



**Contact:**

Mark Ezzell  
NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund  
919-733-4022 (work)

M. Zulayka Santiago  
El Pueblo, Inc.  
(919) 835-1525 (work)  
(919) 368-2721 (cell)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **“NO FUMO!”**

### **NC’s Latino Community Unites to Say ‘No’ to Tobacco**

**(GREENSBORO, NC)** – The state’s Latino community is waging a war against youth tobacco use. In North Carolina, almost 18 percent of Hispanic middle school students reported that they were current tobacco users — a startling statistic that Javier Sanchez, a motivational speaker with Youth to Youth International, will shed light on to attendees at the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Latino Issues Forum, set for **Saturday, May 21** at **UNC-Greensboro’s Elliott University Center Auditorium**.

The Latino Issues Forum is sponsored by El Pueblo, Inc. and the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF) as part of El Pueblo’s No Fumo Youth Leadership Project — a three-year initiative to prevent the use of tobacco and increase cessation among Latino youth in North Carolina.

“The Latino Issues Forum is a key event which showcases the Hispanic community’s commitment to making the lives of their youth tobacco-free,” said Mark Ezzell, HWTF’s grassroots coordinator. “It is especially important that we continue to reach young people and let them know that tobacco products are harmful to their bodies.”

**WHO:** \*Javier Sanchez, motivational speaker, Youth to Youth International.

**WHAT:** 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Latino Issues Forum

**WHERE:** UNC-Greensboro’s Elliott University Center Auditorium, 1000 Spring Garden Road, off College Avenue.

**WHEN:** Saturday, May 21, 2005 at 3:30 p.m.

\*Editor’s Note: Mr. Sanchez will be available for interviews on Saturday, May 21. Contact Zulayka Santiago at 919-368-2721.

**ABOUT THE NC HEALTH AND WELLNESS TRUST FUND:**

The NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund makes North Carolina stronger, both physically and economically, by funding programs that promote preventive health. Created by the General Assembly in 2000 to allocate a portion of North Carolina’s share of the national tobacco settlement, HWTF has invested \$127 million to support preventive health initiatives and \$78 million to fund a prescription drug assistance program for seniors. For more information, please visit [www.hwtf.org](http://www.hwtf.org).

**ABOUT EL PUEBLO:**

Since 1994, El Pueblo has become a leading Latino statewide organization dedicated to strengthening the NC Latino community. El Pueblo reaches its mission through programs that are organized by and for the community and include: Leadership Development, Civic Participation, Health, Youth, Culture, Advocacy, Education, and Training.

## Latino Tobacco Facts at a Glance

- About 35.5 percent of Hispanics in NC are smokers.<sup>1</sup>
- According to the 2002 National Health Interview Survey, 16.7 percent of Hispanic adults in the United States are current smokers (22.7percent of men and 10.8percent of women).<sup>2</sup>
- According to the 2003 NC Youth Tobacco Survey, 17.7 percent of Hispanic middle school students reported that they were current tobacco users. Tobacco use among Hispanic middle school students was higher than White middle school students (14.1percent) and Black middle school students (13.7 percent).<sup>3</sup>
- Latinos/Hispanics (41.4 percent) are almost twice as likely as whites (23.4 percent) to work in the service industry or labor sector, where they are least likely to be protected from secondhand smoke.<sup>4</sup>
- Currently, 18.4 percent of Hispanic high school students smoke. Current smoking rates for Hispanic high school students are higher than smoking rates for African-American students, but lower than the rates of White students. The overall current smoking rate for high school students is 21.9 percent.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2002 Tobacco Info. & Prevention NC Highlights

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "Cigarette Smoking Among Adults - United States, 2002," *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)*, May 28, 2004 53(20); 427-431.  
<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/wk/mm5320.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> N.C. Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch-Surveillance and Evaluation Team, "2003 N.C. Youth Tobacco Survey."

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, March 2000. *Table 10.1: Occupation of the Employed Civilian Population 16 Years and Over by Sex, Hispanic Origin, and Race: March 2000.*  
<http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/hispanic/p20-535/tab10-1.txt>

<sup>5</sup> CDC, "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance – United States, 2003, MMWR 53 (SS-2), May 21, 2004.  
<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/SS/SS5302.pdf>.