

Leaders' meeting for prevention and health promotion from university institutions in Puerto Rico ^[1]

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Part of the representatives of the different public and private universities in Puerto Rico that took part in the C.R.U.S.A.A.D.A. Meeting.

La actividad que se llevó a cabo en el día de ayer en el Salón de Conferencias de Punta Borinquen Resort en Aguadilla.

(Aguadilla, P.R. - December 15, 2023) Representatives from the different universities of Puerto Rico joined together to celebrate the Educational/Administrative Meeting Retaking Prevention and Health Promotion in the University Institutions of Puerto Rico, organized by the Consortium of University Resources Sowing Alliance for Drug, Alcohol and Violence Alertness in Puerto Rico, better known as C.R.U.S.A.A.D.A.

"The Inter-University Consortium C.R.U.S.S.A.A.D.A. is composed of representatives from Colleges and University Campuses in Puerto Rico and has as its priority the prevention of the use of alcohol, other drugs and violence, as well as the promotion and encouragement of health. Keeping ourselves updated and prepared in these areas is our commitment by regulation and by conviction," stated C.R.U.S.A.D.A. President Rosie Torres De Calderón during her welcome message.

Family and interpersonal relationship history, limited access to health services, exposure to illicit drugs and alcohol, traumatic experiences, low educational levels, lack of housing and an unsafe living environment, unemployment and exposure to criminal behavior are some of the possible causes for the decline in health in the American and Hispanic population, as identified in the study

conducted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

According to data from the Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality in its National Survey on Drug Use and Health prepared in 2022, it recorded that:

18.1% (46.5 million) of youth aged 18 and older have a controlled substance use disorder or SUD.

23.1% (59.3 million) of youth 18 years of age and older suffer from a mental disorder or illness (AMI).

8.4% (21.5 million) of youth 18 and older have problems with controlled substances and mental illness.

"The data is clear and we have increased resources in training and collaboration with various entities to strengthen different areas to address controlled substance use disorders and mental health deterioration in our populations," the regional director of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Dr. Dennis Romero, emphasized during his virtual presentation.

"We are aware of the commitment we have to the generations we serve and it is necessary to continue to educate about the use and abuse of controlled substances and alcohol. We have noticed a series of situations that must be addressed in the face of all these challenges and C.R.U.S.A.D.A. is a key entity to meet the needs of our populations," stressed the rector of the University of Puerto Rico in Aguadilla, Dr. Sonia Rivera González.

"In order to address these problems, it is imperative that universities are linked to the community, research, professional training, leadership and volunteerism, as well as to influence public policy processes and be active in social and health advocacy," said the founding president of the Ibero-American Network of Health Promoting Universities (RIUPS), Dr. Hiram Arroyo.

As part of a global vision, the aim is for all university institutions in Puerto Rico to obtain the necessary resources to attend to the needs of their populations and, above all, certification as "Health Promoting Universities", which is part of the World Health Organization (WHO).

Among the institutions represented at the meeting were the University of Puerto Rico, Aguadilla, Arecibo, Mayagüez and Río Piedras campuses; Inter-American University of Puerto Rico, Aguadilla, Arecibo, Bayamón and Ponce campuses; Ana G. Méndez University, Carolina and Cupey campuses; Central University of Bayamón; Universidad del Sagrado Corazón; Ponce School of Medicine; Atenas College; EDP University; National University College (NUC) and the American Military Academy.

C.R.U.S.A.D.A.'s next activity will be the VI Puerto Rican Conference on Public Health, the VI Art and Health Festival, and the International Meeting on Public Health, Health Promotion and Health Promoting Universities on May 2-3, 2024 at the Puerto Rico Convention Center in San Juan.

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