



# LATINO LEADERSHIP ALLIANCE OF NEW JERSEY

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## **Latino Leadership Alliance Denounces State Human Services Suspension of Special Needs Program** *DHS Decision disrupts continuity of services for Latino Special needs population*

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The Latino Leadership Alliance of New Jersey (LLANJ) today denounced the decision by the state Department of Human Services to cancel funding for an outreach program aimed at identifying and helping at-risk children with learning disabilities. The decision by Human Services takes \$425,000 in funding away from a consortium of 32 agencies that are part of the Hispanic Directors Association of New Jersey (HDANJ) and a LLANJ member. HDANJ agencies led a successful campaign that educated more than 5000 parents about developmental disabilities, and helped over a thousand young children access special child health services, including early intervention programs.

“This decision shows no concern or compassion for providing special needs services to the most vulnerable in our community,” said Martin Perez, Esq, President of Alliance. “In this whole process the state never considered the need for continuity of services to these children and went about making this decision in a vacuum without input from the Latino community on how to best deliver these services. The end result was to pit two Latino organizations against each other, while at the same time leaving Latino families in need of special services trying to figure out how to get them.”

The Alliance is calling for a meeting with the Corzine Administration to insure that decisions impacting the delivery of services to the Latino community made by Human Services are no longer made in a vacuum and with total disregard for the affect that their decisions have on the population they are mandated to serve.

“Given the present fiscal crisis, and the excellent work and critical role that the Hispanic Directors Association plays in providing social services to our community, it is imperative that the Department of Human Services understand the negative impact their decision will have on an established network of Latino community service providers and their constituents. We are asking the Corzine administration to open a dialogue with Latino organizations and build consensus among the major stakeholders delivering human services to our community. This process is even more important as we face the next fiscal year that will require everyone to come together to bring fiscal stability to New Jersey State Government and provide these critical social services with fewer resources,” Perez concluded.

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