



BINATIONAL HEALTH WEEK

HEALTH INITIATIVE OF THE AMERICAS

CANADA | UNITED STATES | MÉXICO | GUATEMALA | EL SALVADOR | HONDURAS | NICARAGUA | ECUADOR | COLOMBIA

MEDIA ALERT
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Binational Health Week 2008 ***Governments and binational communities working together*** **October 6-15, 2008**

WHAT: For a single week in October, now for the eighth straight year, towns and cities across the United States and Canada will be hosting Binational Health Week (BHW) --- one of the largest mobilizations of volunteers in the Americas to provide health services and information to underserved populations. Primarily aimed at Mexican and other Latino immigrants engaged at worksites across both nations, the event is endorsed by 140 task forces from seven Latin American countries: Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Colombia, and Ecuador. The participating nations will officially acknowledge their commitment by signing an agreement during the Binational Policy Forum on Migration and Health. This event will be attended by over 400 participants, as part of the ceremonies launching BHW. It will be held in Zacatecas, Mexico, October 6th, 2008.

Binational Health Week activities take place in 43 USA states and 3 provinces of Canada. The effort, since its inception, has been coordinated by the Health Initiative of the Americas, University of California at Berkeley School of Public Health. The Institute of Mexicans Abroad (IME for its Spanish acronym) and the consular representatives of participating countries, play a lead role assembling year-round local task forces.

BHW is led by grassroots organizations—the level at which health promotion and education initiatives are most effective in reaching Latino populations. It reaches the most vulnerable and poor population: the uninsured. Activities include medical screenings, vaccinations, health-care referrals, and cultural and linguistically conduct health education events.

The value of BHW is in the significant human condition it addresses: the capacity of solidarity. Beginning in February each year, thousands of volunteers enthusiastically get together every month to plan the services to be offered. Last year, more than 3,941 activities reached an estimated 301,661 individuals thanks to the invaluable contributions of 15,497 volunteers and 6,586 participating agencies. This year the expectations are even higher.

WHO: Federal, state and local government agencies, community-based organizations, universities, the media, philanthropic entities, unions, faith-based groups, and public health professionals are supporting this monumental effort.

WHY: Latinos in the U.S. constitute the largest and youngest ethnic minority in the country, yet they remain the least insured group and have the least access to health care services. This reality, compounded with federal reforms that have failed to increase health care for immigrant workers, has sparked alternative social movements that seek to provide underserved populations with improved access to and quality of health care, as well as better information on how to care for their health. Binational Health Week is one of those responses.

MAIN EVENTS:

- **Inaugural Event, Zacatecas Mexico (October 5-7, 2008)**
- **Local and regional events in 300 cities and localities (October 6-15, 2008)**
For the calendar of local Binational Health Week events, visit: <http://www.binationalhealthweek.org> or call the United Way toll-free number: **1-800-273-6222** (9 - 5pm PST)
- **Closing Event, New York (October 14, 2008)**

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