

Aviso Newsletter

www.iahse.org



October 2025

37th Annual Training Conference & Job Fair SEGUIMOS PA'LANTE: AMPLIFYING OUR VOICES Friday, October 10, 2025

Annual Conference Highlights:

This year marked our 37th Annual Training Conference & Job Fair, and it was yet another successful event! We extend our heartfelt grat-i-tude to **ALL** the volunteers, workshop panelists, guest speakers who made this event possible. A special thank you to our MC's, Attorney Jorge Montes, Radio Host Patti Vazquez, Comptroller Susana Mendoza-our keynote speaker-and-Governor JB Pritzker for delivering a powerful and inspirational message during our morning session.

Thank you to all who purchased raffle tickets for our annual conference this year! Our fearless and thoughtful treasurer, Edith Feliciano along with Hilda Frontani of Rincon Family Services who worked tirelessly to create 21 beautiful baskets that made the raffle a success!

With your generosity, we collected \$1,358.81- with a substantial portion scheduled for donation to the Springfield Immigrant Advocacy Network (SIAN). We encourage you to continue supporting this incredible and selfless group of volunteers who advocate for and assist underserved communities throughout Springfield and surrounding areas.



Living with Diabetes: My Journey and Why Awareness Matters

By: Elizabeth Villarreal

When I was diagnosed with diabetes at 21, I felt alone and overwhelmed. Like many newly diagnosed patients, I didn't fully understand what the diagnosis meant for my future, and I struggled to process the weight of managing a chronic condition without support or community around me. Looking back, I wish I had known then what I know now—that I wasn't alone, that resources and understanding existed, and that taking my health seriously from the start could have changed my trajectory. This National Diabetes Awareness Month, I want to share what I've learned so others don't have to travel this path alone.

My experience taught me that diabetes management isn't just about numbers on a screen—it's about understanding what those numbers mean for your long-term health, and recognizing the real-world pressures that make that management difficult. While juggling full-time work, school, and motherhood, I found myself constantly stressed and struggling to prioritize my health. The stress of trying to balance everything, combined with the fear of taking time off work for medical appointments, made managing my diabetes feel impossible. What I didn't understand then was that stress itself makes blood sugar control harder—it's a vicious cycle. As my diabetes progressed without proper control, complications developed silently. I kept thinking that I could manage my A1C, but I didn't realize that my high A1C levels, unmanaged blood pressure, and elevated cholesterol were quietly affecting my kidneys, my heart, and my overall wellbeing. By the time I suffered a heart attack and was diagnosed with end-stage renal disease, I was forced to confront what I had been avoiding for years. The positive message I want to share is this: it doesn't have to be this way. When you know your numbers, work closely with your medical team, and prioritize your health even amid life's demands, you have the power to prevent or delay serious complications.

This November, as we recognize National Diabetes Awareness Month, I encourage everyone with diabetes—or at risk for diabetes—to take action. Schedule an appointment with your healthcare provider to check your A1C, blood pressure, and cholesterol. Connect with support communities and resources that can help you navigate this journey. Most importantly, know that managing diabetes is possible, and you don't have to do it alone. My podcast, "Sinai Chicago Health & Hope," features conversations with others living with kidney disease and diabetes, creating the community and understanding that I wish I had access to when I was first diagnosed. Your health matters, and it's never too late to prioritize it.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nBbJuTLRY9k&list=PL02xcZoCzTnCxPzlj6Md4JjwB4xWdSt3Y>



This month IAHSSE is featuring our very own Associate Member and Newsletter Curator, Elizabeth "Liz" Villarreal.

To learn more about becoming a living donor for Liz, please visit:
<https://www.nlmivingdonor.org/>

To learn more about Diabetes, please visit the American Diabetes Association:
<https://diabetes.org/newsroom/press-releases/american-diabetes-month-we-fight-you>

Conference photos



37th Annual IAHSE Featured workshops:

Legislative Roundtable Workshop

Featured panelists:

State Representative Theresa Mah of the 24th District was a state employee under Gov. Quinn, understands the need and concerns of state employees ask for more bilingual staff. Was proud of the work she did on Language Access and the internal advocacy she did when she was a state employee.

Representative Fred Crespo of the 44th District, is the fourth longest serving member of the House. His expertise is in the state budget, he understands the need to keep programs in education and community development funded but emphasized understanding the budget and our revenue streams (especially finding new revenue streams) to keep them going.

State Senator Graciela Guzman of the 20th District, is a new senator but brings years of organizing and policy expertise in healthcare. Organized and led efforts under Healthy Illinois and wants to find ways to make healthcare affordable and accessible to all, including undocumented immigrants.

There continues to be a noticeable lack of Hispanic representation across all levels of state government. How can legislators and advocates work together to hold agency directors accountable for improving representation and equity within their departments

- Panelist encouraged state employees to read and become familiar with the Hispanic and Asian Employment plans.
- Panelist agreed that raising these concerns to their State Reps and Senators ahead of appropriation committee hearings for these agencies gives them the opportunity to question them on their hiring and retention plans and inquire about any concerns they have heard about the agency.

Language Equity Access Workshop

Featured panelists:

Isabella Hurtado Director of The Governor ' s Office of New Americans. In this role she is leading statewide efforts to improve language access and providing key planning and advisory capacity to the Governor ' s Office and state agencies on immigrant-related policy and strategy.

State Representative Dagmara Avelar of the 85th District, a formerly undocumented DREAMer who became a U.S. citizen in 2016, Rep. Avelar has dedicated over a decade to advocating for working families, immigrants, and historically underserved communities.

What guidelines are provided to state agencies in determining bilingual staffing needs?

o Isabella – We are still in the early stages, data will show us what the needs are and how to target those needs, like a bilingual pay strategy for example.

- State employees should be familiar with the Bilingual needs and pay report.
- Language access coordinators are selected by agency leadership
- Office of New Americans website will be launching soon, the interim report will be posted there along with a directory of the agencies language access coordinators.

Moderated by:
**Marlén J. Mendoza, Director
of Legislative Affairs
Department of Human Rights**



Legislative Updates

On September 23, Governor JB Pritzker signed Executive Order 2025-06 to establish the Illinois Accountability Commission (IAC), an independent board housed within the Illinois Department of Human Rights tasked with capturing and creating a public record of the conduct of federal law enforcement agents and recommending actions to hold the federal government accountable as they continue conducting military-style operations in Chicago, collar counties, and other areas throughout the state.

You can visit the IAC website at ilac.illinois.gov for upcoming information about the Commission's work and other updates.

We will be featuring IAHSE members in our monthly newsletter highlighting our diverse and talented Latino/a/e/x membership. If you wish to be highlighted or nominate another IAHSE member, please email us at IAHSE.Assoc@illinois.gov.

Join IAHSE. Scan QR code or click on the link below:

<https://iahse.org/joiniahse/>



Newsletters

Subscribe Today!

Don't miss important notices about upcoming events, legislative updates, & more.

To subscribe, complete the IAHSE Monthly Newsletter Subscription form

<https://bit.ly/3UDE8ks>

For more information or to unsubscribe: contact IAHSE.ASSOC@illinois.gov