

***Salud America!*: Using Research, a Policy Contribution Model and Multimedia Communications to Fuel Obesity Prevention in Latino Communities**

More than 39% of Latino children ages 2-19 are overweight or obese, compared to almost 32% of all U.S. children. These high rates of obesity among Latino children are particularly alarming because Latino children currently comprise 22% of all U.S. youth—and are expected to grow to comprise 30% of the youth population by 2025.

In 2007, Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez, with funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, launched *Salud America!* The RWJF Research Network to Prevent Obesity Among Latino Children to mobilize sectors of society (parents, community leaders, researchers, policymakers and media) to collaborate to reduce and prevent obesity among Latino children.

From 2007-2012, the network recruited more than 2,000 members and fueled them with innovative video, online and e-communications. The network also made many research advancements:

- Developed the first-ever Latino Childhood Obesity Research Priority Agenda;
- Funded 20 grantee researchers who made novel findings;
- Developed research briefs on Latino nutrition, physical activity and media/marketing issues.
- Developed the “Policy Contribution Spectrum” model

The network has continued its strong research presence and grown to more than 10,000 members. In 2014, the network unveiled the *Salud America! Growing Healthy Change* online platform to increase self- and collective efficacy to create healthy change through peer modeling—framed through the network’s evidence-based Policy Contribution Spectrum—and tools to help individuals interested in promoting change to connect with each other and with opportunities for concerted local actions in their communities. The platform activates people to create healthy lifestyle policy change to prevent and reduce Latino childhood obesity in the areas of: active play, active spaces, better food in the neighborhood, healthier school snacks, healthier marketing, and sugary drinks. The platform serves as a clearinghouse for news, research and evidence-based informational products, ongoing prevention policies, dynamic role model stories and videos, and other resources to prevent childhood obesity.

Dr. Ramirez will discuss research outcomes, lessons learned, and best practices for reversing the obesity epidemic among Latino children.