

CALIFORNIA-MEXICO HEALTH INITIATIVE (CMHI) CONVENES
AT THE CENTER FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Collaborative Researchers Transcend Borders to Improve Health Access for Migrants

Mexican immigrants, among the lowest wage earners in the United States, receive inadequate health services and, as a result, have the lowest rates of flu shots, dental exams, and regular doctor's visits in the U.S. These are just some of the findings of researchers with the California-Mexico Health Initiative (CMHI), who say that economic as well as cultural barriers are to blame, with often dire consequences for immigrants and their families.

Founded in 2001, the public/private CMHI aims to improve the availability of immigrant health resources through binational research, training, and health promotion and education projects. "This unique initiative takes into consideration both sides of the border," says Nuria Ciofalo, senior evaluation analyst for The California Endowment. "Research and other activities focus on both the 'sending' communities in Mexico and the 'receiving' communities in the United States. It turns out that the most pressing health concerns are the same in both."

CMHI's first three-year cycle of research on migration and health culminates on Monday, September 17, 2007, when about 50 participants representing more than 20 binational research teams will gather at the Center for Healthy Communities to share their results and discuss their recommendations for decision makers and public health programs in both the United States and Mexico.

TRANSLATING RESEARCH INTO ADVOCACY

Created under the auspices of the California Policy Research Center of the University of California, Office of the President, CMHI is a collaborative effort involving government, academia, the private sector and community-based organizations of both countries. Funded by the University of California, The California Endowment, the California HealthCare Foundation, and The California Wellness Foundation, CMHI has become a critical resource for researchers, advocates, policymakers, and other stakeholders concerned with immigrant health.

"The health of a mobile population requires multiple approaches to service design and delivery," explains Ciofalo. "This project helps increase our understanding of migration and health issues, and of culturally competent strategies and best practices to address them. The next step is translating this research into policy briefs and strategies that will engage binational policymakers and begin to address health disparities among vulnerable migrant populations."

During the morning session in downtown Los Angeles on September 17, discussion and dialogue among researchers and policymakers from both Mexico and the U.S. will center on CMHI's research findings and policy recommendations. In the afternoon session, an experienced public advocacy trainer will work with the researchers to translate those findings and recommendations into effective policy briefs.



CMHI+

The California-Mexico Health Initiative's Migration and Health Research Program (Program de Investigacion en Migracion y Salud, or PIMSA) is a collaboration of:

- > California Program on Access to Care (CPAC) of the California Policy Research Center, UC Office of the President
- > Mexico's Ministry of Health (SSA)
- > Mexican Foundation for Health (FUNSALUD)

PROJECT EXPANDING, CHANGING ITS NAME

From 2003 through 2005, CMHI's binational research project primarily targeted the Mexican migrant population in California and its respective towns of origin in Mexico. That effort is now expanding to include other U.S. states beyond California and diverse communities in Latin America. Reflecting this wider scope, CMHI is changing its name to the Health Initiative of the Americas, and its research efforts will now come under a new collaborative program called Programa de Investigación en Migración y Salud (PIMSA), or the Migration and Health Research Program.

"By promoting collaborative research at an international level we hope to create long-term connections between universities in the United States and research institutions in Latin America," notes Ciofalo. "Ultimately, we want to create and sustain a multinational network of researchers and institutions that can inform policymakers on issues related to health and migration, and improve migrants' access to the care they need."

For more information:
California Mexico Health Initiative
www.ucop.edu/cmhi

- > Mexico's National Council on Science and Technology (CONACYT)
- > The United States-Mexico Foundation for Science (FUMEC)
- > The University of California Universitywide AIDS Research Program
- > University of Arizona
- > Texas A&M University
- > University of Illinois at Chicago
- > State University of New York
- > The California Endowment