

—Slug:.....COMM-0841.arts.WWAC\_alzheimers  
—Contributor.....  
—Contributor email.....  
—For section.....The Arts  
—Format.....News - no byline  
—Dateline.....  
—Article Number:.....42616

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**Notes from editor (not for publication):**

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**HEADLINE ELEMENTS:**

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1 Film tells story of Cuba's Alzheimer's breakthrough

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3 TEXT BODY:

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4 On Friday, Nov. 21, at 6 p.m at 118 Elliot Gallery,  
5 Windham World Affairs Council (WWAC) and 118 Elliot will  
6 present *Teresita's Dream: Cuba's Battle Against Alzheimer's*, a  
7 new short film (23 minutes) by Cuban Director and Journalist  
8 Daniel Montero.

9 The film gives viewers a window into the challenges and  
10 motivations of scientist Teresita Rodriguez as she and her team  
11 work toward developing a promising new Alzheimer's drug.

12 A discussion with Montero and other Cuba watchers will  
13 follow.

14 Americans often hear of Cuba's troubles, but rarely do  
15 we capture a glance at the country's medical research and drug  
16 development, which continues, despite the burdens imposed by  
17 the 65-year U.S. embargo on its island neighbor.

18 Rodriguez's dream is her quest to cure Alzheimer's,  
19 inspired by her mother Amelia's own battle with the disease. As a  
20 founding member of Cuba's Center for Molecular Immunology  
21 (CIM), she discovers that a new treatment being developed for  
22 strokes could work to slow Alzheimer's down. She and her team  
23 of mostly women scientists are now pushing to finish the final  
24 clinical trials to release the patented Alzheimer's drug, called  
25 NeuroEPO (commercialized as NeuralCIM).

26 According to the news release, up to this point  
27 NeuroEPO has shown promising results and very few side effects  
28 (such as brain bleeds), if any, when compared to leading FDA-  
29 approved treatments for Alzheimer's and dementia. The reported  
30 results include a slowing of the progression of the disease for  
31 extended periods of time, and in some cases, improvement of a  
32 patient's cognitive ability.

33 Additionally, while many Alzheimer's medications are  
34 administered via injection, NeuroEPO is administered via nasal  
35 drops, making it more user-friendly for the patient and caregiver.

36 "More than 55 million people globally live with  
37 Alzheimer's — 7.2 million in the U.S. — but access to treatment  
38 is unequal and exorbitantly priced," stated event promoters in the  
39 news release. The filmmakers say that when Neuro-EPO is ready  
40 for public use, it will be made available for all Cubans for free —  
41 and to the rest of the world at a significantly lower cost than  
42 other existing treatments on the market.

43 Bringing any drug to market requires a high investment,  
44 but U.S. policy greatly magnifies Cuba's challenge in bringing its  
45 products to people who need them. In 2021, Cuba quickly  
46 developed three Covid vaccines rivaling Moderna and Pfizer in

47 effectiveness to administer to its own people. Other  
48 breakthroughs include Hebeprot-P, a drug for diabetic foot ulcers  
49 that prevents neuropathy and consequent amputations; and  
50 Cimavax, a lung cancer vaccine currently in U.S. trials with  
51 Roswell Park, a Buffalo, N.Y.-based cancer center.

52 Belly of the Beast is an independent U.S. media outlet  
53 that includes a team of both U.S. and Cuban journalists.  
54 According to promotional materials, its pioneering mission is “to  
55 tell untold stories from Cuba through documentary filmmaking  
56 and reporting, breaking from the traditional ‘parachute  
57 journalism’ model.” The independent organization takes no  
58 government or corporate support.

59 Elisabeth Stevens, director, Americans for Common  
60 Sense on Cuba, a volunteer association working to overturn the  
61 U.S. blockade on Cuba and recent executive branch actions that  
62 harm the peoples of both countries, and Lissa Weinmann,  
63 WWAC board emerita and long-time U.S.-Cuba policy observer,  
64 will be present to join Montero (Zoomed in from Cuba) to answer  
65 questions and lead a discussion, accompanied by refreshments,  
66 following the screening.

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Bio/COATTAIL:

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LINKS:

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VIDEO:

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LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

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