



**Riverside County
Public Health**

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Perris doctor to be featured speaker Friday at Riverside event kicking off Latino Health Awareness Month

Dr. Keyla Monterrey has a standard message that she gives her Spanish-speaking patients whenever she sees their struggles with obesity, diabetes and other chronic illnesses brought on by poor eating habits, including the consumption of too much fast food.

“I tell them they have to eat like their grandpas did. They never ate out and cooked all their meals at home. There was no fast food,” said Monterrey, “In some cases the second- and third-generation Latinos don’t even cook at home. Everything is fast food.”

Dr. Monterrey, will be the featured speaker Friday (Sept. 19) at the Latino Health Awareness Month event taking place at the Riverside Hispanic Seventh Day Adventist Church, 3625 Ottawa Ave., from 8 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Some of the activities include free basic health screenings, healthy cookbook giveaway, physical activity, healthy food demonstration, and participants will be able to visit Dr. Monterrey at the “Ask the Doctor” booth.

Dr. Monterrey was recently named a Champion Physician in the statewide Champions for Change initiative which is sponsoring the event along with the Riverside County Department of Public Health. Friday’s event is free.

Dr. Monterrey, who was born and studied medicine in Nicaragua, said she has a special place in her heart for her Spanish-speaking patients, which account for about 60 percent of her clients, although she sees many of the same issues facing most of those who come to the Perris clinic where she works. Most are dealing with health problems like obesity, diabetes, high blood-pressure and other ailments brought on by poor nutrition and lack of exercise. The doctor said she tries to encourage her patients to change their eating habits and get exercise, even if they cannot get the 30 minutes of daily exercise recommended by doctors.

“I have a little goal each visit,” said Monterrey, who has worked at the Perris Family Care Center since 2007. “I try and talk to them during each visit; even if they cannot get 30 minutes of exercise, then 10 or 15 minutes is good, too. Over time they do change their behavior.”

For more information about Latino Health Awareness Month, contact Claudia Pelayo with the Riverside County Department of Public Health, at 951-358-5883

