Health Initiative of the Americas 2018 Activities Report

About HIA: The Health Initiative of the Americas (HIA) is a program of the UC Berkeley School of Public Health. HIA is considered to be one of the world’s leading programs on health and migration. HIA coordinates an international research program and directs a globally recognized multidisciplinary training effort focused on migrant health.

Mission: To coordinate and optimize resources to reduce health disparities of the Latino-origin population living and working in the United States.

Vision: The health of a country includes the wellbeing of its immigrants.

Core Competencies: Aligned with UC Berkeley’s four pillars: research, training, service, and public policy, HIA produces new knowledge through action-oriented research, policy analyses, applied learning opportunities, and communication activities. To accomplish this, HIA draws upon integrative scholarship from all UC campuses and forges a globally responsive citizenry.

Collaborative Agreements: HIA maintains collaborative agreements with Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Colombia, and Peru. The Initiative’s programs involve governments, academia, the private sector, and community-based organizations.

Funding: In addition to UC support, HIA receives grants from foundations and government agencies, as well as private donations.

Governance: HIA’s External Advisory Board is composed of 20 distinguished leaders including government officials from the United States and Latin America, legislators, researchers, philanthropic organizations, and community members and advocates.

UC Involvement: UC has embarked on the important and urgent mission to foster and develop partnerships with Mexico and Latin America. HIA is at the core of this effort, driving research, conducting trainings, and translating results into public policy recommendations that have generated government programs serving local, national, and international communities.
Research

Long-term improvements in the health of Latino immigrants are possible through systemic and institutional changes. In response, HIA gives high priority to promoting and funding cross-border, evidenced-based research. Researchers have the power not only to increase their knowledge on migration and health but also to inform public policy changes. HIA currently coordinates two research programs: PIMSA and MAHRC.

PIMSA

HIA’s flagship research program is the collaborative Research Program on Migration and Health (PIMSA for its Spanish acronym), which has created a transnational network of leading academic researchers and institutions throughout the United States and Mexico.

Findings from the funded projects are presented at conferences and policy briefings hosted by HIA and other agencies. Research teams also publish their results in peer-reviewed journals. A comprehensive external evaluation of the PIMSA program found that researchers overwhelmingly felt the program increased their ability to conduct collaborative research, disseminate findings, and develop policy recommendations. PIMSA grantees attend and present their research findings at the annual Summer Institute on Migration and Global Health.

PIMSA released its 14th RFP (2017–2018 cycle). Twenty-three binational teams and eight graduate students (master's and doctoral) submitted LOIs by the January 2018 deadline. Of those, 12 binational teams and 6 graduate students were invited to submit the full proposal. After a rigorous external review process, 5 binational teams and 3 graduate students were selected for funding.

MAHRC

The Migration and Health Research Center (MAHRC) provides multidisciplinary research on health disparities encountered disproportionately by mobile populations and seeks evidence-based solutions. MAHRC is under the co-directorship of UC Berkeley and UC Davis. In collaboration with MAHRC, HIA holds regional and national policy briefings to call attention to how diabetes, infectious diseases, and occupational injuries affect migrants.
UC–MEXICO INITIATIVE HEALTH WORKING GROUP

The goal of the UC–Mexico Initiative is to create a sustained, strategic and equal partnership between UC and Mexican institutions that addresses common issues from a scientific perspective, and also to educate our next generation of leaders. HIA is the academic and administrative coordinator of the U.S.– side of the Health Working Group (HWG) of this Initiative. Its mission is to develop new research in three areas of critical importance for both countries: diabetes, violence, and maternal and neonatal health. The HWG has also created two online certificate programs:

- The Health–Services Leadership and Management certificate program, designed for physician leaders and administrators, was launched August 2017 with an initial cohort of 53 registered students from 19 Mexican Health Institutions. Throughout 2019 the second cohort will graduate of the certificate online course on Health–Services Leadership and Management, taught by UC and UNAM instructors. The course aims to strengthen the administration skills of medical and executive staff to prepare them for higher level decision–making positions.

- The Online Binational Course on Regulatory Sciences, with a target audience of health–care executives, regulators, academics, and emerging leaders, was launched in 2018. This course introduces in depth the theories and best practices of regulatory issues, both at the global and country scales. The course will facilitate the dialogue between the Mexican regulatory agency (COFEPRIS) and the industry, as well as within the different areas of COFEPRIS, spreading a common language.
Training and Mentoring

SUMMER INSTITUTE ON MIGRATION AND GLOBAL HEALTH

The annual Summer Institute on Migration and Global Health has become a well-recognized venue where researchers, faculty, graduate students and professionals working with migrant communities around the world learn and share experiences about different health issues that affect mobile populations for this purpose. Since 2006 through a combination of lectures and workshops taught by highly recognized national and international experts as well as site visits to local health centers, attendees gain valuable knowledge around topics of migration and health to help facilitate culturally sensitive and effective interventions among mobile populations in their communities.

The 13th Summer Institute on Migration and Global Health took place in Oakland, California in June 18–21, 2018 with the participation of 115 people representing 63 different organizations from Mexico, Canada, Costa Rica, England, Spain, Denmark, Netherlands, Bangladesh, and the U.S. The Mario Gutierrez Migration and Health Award was presented during the event to three outstanding individuals and tireless professionals that have dedicated their career to dignify the health of migrants. The award recipients were Carmela Castellano-Garcia, President and Chief Executive Officer of the California Primary Care Association (CPCA); Steven P. Wallace professor and chairperson of the Department of Community Health Sciences and Associate Director of the UCLA Center of Health Policy Research; and Alfonso Rodriguez-Lainz, Migrant Health Specialist for CDC’s Division of Global Migration and Quarantine. The award was named in memory of Mario Gutierrez, an extraordinary man who dedicated his life to social justice and erasing health disparities for migrants, and tremendous HIA supporter.

ONLINE CERTIFICATES FOR PROMOTORES

In partnership with the Autonomous University of Zacatecas (UAZ) and the UC–Davis Western Center for Agricultural Health and Safety (WCAHS), HIA has developed two online certificate programs (Diplomados) for promotores or CHWs; one on Nutrition and Health and one on Occupational Health of Migrant Workers. The purpose of these certificates is to provide structured training to promotores working with the Latino population in the US. The certificate programs last 10 weeks each. They are taught in Spanish using simple terminology and practical exercises. Upon completion students receive a certificate and academic credits from UAZ. In 2018, 21 students completed the Occupational Health Certificate and 27 students completed the Health and Nutrition Certificate.
BINATIONAL PROMOTORES CONFERENCE

The role of promotores or Community Health Workers (CHW) is fundamental in the advancement of migrant health. In times when public policies and anti-immigrant rhetoric limit access to health and social services for migrant individuals and families, the work of promotores in these communities becomes even more relevant and important. HIA, through its Binational Promotores Program and the annual Binational Promotores Conference, provides up-to-date information relevant to the health of Latin American migrants living in the United States, as well as useful tools that allow the personal and professional development of the promotores. In 2018 the XVIII Binational Promotores Conference took place in Oakland, CA in April 16, and 250 promotores from California and other states received training in diverse topics including how to create an emergency immigration plan, human trafficking for sexual exploitation, the Zika virus, psychosocial assistance to migrants, legal use of recreational marijuana in California, among other interesting topics.

INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARS AND STUDENTS

The Health Initiative of the Americas is often home to visitors who have traveled to Berkeley from around the globe to work with our program and UC faculty. During these visits, articles are co-authored, new working relationships are solidified and international connections are established that lead to increased global opportunities. In 2018, HIA hosted seven students and professionals from the University College London (UCL), the Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City, the China University of Mining and Technology, the National Health School of the Health Institute Carlos II, Madrid, Spain, the Universidad del Valle de México, El Colegio de México, and the Instituto Nacional de Salud Pública (INSP-Mexico).

UC BERKELEY GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

In 2018, nine UC Berkeley undergraduate students—the majority of them first generation immigrants—received training at the HIA headquarters through the work-study program. During their tenure in the HIA office, students learn what it means to work in a public health program. Students are given challenging tasks that require research, critical and analytical thinking, writing, editing, and design. HIA greatly values the students’ contributions to the program, and incorporates their help in planning and executing the annual events, such as the Summer Institute on Migration and Global Health and the Binational Promotores Conference. In addition to working at the events, the students are able to enjoy the presentations, workshops, networking opportunities, and visiting scholars. Another valuable experience for the students is interacting and communicating with high-level officials through phone, email, and in person. By the time the students graduate from Berkeley, they have developed and honed a host of practical skills that carry over to their future endeavors.
2018 Publications

As part of PIMSA and MAHRC, HIA produces a wide range of publications—tailored to various audiences—in collaboration with Mexican and U.S. institutions. All publications are available on the HIA website.

- **Accountability across Borders: Migrant Rights in North America.** HIA contributed to this book with a chapter on Binational Health Week: A Social Mobilization Program to Improve Latino Migrant Health. The book is being printed by University of Texas Press, and will be launched in 2019.

- **Migration and Health: Current Challenges and Opportunities (2018).** HIA in conjunction with Mexico’s National Population Council have been publishing annual binational reports on Migration and Health for more than 14 years. This volume is divided into two sections. The first section includes various statistics on Mexican migrants living in the United States: their sociodemographic characteristics, their access to health care and their health conditions, as well as information on the access to health care of migrants returning to Mexico. The second section is made up of four chapters that address issues concerning access to health care of migrants in the United States, as well as their perceptions and knowledge about some diseases and/or health conditions, such as obesity. These four the articles are authored by PIMSA grantees based on their PIMSA research.

- **Migration and Health Resource Repository.** This comprehensive collection is continuously updated with new material, and it allows students, researchers, faculty, and policymakers to access publications, articles, presentations, and other documents that are related to migration and health. [http://repository.ucdavis.edu/](http://repository.ucdavis.edu/)

- **Fact Sheets about the Latino population.** HIA staff and UCB students produce these fact sheets by analyzing publicly available statistics and incorporating compelling facts from published articles. The fact sheets are reviewed by MAHRC and PIMSA researchers. Policymakers, the media, and the general public are the target audience. ([https://hia.berkeley.edu/materials/fact-sheets/](https://hia.berkeley.edu/materials/fact-sheets/))
Service and Community Engagement

Zika Virus Outreach and Education

HIA assisted the California Department of Public Health in their Zika outreach and education activities targeting Limited English Proficiency Latinos, translating materials and providing feedback on the communication strategy. It also organized a webinar in Spanish for promotores Latino community leaders and personnel from Latin American consulates in the U.S., where near 100 participated.

Blindness Prevention of Diabetic Retinopathy in Mexican Immigrant Communities: Engaging Patients in Preventative Care

This pilot project under the Health Working Group (HWG) of the UC–Mexico Initiative, aims to prevent blindness among low-income immigrant communities through retinal screening, health coaching, and medical referrals. In addition, the project aims to prove that health coaching from Mexican residents will prompt people diagnosed with Diabetic Retinopathy (DR) to seek treatment. This innovative, binational project uses cultural telemedicine and health coaching tools to reach its target population. The collaboration is between the following institutions:

- National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM)
- Mexican Institute of Ophthalmology Foundation Conde de Valenciana (IOCV)
- UC Berkeley School of Optometry (UCSO)
- UC Berkeley School of Public Health – Health Initiative of the Americas (HIA)
- Ventanillas de Salud (VDS) from Fresno and San Francisco Consulates
- Fiscal Agency in San Francisco: Tiburcio Vasquez Health Center, Inc (TVHC)
- Fiscal Agency in Fresno: Family Healthcare Network (FHCN)

The pilot project is taking place in the VDS of the Mexican Consulates of Fresno and San Francisco. Each promotor (health worker) at the VDS currently takes retina images of participants who self-identify as diabetic and agree to participate in the project. The promotores send the retina image to the medical residents of IOCV who read the image and send their diagnosis to UCSO. The ophthalmologist in UCBSO validates the diagnosis and makes referrals when needed. Each participant receives a follow-up call to inform them of their diagnosis and sets up an e-consultation with a Mexican physician if needed. At the conclusion of the project, a symposium will be conducted at UCB to share project results. Participating residents from Mexico will attend the symposium.
Binational Health Week (BHW)

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 that lives in the United States and Canada. 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 referrals, vaccinations and medical screenings, serving about 300,000 people a year. BHW main partners include the Secretariats of Health and Foreign Affairs of Mexico, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala, Honduras, Colombia, and Peru, as well as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, several Departments of Public Health, the Council of Mexican Federations in North America, and HIA.

The eighteenth edition of BHW was celebrated not only in the United States, but it also expanded to other countries including Canada, Mexico, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Argentina, and Spain, thanks to the participation and leadership of the consular networks of Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia, and Peru. The slogan for 2018 was “Healthy Mind, Healthy Life,” having mental health as one of the priority topics, as well as Infectious Diseases, Chronic Diseases, Occupational Health, and Access to Health Care.

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