



October 14, 2021

Road Map Bulletin 8: A Lookback on Latinx Heritage Month

Happy Thursday, Mount Sinai Community –

As many of you know, tomorrow marks the end of Latinx Heritage Month, so today we are dedicating the *Bulletin* to reflecting on Latinx identity and the community overall at Mount Sinai.

We are both proudly Afro-Latinx, and co-author **Shawn Lee** is also co-lead for the **Heritage of Latinx Alliance (HOLA)** Employee Resource Group. For those who don't know, [employee resource groups](#)—commonly referred to as “ERGs”—are groups of employees united by common goals, interests, and characteristics that are designed to create an atmosphere where all employees, faculty, and students feel they belong. The Heritage of Latinx Alliance ERG aims to foster an environment where all are recognized and represented across all levels of the organization. The group seeks to engage all employees who wish to gain a greater understanding of Hispanic/Latinx cultures and the issues that impact the Hispanic/Latinx community.

Shawn sat down with HOLA co-lead **Frank Pabon**, Director of Operations at the Central Billing Office, and other HOLA members including **Kelley Gonzalez**, Training Instructor, Information Technology, and **Elizabeth Diaz**, Senior Project Coordinator for the Office for Diversity and Inclusion to discuss what Latinx Heritage Month means to the Mount Sinai community.



From left: Frank Pabon, Kelley Gonzalez, and Elizabeth Diaz

For Shawn, Frank, Kelley, and Elizabeth, celebrating Latinx Heritage Month at Mount Sinai is centered on one main principle: inclusion. This means celebrating Mount Sinai’s vibrant Latinx communities, showing Latinx colleagues and patients that they have a place within the larger Mount Sinai family, **and** showcasing the Latinx community’s own, internal diversity. It also means that everyone, regardless of your ethnicity or background, is invited and included in the events and HOLA itself.

As Frank told the group, the goal was to show Latinx individuals that “we matter to Mount Sinai, regardless of where you are in the organization—**from leadership to entry-level staff, Mount Sinai is celebrating your culture and background.**”



To achieve this goal, Shawn, Frank, Kelley, and Elizabeth—along with many of their colleagues—worked to brainstorm, plan, and execute events to celebrate Latinx Heritage Month, from conversations with Latinx leaders to a Virtual Healing Circle (scheduled for tomorrow) hosted in partnership with the Asian Resource Network. One event featured a conversation with Kelley about her 14-year journey at Mount Sinai, growing from an entry-level Central Billing Office staffer to a leader in the IT Department.

This conversation had the highest attendance of any HOLA event—ever—which Frank attributed to the fact that staff members “saw themselves and their journey in Kelley’s story.” For her part, Kelley said she saw the event as a way to “show everyone that regardless of where you start or what your background is, we can all do great things.”

It’s events like these, according to Shawn, that have helped the Corporate Services Center Chapter of HOLA grow from a “group of eight people who invited me for free pizza” to a community with over 100 members. Now, the group is, in Shawn’s words, **“showing people there’s more than just your day-to-day duties at Mount Sinai—there’s community.”**

HOLA’s work has expanded beyond the celebration of Latinx culture—they’ve hosted everything from financial literacy seminars to nature hikes. They’ve even created a wellness-focused walking and running challenge. Next, they’re looking to bolster inclusivity by working hand-in-hand with other ERGs to examine intersectionality with groups from Mount Sinai military veterans to those living with disabilities.



Across all of this work, HOLA's focus remains on making Mount Sinai an inclusive place to work and receive care. As Frank told us, Latinx Heritage Month and HOLA's work overall is about "getting to know your neighbor" because "we have patients and colleagues from all cultures and ethnicities—and we serve our patients better and work together better when we understand each other's background."

For Elizabeth, all of these efforts connect back to the [Road Map for Action to Address Racism](#). She told us that "for an organization that wants to be an anti-racist institution, the focus has to be keeping an open mind—it's a work in progress, of course, but great things are happening, and HOLA is a shining example."

To learn more about the work HOLA and other ERGs do every day, join us at an upcoming event:

A Conversation With Leaders: MSHS Policy on Responding to Racist Patient Behavior— Join this event, sponsored by the Mount Sinai Queens Diversity Council on **Tuesday, October 19, from noon to 1 pm**, to discuss Mount Sinai's policy on responding to racist patient behavior (the topic of our September 30 [Bulletin](#)). Click [here](#) to join.

Chats for Change: Do You Have to Speak Spanish to Be Latinx?—In honor of Latinx Heritage month, on **Tuesday, October 19, from noon to 1 pm**, explore the intersectionality of Spanish language/culture and interactions between physicians and patients in the United States. In this discussion, we will take a closer look at the treatment of Latinx patients in clinical settings and provide tools on how to be a better advocate for patients from different backgrounds. Click [here](#) to register.

Patient Experience Forum: "Equity and Patient Experience: Let's Keep Talking About It!" — Join **Arthur Gianelli**, Chief Transformation Officer of the Mount Sinai Health System and President, Mount Sinai Morningside, and **Erica Rubinstein**, Vice President of Service Excellence and Patient Experience on **Tuesday, October 26, at 3 pm** for a deep dive exploring how we can sustain equitable experiences for all our patients. [Join via Zoom](#), and enter passcode **23719**.

[Road Map for Action](#)

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