



Georgia Latino Children's Health: Should we worry?

By Natalie D. Hernandez, MPH

On Wednesday, June 4, 2008, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released data from the 2007 National Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). The data found that today's high school students are less likely to engage in many health risk behaviors than high school students in the early 1990s. While that was the case for all high school students, among Hispanic students this was not. This study found that Hispanic students remain at greater risk for certain health-related behaviors and have not matched the progress made over time by black students and white students.

A brief analysis of the Georgia YRBS data found the following:

- Georgia Hispanic high school students were also most likely to be overweight (22.9%) compared with Whites (15.5%).
- Only 38.4% of Hispanic high school students in Georgia reported being physically active for 60 minutes or more per day at least five days a week compared to 47.3% of White students.
- 34.1% of Hispanic high school students "felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or

more in a row that they stopped doing some usual activities during the past 12 months."

- Almost a quarter (23%) of Latino high school students made a suicide plan compared to 11% of Blacks and 11% of Whites. Latino high school students were also most likely to attempt suicide (12%)--compared with 8% of Blacks and 7% of Whites--and to receive medical attention after attempting suicide (7%), compared to 3% of Blacks and 1% of Whites. Georgia Latino children suffer disproportionately from risk factors that can lead to many conditions such as poor oral health, obesity, mental health conditions, unintentional injuries and risky sexual behaviors. Factors contributing to these conditions include the education level of the child and parent, family structure, language and cultural barriers, economic stability of household, poverty, underuse of health services, and lack of a regular source of care. Hispanics represent 8% of Georgia's total population, but Latino children comprise 10% of Georgia's total child population. Latino children also represent more than one-third (35%) of the total Latino population in Georgia. As these percentages

continue to increase, it becomes increasingly evident that improving the health and well-being of Latino children is critical to the state's future. To secure Georgia's future, it is imperative that state and local agencies, community-based organizations, and local private funders come together to develop a plan of action to address the disparities Georgia's Latino children face. Specifically, research should be expanded to address the health status of Hispanic children, their needs, and the barriers they face accessing health care. A statistical brief on Georgia Latino children's health will be released by The National Council of La Raza (NCLR)—the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States—in July 2008. The statistical brief provides a snapshot on the health status of Georgia Latino children to date.

To access the statistical brief please visit www.nclr.org. The 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey data can also be accessed at www.cdc.gov/yrbs. U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2006 *American Community Survey*, "Sex by Age (Hispanic or Latino), Table B01001I." Conducted by U.S. Census Bureau. Washington, DC, 2007. Percentages calculated by the NCLR.

HHCGA New Strategic Plan 2008-2011

The HHCGA Board met in May to write a new strategic plan for the organization that will move us effectively towards the future. HHCGA has grown by leaps and bounds in the last few years and our organizational structure and financial planning needs to respond to that growth in a responsible and efficient manner. Just this past year, HHCGA won three grants to support our efforts: National Council of La Raza's "Emerging Latino Communities" grant; a Foundation for Southern Communities grant; and a Healthcare Georgia Foundation grant. We have also hired two staff: Mayira Bunting as Program Manager and Michael Jordan as IT Specialist/

Administrative Assistant. As of April 2008 we have three new board members: Debora Furce, Maria Isabel Castaneda and Maritza Licameli. Our committee structure has been redesigned as follows:

Organizational Development Committee: Task is to identify and develop internal systems that will maximize organizational effectiveness.

- Co-Chairs: Jack Kinkade and Maritza Licameli
jkinkad@emory.edu
maritza.licameli@heart.org

Advocacy Committee: Task is to identify advocacy issues, to develop proactive strategies and to build

meaningful relationships in the community.

- Co-Chairs: Susy Martorell and Mayira Bunting
mayirab@yahoo.com
smartor@emory.edu

Program Committee: Task is to identify and develop educational, leadership and networking opportunities for the membership and for the broader community.

- Co-Chairs: Maria Isabel Castaneda and Paola Salazar
mcastaneda@sjha.org
pasalazar@univision.net

We encourage those HHCGA members who would like to participate on a committee to contact the co-chairs.

The Hispanic Health Coalition of Georgia is funded by National Council La Raza (NCLR), Healthcare Georgia Foundation, and the Funds for Southern Communities.

HHCGA Dialogue to Improve Access to Health Services in Hall County. May 16, 2008 *By Susy Martorell*

This past May, HHCGA succeeded in organizing a very effective and well attended meeting of community stakeholders in Gainesville, Hall County. Participants in the dialogue numbered, 28, and included representatives from Georgia Legal Services, Hall County Health Department, United Way of Hall County, Healthy Hall and Hall County Schools, to name just a few. The event was sponsored by WellCare of Georgia Inc. and funded by the “Fund for Southern Communities”.



HHCGA shared information about successful advocacy strategies used in Metro Atlanta. Hall County representatives shared information about local concerns regarding access to health services in their community. Some key elements discussed:

- Need for trained medical interpreters
- Scarcity of bilingual mental health providers
- Fear within the community rising over immigration raids and the like
- Need for more education for patients and providers both
- Concerns expressed about obstacles to Medicaid and similar benefits due to cultural and linguistic barriers, as well as misinterpretation of state policies
- Complexities inherent in serving “mixed status” families
- Complexities related to proving income for employees paid in cash and ID issues.

This event highlights HHCGA’s vision to bring together organizations around Georgia in an effort to build a stronger voice and a stronger resolve to find solutions to obstacles to health services for Latinos in our state. For more information about this initiative contact Mayira Bunting at

mayirab@yahoo.com

Save the Date

July 29 4rd HHCGA HEALTH OPEN CALL IN GEORGIA (see box below)

August 1 HHCGA DIALOGUE TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES IN HALL COUNTY : 11:30 to 2:00 pm at Peach State Bank Trust. Initiative sponsor by Funds for Southern Communities and WellCare of Georgia, Inc . Pre-registration required .

August 7 HHCGA DIALOGUE TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES IN LYONS : 11:00 am to 2:00 pm Pre-registration required .

February 27 to 29 2009

LATINO/HISPANIC HEALTH SUMMIT OF GEORGIA
Emory Conference Center
Partially funded by the Healthcare Georgia Foundation

For more Information about the above events please contact Mayira Bunting at hhcga.membership@yahoo.com

4th HHCGA Health Open Call in Georgia

“Obesity in the Latinos Community”

Tuesday, July 29th 2008
9:00-10:00 AM

To register for this Free HHGCA teleconference RSVP hhcga.membership@yahoo.com

With your name, organization, position, phone & email The teleconference will be a 60 minute call and will include speaker presentations and Q&A.