

Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

April 2014

"Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane."
--Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., in a speech to the Medical Committee for Human Rights, 1966

OCR News

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services joins in celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In the upcoming weeks, the Office for Civil Rights, in partnership with the Office of Minority Health, will jointly host activities to both promote health equity and honor courageous individuals and momentous events that continue to define the civil rights movement today. To commemorate the historic buildup to the signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, we hope you will enjoy and share this month's copy of our special newsletter which will be disseminated through OCR's listserv.



PHOTO: A ward in the City-County Memorial hospital in Corpus Christi, Texas in 1949 where Latinos were segregated.
Source: www.cah.utexas.edu/ssspot/lesson_plans/lesson10.pdf

This Month in Civil Rights History

April 9, 1866 Civil Rights Bill passes over President Andrew Johnson's veto.

April 8, 1960 US Senate passes Civil Rights Bill with measures against discriminatory voting practices.

April 10, 1960 Senate passes landmark Civil Rights Bill.

April 11, 1968 President Johnson signs 1968 Civil Rights Act.

April 17, 1993 Police officers found guilty of violating Rodney King's civil rights

Source: Dirksen Congressional Center "Major Features of the Civil Rights Law"
http://www.congresslink.org/print_basics_histmts_civilrights64text.htm

Spotlight on Dr. Hector P. Garcia

In recognition of National Minority Health Month, HHS honors the achievements of Dr. Hector P. Garcia.

During mid-20th century America, Mexican Americans were relegated to second-class citizenship in segregated hospitals, public schools, and public facilities. Returning from World War II in 1946 with six battle stars, Dr. Hector P. Garcia found deplorable the conditions "his people" lived under at home while Mexican Americans fought to defend American interests abroad. Determined to make a difference, Dr. Garcia settled in Corpus Christi, Texas, to begin his private medical practice with his brother José Antonio. Together, they treated the "poorest of the poor" regardless of their ability to pay.

In 1947, Dr. Garcia fell ill with life-threatening acute nephritis. While recuperating, he heard the local superintendent of schools bragging about segregation in his district, so Dr. Garcia vowed to dedicate his life to achieving equality for his people if he lived. Dr. Garcia survived his illness, and in 1948 founded the American GI Forum, a national Mexican American veteran organization committed to fighting discrimination. Dr. Garcia ignored death threats and through peaceful protest and legal recourse confronted discrimination against Mexican Americans at the same time Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. worked to ensure equal rights under the law for all Americans. Dr. Garcia received multiple accolades from various governments, and in 1967, President Johnson appointed Dr. Garcia as an alternate ambassador to the United Nations, where he gave the first speech by an American before the UN in a language other than English. In 1968, Dr. Garcia was sworn in as the first Mexican American to serve on the United States Commission on Civil Rights and, in 1984, became the first Mexican American to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award given by the President of the United States.

Source: http://www.cah.utexas.edu/ssspot/lesson_plans/lesson10.pdf; <http://www.pbs.org/programs/justice-for-my-people/>



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