sell them anything," she said.

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