



VIII BINATIONAL HEALTH WEEK OCTOBER 6-15, 2008

KEY MESSAGES

1. Over the last decades the Mexican-born population resident in the United States registered an enormous increase. It is estimated that in 2007 the number was 11.8 million. Fourteen states have 100,000 or more residents who are Mexican immigrants.
2. Latinos in the U.S. are the largest and youngest ethnic minority in the country, yet they remain the least insured group and have the largest limited access to health care services. This reality compounded with federal reforms that fail to increase health care for migrant and immigrant workers, creates alternate social movements that seek to improve the access, education, and quality of health care for underserved populations.
3. The migratory process has an enduring impact on a person's health. From the time a decision is made to emigrate to eventual acculturation in the receiving country, immigrant workers and their families have special health needs. The purpose of Binational Health Week is to address the healthcare and health access needs of Latino immigrants, their families, and their communities.
 - Latino immigrants come to the U.S. to work, and they are young and healthy when they arrive.
4. Binational Health Week seeks to improve the health of Latin American immigrants and their families in North America.
 - Studies show that the health of Latino immigrants declines with the length of their stay in the U.S. Latino immigrants play an important role in the U.S. workforce. The good health in which these individuals arrive is important to maintain, for their economic contribution as well as the health of their communities. Good health helps immigrant communities thrive socially and benefits both the countries of origin and those of destination.
5. Binational Health Week activities are led by grassroots organizations—the level at which health promotion and education initiatives are most effective in reaching the Latino population. Federal, state, and county agencies also endorse this effort.
 - Local coordinators work with volunteer task forces to organize activities. Members of the 147 nationwide task forces include consular representatives from seven countries (Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Ecuador and Colombia), community clinics, county health service agencies, hometown associations, legislators, educational institutions, faith-based organizations, union representatives, indigenous organizations and members of the media, among others.
 - Activities include the provision of on-site health services through mobile clinics, health service and insurance referrals, educational outreach, and workshops.
6. BHW has aimed to search for bilateral and now multilateral opportunities that seek to make a positive policy impact at the local, state, and federal levels. Policy change in conjunction with improved access is what enables migrants and immigrants to increase the protection of their health and welfare.

7. Binational Health Week plays a fundamental role in creating opportunities for discussion and collaboration among local, state, and federal programs, as well as health care providers that seek to improve the quality of life for so many Latinos living in the U.S. Its objective aims to reach the most marginalized and poverty stricken communities whose health drastically worsens over time.
8. This year, special efforts are being made to address the issues of Obesity and Diabetes, the Autism epidemic, HIV/AIDS and Emergency Preparedness

For more information on local and regional events, visit:

www.binationalhealthweek.org or www.semanabinacionaldesalud.org