

U.S. SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES XAVIER BECERRA HONORED BY LATINO COMMISSION ON AIDS AT ANNUAL CIELO GALA

PIANIST AND MUSICAL DIRECTOR OSCAR HERNANDEZ, SOUTHERN AIDS COALITION AND HEALTH ADVOCATE STEVEN VARGAS ALSO RECEIVE RECOGNITION

NEW YORK, NEW YORK, USA, October 17, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On Friday, October 14, 2022, The [Latino Commission on AIDS](#) celebrated its 32nd anniversary at its annual [Cielo Gala](#) at Cipriani Wall Street in New York City. The event paid tribute to the music industry, as well as celebrated 15 years of The Commission's [Latinos in the South](#) program.

Among those honored were Xavier Becerra who is the first Latino to serve as U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) with the Esperanza (Hope) Award; Oscar Hernandez, Pianist and Musical Director of the Spanish Harlem Orchestra with the Compañero (Partner) Award, The Southern AIDS Coalition with the Fuerza (Strength) Award, accepted by Dafina Ward, J.D., Executive Director, and Steven Vargas, HIV Advocate, accepted the Dennis deLeon Voz de Compromiso (Voice of Commitment) Award. Miss Universe Harnaaz Sandhu and Johnny Cruz, Founder of the Spanish Harlem Salsa Museum were inducted as the newest Madrina and Padrino, respectively, of the Commission.

"The Latino Commission on AIDS continues to build capacity and take significant strides to fight HIV and AIDS, which still disproportionately affect our Latino communities," said Guillermo Chacon, president of the Latino Commission on AIDS. "As we stay focused on our ultimate goal of ending AIDS and protecting vulnerable communities such as those in the South, we are in



Miss Universe Harnaaz Sandhu, the 2022 Madrina of the Latino Commission on AIDS, with the leadership of the organization (L-R) Board Chair Jesus Aguais, President Guillermo Chacon, and Vice President of Programs Leandro Rodriguez.

gratitude for the support of amazing leaders and contributors to our cause.”

The Cielo Gala is an important platform to recognize the work of those who support the Commission’s goals of ending HIV and AIDS and improving overall health outcomes and wellness for the Hispanic/Latinx community. The gala was hosted by Alfredo Galvan, morning show host of 93.1 Amor’s La Bodega. Grammy-winning the Spanish Harlem Orchestra led by Oscar Hernandez provided live entertainment during the event. Acclaimed DJ Missy B played tracks into the night.



Oscar Hernandez, pianist and musical director of the award-winning Spanish Harlem Orchestra receiving the Compañero Award at the Cielo Gala.

The 2022 Gala culminated the Commission’s commemoration of 32 years of service and launched a new era of service and commitment to meet the health challenges ahead. The event also celebrated the 15th anniversary of the Commission’s Latinos in the South program that aims to build local leadership, develop networks and coalitions, enhance knowledge and cultural competency, and spur actions to address the needs of the emerging Latino/Hispanic communities in Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. The program accomplishes these goals through capacity building, community organizing, leadership development, and networking initiatives, with a focus on community-based participatory research and information dissemination.

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*Guillermo Chacon, President,
Latino Commission on AIDS*

For more information on the event, visit

www.cielolatino.org and to learn more about the work of the Latino Commission on AIDS, visit www.latinoaids.org.

About the Latino Commission on AIDS

The Latino Commission on AIDS (Commission) is a nonprofit organization founded in 1990 dedicated to meet the health challenges and address the impact of HIV and AIDS, viral Hepatitis, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), addressing stigma in the Hispanic/Latinx community. The Commission is the leading organization coordinating National Hispanic Hepatitis Awareness Day (May 15), National Latino AIDS Awareness Day (October 15), Latinos in the South, the Latino

Religious Leadership Program and other prevention, research, capacity building, and advocacy programs across the United States and its territories. The Commission is also the founder of the Hispanic Health Network, dedicated to addressing health disparities.

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Dennis Gonzalez, Executive Officer, Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, accepted the Esperanza Award on behalf of Secretary Xavier Becerra.

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