



Pedro J. Rivera  
Board Chair

Nilda I. Ruiz  
President & CEO

---

# NEWS

---

**Contact:** Luz Cárdenas  
Cárdenas Grant Communications  
(215) 520-8850

**For Immediate Release: August 14, 2006**

## **Statement of Nilda I. Ruiz, President & CEO of APM, Inc. on the Passing of Dr. Jesus Sierra**

I join all APM staff and clients in expressing our deepest sympathies to the family of our founder and former Executive Director, Dr. Jesus Sierra. His passing has left a profound sadness throughout the organization that he worked so diligently to build on behalf of his beloved Puerto Rican community. Today, our prayers and thoughts are with his wife and family and with all those who knew him well and loved him dearly.

Dr. Sierra was one of Philadelphia's most prominent Latino leaders and his contributions will survive him as a testament and legacy to the determination and commitment to improving the lives of Latinos by providing life's most essential needs: health, human services and housing. He was an activist and innovator who was tireless in his pioneering efforts to bring help to some of Philadelphia's poorest citizens through community development and cultural enrichment. He fought the entrenched racism of his time for economic parity and equal opportunity for Latinos when no one else thought or cared to use economic development tools to create change.

Dr. Sierra will always be known to us as the father of APM, where he dedicated more than 33 years of his life. APM was started in 1970 when Dr. Sierra and other Puerto Rican veterans organized to get more services into the community, which seemed to be overlooked in city politics and services. One of the first acts of the group was to sue the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare for the neglect and maltreatment of Spanish-speaking residents at Pennhurst State School and Hospital.

He built APM from a humble two-person office on Germantown Avenue to one of Philadelphia's oldest and largest providers of social, health and mental health services. APM has become the largest non-profit development corporation in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; Dr. Sierra's legacy now provides jobs for more than 200 people.

In the process, he has literally saved the lives of countless people. His foresight and diligence in creating APM's unique focus on housing and economic development has given new hope to thousands. He enriched all of our lives and will live on through the work of this organization. We will never forget him.

###