

Health Insurance for Latino Children: A Community-Based Approach



Twenty-three (23%) percent of Latino children and their families lack health insurance compared to 10.6% of the overall population in Massachusetts. Uninsured children are more likely than insured children to be in poor or fair health, not have a regular physician, and not to have made any medical visit in the past year. They utilize emergency or critical care more frequently than other health services. More effective outreach, education and enrollment methods are necessary to increase the number of Latino children and their families with health insurance. In Massachusetts, ALL children are eligible for public health insurance regardless of their immigration status.

Milagros Abreu, MD, MPH at BU's School of Public Health made insuring Latino children her objective as part of her practicum requirements while achieving her MPH. Her belief that bringing the information directly to the residents is best approach as it is critical that children have the proper health care they deserve. Working with her advisor, Professor Pat Hynes, Director of the Collaborations and Partnerships Core for the PRC, assistance from the PRC Education/Training Core, she designed and developed a community-based approach to getting information and education assistance to the parents of Latino children in applying for health insurance, and connection with primary care targeting the residents of the Boston Housing Authority's two public housing developments in East Boston: Orient Heights and Maverick Housing Developments.

Goal of the program: increase the number of Latino children and their parents to enroll in health insurance and identify and train Latino community leaders (residents) to conduct outreach, education and enrollment for health insurance programs.

The program received funding in July 2006 from the John Henry Foundation which supported Dr. Abreu and five Program Assistants (trained residents) with their outreach efforts which made possible the enrollment of approximately 200 Latino children and adults in health insurance with connection to primary care.

Due to the success of this initiative, future programs are being planned to reach other Boston public housing developments, other Boston neighborhoods and other immigrant communities outside of Boston. The LHIP has expanded into the MetroWest area of Massachusetts-Greater Framingham to service the Brazilian and Latino Communities.

A list of sites to access services on following page.

For more information: Dr. Milagros Abreu, MD, Assistant Research Professor, Department of Epidemiology, Boston University School of Public Health. Tel: 617-638-6727 email: mabreu@bu.edu



Health Sites for enrollment, follow-ups and referrals in Massachusetts. Services are offered in Spanish, Portuguese and English in all locations:

Latino Health Insurance Program (Main Office)
12 Irving St., 2nd Floor
Framingham, MA 01702
617-638-6727 (temporary)
Ask for Arlete Falkowski or Maria Aldana
Wed-Thurs. 10:00am—5:00pm, Fri. 10:00am-4:00pm

Igreja Assembleia de Deus Bethesda
100 Concord St.
Framingham, MA 01702
508-816-3588
Ask for Cida Gomes or Pastor Aparecido da Silva
Mon-Tues, 9:00am-5:00pm

Iglesia Cristiana Nueva Vida
70 White St.
East Boston, MA 02128
617-567-0235 ext. 2
Ask for Ana Sanabria or Pastor Maria Saravia
Tues-Wed 10:00am-3:00pm

Iglesia Bautistas de Framingham and Cambridge
112 Hollis St., 2nd Floor
Framingham, MA 01702
Ask for Pastor Antonio La Zerda

La Iglesias Santa Maria de Waltham
133 School St.
Waltham, MA 02451
781-891-1730
Ask for Deacon Eduardo Mora

Igreja Metodista Unido de Saugus
493 Lincoln St.
Saugus, MA
781-233-0586
Ask for Rev. Juarez Goncalves

For more info contact Dr. Milagros Abreu, Director and Founder of the Latino Health Insurance Program at 617-638-6727 or via email mabreu@bu.edu