



HEALTH AWARENESS

Depression Does Not Discriminate

(NAPSA)—Many Latina women feel as though they are being pulled in a million directions. Between childcare and job responsibilities, it's no wonder fatigue is one of their most common complaints. However, if you are finding it harder to do the laundry or are experiencing nagging aches and pains that won't go away, it may be more than just fatigue. It may be time to get screened for depression.

Depression is an illness that affects more than 19 million Americans, and women are twice as likely as men to experience depression at some point in their lives. Many people think depression is only about sadness, but often physical symptoms, such as back pains, headaches and shoulder pain, are the first signs that a person is depressed.

Depression affects every race and culture. Although depression rates are similar among Caucasians and Hispanic women, only one in five Hispanic women is treated properly. "Because of societal pressures, many Latina women aren't comfortable admitting that they are sad, so they come to my office complaining of symptoms like back pain. We need to realize that there is a real connection between pain and depression in all of our patients, not just Latina women," said Dr. Rodrigo Muñoz, former president of the American Psychiatric Association and co-author of a new book *Fuego y Hielo Entre Las Latinas*. Dr. Muñoz wrote the book with Dr. Marilyn Martin to educate Latinas about depression and offer suggestions for attaining better mental health.

"We wrote this book so that Latina women could understand how to recognize the symptoms of depression and seek help. Depres-

FUEGO Y HIELO ENTRE LAS LATINAS

Rodrigo Muñoz, M.D.,
Marilyn Martin, M.D.



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sion is a treatable illness and with proper treatment, patients can restore their quality of life," said Dr. Muñoz. He offers the following tips if you think you or a loved one may have depression:

- Be aware of the physical and emotional symptoms of depression.
- Keep a daily log of your symptoms and bring them to your doctor's office.
- Find a healthcare provider who is a good listener and understands your unique cultural background.

Although the book is written about women, Latino men sometimes share some of the same feelings of embarrassment about depression. "It is very important to realize a patient's unique cultural background. *Machismo* often prevents Latino men from seeking help for their depression. But depression is an illness just like diabetes or arthritis that needs to be treated," added Dr. Muñoz.

To purchase the book, log on to www.hiltonpub.com or check your bookstore.