

XV BINATIONAL HEALTH WEEK



15 years working for your health

Final Report

Binational Health Week (BHW) was created in 2001 with the objective of raising awareness and responding to the unique health care challenges Latinos living in the United States and Canada face. Since its inception, BHW has evolved into one of the largest mobilization efforts in the Americas to improve the health and well-being of the underserved Latino population. This has been possible thanks to the leadership of the Secretariats of Health and Foreign Affairs of Mexico, in conjunction with the Health Initiative of the Americas at UC Berkeley, the Secretariats of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala, Honduras, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru and several other Latin American consulates.

During BHW, federal, state and local government agencies, community-based organizations, and thousands of volunteers come together in the month of October to conduct a series of health promotion and health education activities including workshops, insurance referral sessions, vaccination clinics, and medical screenings. The idea behind binational collaboration is that improving the health of Latino immigrants not only benefits them, but also has a positive economic and social impact in the countries of origin and countries of destination. While Binational Health Week is only during the month of October, its annual occurrence invigorates a much larger program of cooperation amongst Latin American countries to improve the health and well-being of immigrants and their families throughout the year.



Context

Today Latinos make up 17% of the U.S. population, and the Census projects that by the year 2060 it will increase to 31%. Despite the fact that they are the largest and youngest ethnic minority, the barriers that limit their access to health care and health insurance still continue to be a serious issue for Latinos. Overall, the Affordable Care Act has contributed to the decline of the uninsured population in the U.S., but despite this improvement Latinos continue to have the highest uninsured rates among major U.S. racial or ethnic groups. In 2014, the uninsured rate of Latino adults was 34%, compared to 16% among non-Latino Whites. One reason for this is that Latinos make up a disproportionate share of unauthorized immigrants who are ineligible for Medicaid or participation in state and federal marketplaces.

As a response to the persistent health disparities of the U.S. Latino population, alternative social movements like Binational Health Week (BHW) have emerged. BHW calls for a renewed commitment to eliminating inequalities in the social determinants of health, with a focus on access to health services and insurance coverage, and the prevalence of certain chronic and infectious diseases that disproportionately affect this population.

The Vision and Dedication of Many

Key to the success of BHW is the collaboration and synergy among those who are interested in and committed to improving Latino health. Successful social mobilization for BHW depends on several factors, including the vision of dedicated leaders in communities across the country, instructional and material resources provided by HIA, time and insight donated by thousands of volunteers, financial and in-kind donations, and the successful collaboration between participating agencies and groups.

The decentralized organizational structure of BHW facilitates social mobilization on a large scale. BHW is orchestrated at the local level by task forces that create and implement their own plan to address Latino health issues in their respective communities. County task force membership often includes representatives from the Consulates of Mexico and other Latin American countries; local, state and federal government agencies; health organizations, clinics, and professionals; community-based organizations; educational institutions; Mexican hometown associations; faith organizations and religious institutions; and local leaders who have adopted the BHW mission as their own. These task forces identify funding and resources, develop outreach and BHW promotional and material distribution plans, and make BHW a reality.

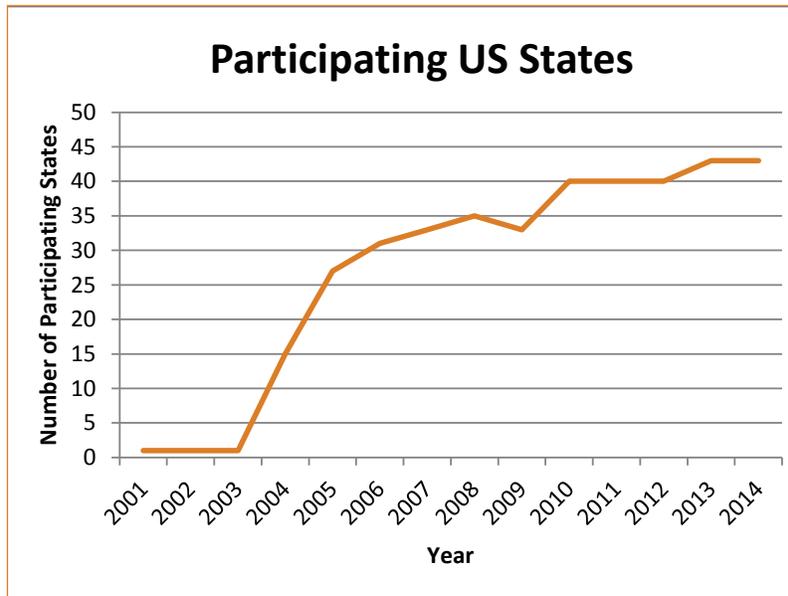


The Growth and Impact of BHW over the years



BHW was established in 2001 and began as a small program between Mexico and the United States, with partners in only seven counties in California. Since then, BHW has expanded to 43 U.S. states and three provinces in Canada. BHW has continued to gain momentum and with the leadership and coordination of several Latin-American countries. Over the course of fifteen years BHW has provided health education and preventive services to **over five million people**. Besides basic information, referrals, educational sessions, conferences, and sports events, the provision of free health services is an important component of BHW. These services are provided in collaboration with local physicians, community clinics, hospitals, and medical schools to insure that proper follow up takes place in case it is needed. Health services and screenings offered at BHW vary according to year and region, and can include: glucose, cholesterol, BMI, blood pressure, HIV, mammograms, breast exams, PAP smears, dental check-ups, vision check-ups, and vaccinations, among others.





Over the years Binational Health Week has expanded from only seven counties in California to 43 American states, as well as 3 Canadian provinces.

Training of Community Leaders

Since most BHW coordinators are not health experts, it is critical to provide coordinators with basic education on the key issues of each topic and guidance on where to access relevant information they can provide during BHW events to the Latino population. Thanks to the support of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), HIA has offered several webinars prior to the month of October to the BHW coordinators and their local partners as a way to improve their ability to promote health among the communities they serve.



Each webinar covers a different topic relevant to the Latino community, such as diabetes prevention, and the Affordable Care Act. Besides this approach, various agencies and organizations provide valuable print and electronic educational resources in Spanish, which are disseminated to task forces and posted electronically on the Binational Health Week website (www.binationalhealthweek.org), administered by HIA. In addition to webinars, each consulate network schedules periodical conference calls with HIA to obtain guidance on the process of planning, executing, and evaluating the health events, as well as sharing best practices.

BHW over the years

2001

Even though you are far from home, you are not alone

- First Binational Policy Forum on Migration and Health
- BHW takes place in 7 California counties

2002

Health is not everything, but if there is no health there is nothing

- BHW is celebrated in 13 states California counties

2003

The health of a country is also its immigrants' health

- BHW is expanded beyond California to implement activities in New York for the first time.

2006

Health is joy

- El Salvador and Guatemala join BHW

2005

Health in motion

- BHW expands to three Canadian provinces
- National campaigns are implemented for the first time addressing Latino Health

2004

Health does not have borders

- BHW expands to 15 states

2007

Your health, your future

- Colombia joins BHW

2008

Your health is your life

- Honduras joins BHW
- The BHW Website is created

2009

Give a hand to your health

- Ecuador and Perú join BHW

2012

Health first is love

- BHW expands to 40 states

2011

Walk happily for better health

2010

Health beyond the borders

- Bolivia joins BHW

2013

Health is life

2014

Health is movement

- Brazil and Venezuela joins BHW

2015

15 years working for your health

- Uruguay joins BHW



Since its inception, BHW has prioritized strategic media campaigns to raise public awareness of migrant health issues and to promote healthy behavior among immigrant families. BHW conducts Radio and TV presentations on chronic diseases such as diabetes and obesity, infectious diseases, violence from the public health perspective, occupational health, and access to healthcare among others; the campaigns also served to disseminate the BHW calendar of activities and to invite the general public to participate in the events.

Below is a list of how the XV Binational Health Week was featured in the media:

- Television announcements, newscast stories and interviews with the active participation of UNIVISION (the most watched hispanic broadcast television network reaching 99% of hispanic households in the US), its local channel through the Bay Area Univision14 and Univision.com -7 million visitors-, and Telemundo through Telemundo48 –with the most viewed newscasts in the area with more than 800 thousand viewers- and Telemundo.com -4 million visitors.
- Radio coverage, announcements, special programs and interviews including but not limited to Hispanic Communication Network -through its 270 affiliated radio stations with 13 million listeners- Radio Bilingüe –with its 100 affiliate stations in the continent-, NPR’s KQED -4.1 million listeners- , Radio Zacatecas; broadcasts such as “Hecho en California” –the radio program with the largest audience in the North of California, among others.
- Newspapers, electronic media, social media and online channels that covered BHW events in Mexico and the US included: el Universal, La Jornada, Noticias MVS, La Opinion, El Hispano News, Intravision, El Mundo USA, La Vision Newspaper, La Columna (laredhispana.org), latinofresh.com, elperiodicohispano.com, revistasinfrontera.net, cambiodigital.com.mx, etc.

BHW 2015 Results



In 2015, thanks to the leadership and coordination of the consulates of the participant Latin American countries, **1,780** were organized, including health fairs, conferences, classes, and sports events. Approximately **325,600 people** attended those events (65% female, 35% male). Close to **4,000 organizations** and **11,000 volunteers** joined this efforts and about **60,000 health screenings and services** were offered, including glucose, cholesterol, BMI, blood pressure, HIV, mammograms, breast exams, PAP smears, dental check-ups, vision check-ups, bone density, flu shots and other vaccinations, mental health screenings, health insurance enrollments and referrals, among other health related services.

Binational Policy Forum on Migration and Global Health

The Binational Policy Forum on Migration and Global Health is the launching event of Binational Health Week. The goal of the forum is to convene key stakeholders from the United States, Mexico, and other Latin American countries to discuss migrant health challenges and to explore unique opportunities to work collaboratively to improve the health and well-being of this population. Topics that are addressed include: chronic and infectious diseases, access to health care, occupational health, and violence from the public health perspective. The location of the Policy Forum alternates each year between Mexico and the United States. In 2015 the event took place in the San Francisco Bay Area, California. The event had three main components:

1 Welcoming Reception



The activities began on Sunday, October 4th with a welcoming reception offered by the General Consulate of Mexico in San Francisco under the direction of Dr. Andres Roemer, Consul General of this entity. Over 200 people were present at this event, including representatives of the participating Latin American countries. The event culminated with a culinary display and cultural show.



Participating Countries

2 Bilingual Policy Forum

The event took place on October 5th at the California Endowment located in Oakland, California. More than 400 people representing 280 public, private and academic entities from the United States, Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela, Brazil and Chile participated in this event.

The forum was inaugurated by the Secretary of Health in Mexico, Dr. Mercedes Juan and the Secretary of the California Health & Human Services Agency, Diana Dooley. Both dignitaries expressed that the health of migrants is a priority for both countries, not only due to their contribution and effect in their respective countries, but also because of the opportunities and challenges that these migrants and their families face in regards to health.

The rest of the afternoon was divided into eight workshops which covered five different topics. Each session had a binational panel which consisted of two experts and one moderator. The academic portion of the event concluded with a plenary session where moderators from each topic presented a summary of their workshops and the public policy recommendations. Below you can see a portion of the results, the presentations as well as the conclusions are available online: <http://www.binationalhealthweek.org/>



Access to Health Services: Support legislation directing appropriate state agencies to set aside funds as community contributions from key HMO merger agreements in California.

Chronic Diseases: Bring to primary care the public policies that Mexico has, both in the health and education sectors, in order to reduce the levels of pre-obesity and diabetes.

Infectious Diseases: Develop binational investigations to follow-up with patients that are diagnosed with latent TB in high risk populations.

Occupational Health: Recommend measures to give equal protection to immigrant and non-immigrant workers.

Violence: Continue exploring the protective factors that migrants have in relation to violence.

3 Latin American Style Gala and Dinner



The gala dinner at the Saint Mary's Cathedral concluded the event. Welcoming Remarks were given by Dr. Barbara Garcia, Director of Health, San Francisco Department of Public Health; Dr. Roberto Tapia, President and CEO of the "Carlos Slim" Foundation; Castulo de la Rocha, President and CEO of AltaMed Health Services Corporation and Dr. Pablo Kuri Morales, Undersecretary of Prevention and Promotion at the Mexican Secretariat of Health.

The BHW Forum over the years



Conclusion

For the past fifteen years, Binational Health Week has played a fundamental role in creating opportunities for 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. Today, thousands of Latinos across the U.S. and in parts of Canada have come to rely on BHW to receive much needed health care education and interventions. From grassroots to policymaking levels, BHW is a catalyst for continued collaboration and action to increase health education, access to quality care, and provide health services to a large population disenfranchised from the existing health system. The added element of engaging legislators committed to Latino health issues works towards implementing lasting change at the policy level. BHW's successful model of utilizing social mobilization strategies to effect change may also be replicated and adapted to address other populations and subjects. In sum, the impact of BHW lasts above and beyond the month of October, and ensures that this hard-working population can lead healthy lives, regardless of borders and bureaucracy.

BHW is possible thanks to the generous contribution of our sponsors:



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