



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 16-2568, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

RECOGNIZING ROSA E. MARTINEZ-COLON - PAVING THE WAY FOR 25 YEARS

WHEREAS, a Puerto Rican native, Rosa E. Martinez-Colon's first experience with HIV/AIDS was when a neighborhood friend died from the virus. Soon after, more friends experienced the devastating symptoms of HIV/AIDS. At this time, Rosa did not know just how much her life's work would impact the lives of thousands of people affected by HIV/AIDS;

WHEREAS, Rosa was one of several community activists, service providers and HIV+ individuals who responded to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the Latino community in 1991 by founding CALOR (Comprensión y Apoyo a Latinos en Oposición al Retrovirus) along with co-founder Omar Lopez. Rosa was approached by Saul Maravilla, a classmate, looking for a space a group of Latinos needed to meet on this vital topic, Rosa opened the doors to the first support group;

WHEREAS, Rosa was invited to attend training offered by the now defunct Stop AIDS Chicago on Women and HIV. It was here that Rosa would find her calling. Rosa was set on her path by the lack of information offered to women on the virus, even though women were as heavily impacted by HIV/AIDS as men were. Spanish material on the virus was almost non-existent. Rosa knew she had to change this;

WHEREAS, with the need for more support groups and resources for the Latino communities, CALOR's mission, was to continue offering support groups for Latinos affected by the HIV virus and for Hispanic HIV/AIDS service providers. The emphasis was put on providing intervention initiatives and building support systems for people recently diagnosed. In 1993, with the help of grants, the organization began offering case management and mental health services. Later, essential prevention initiatives were developed along with employment placement services;

WHEREAS, in 1997, CALOR merged with Anixter Center, a well-respected and established provider of services for people with disabilities of all ages. The merger allowed CALOR to increase the programs and services it offered to people with HIV/AIDS and to reach out to people with other disabilities. Following this merger, CALOR continued to expand, opening Casa Contreras, a 17-unit building named after two of CALOR's other founding members-Salvador and Jose Luis Contreras. Then, a new HIV/AIDS prevention and education program targeting young Latino men called A.C.E (Advocating for Community Empowerment), now one of CALOR's programs they are known for;

WHEREAS, having moved to a larger space located at 5038 W. Armitage, on the city's north side, CALOR is still growing. From a weekly support group, CALOR has grown to offer 7 programs providing services to 6 different populations. In 2010, Rosa was Community Co-Chairs for the Host Committee for the U.S. Conference on AIDS, which was held in Chicago in 2011;

WHEREAS, the following year she was selected as an Ambassador to the XIX International AIDS Conference in Washington, D.C. Most recently, Rosa was elected Co-Chair of the National Latino AIDS Action Network. She also serves as a member of the Steering Committee for the Alliance for Research in Chicagoland Communities, as well as with the AIDS Foundation of Chicago's Service Provider Council and the Case Management Cooperative Leadership Council;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the President and Cook County Board, issue a proclamation that all the citizens of Cook County thank and congratulate Rosa E. Martinez-Colon for 25 years of continuous dedication to not only

the Latino community but to the countless patients, families and friends suffering from HIV/AIDS and the effects of such.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this text be spread upon the official proceedings of this Honorable Body, and an official copy of same be presented to Rosa E. Martinez-Colon present today to commemorate this milestone event.