

ODMHSAS

Creating Healthier Oklahoma Communities

Latino Population Workgroup

Final Report



Workgroup members

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Introduction

Hispanics/Latinos are very racially diverse, and as a result an ethnic category, rather than a race was formed. While the two terms are sometimes used interchangeably, "Hispanic" is a narrower term which only refers to persons of Spanish-speaking origin or ancestry, while "Latino" is more frequently used to refer more generally to anyone of Latin American origin or ancestry, including Brazilians. Hispanic thus includes persons from Spain and Spanish-speaking Latin Americans but excludes Brazilians while Latino excludes persons from Spain but includes Spanish-speaking Latin Americans and Brazilians.

Demographics

Hispanics make up the largest ethnic minority in the country. In 2010, the estimated Hispanic population in the U.S. was 50.5 million, constituting 16% of the nation's total population. This estimate does not include the 3.7 million residents of Puerto Rico. The Hispanic population increased by 15.2 million between 2000 and 2010. By 2050, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that Latinos will make up 25% of the entire U.S. population and 50% of the K-12 population.

In Oklahoma City Public Schools, Latinos already comprise 46% of the K-12 population. The current 2011 population figure in Oklahoma is 3,791,508 and the Hispanic population has become the largest minority group, as there are a reported 332,007 living in Oklahoma which accounts for 8.9 percent of the total population.

Oklahoma County is the largest county with 718,633 people and grew 8.8% since 2000; this represents 19.2% of the state's total population. The Hispanic population accounts for 15.1 percent of the total population that live in Oklahoma County. The Hispanic population grew an astonishing 89.3 percent in Oklahoma

County over the past ten years. About a fifth of all births in Oklahoma County are of Hispanic women.

The growth of the Hispanic population does not, however, reflect true numbers due to external variables, such as mode and pattern of migration into this country and confusion of appropriate designation of ethnic/racial breakdowns. The standard race categories used for Census purposes are White, Black, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. Hispanic is not considered a race but is instead an ethnicity- Hispanics can be of any race.

The U.S. Census Bureau released new state-level data from the American Community Survey on poverty in 2010. Some 616,610 Oklahomans, one out of every six (16.9 percent), lived in poverty. Oklahoma's poverty rate rose from 16.2 in 2009. After African-American with 30.1 percent, Hispanics have the highest rates of poverty (29.8 percent).

Other counties with large Hispanic populations are:

- Tulsa County- 11% of the county's population
- Texas County- 42% of the county's population
- Jackson County 20.9% of the county's population
- Blaine County 24.1% of the county's population

Alcohol and Substance Abuse Use

Surveys that are limited to adolescent populations indicate that younger Hispanics have a higher rate of illicit substance use compared to African American and White adolescents (*Delva et al., 2005; Johnston et al., 2004*). Since adolescents and young people are at higher risk of substance abuse and addiction than older individuals, the fact that 40% of Latinos are under age 21 (*Ramirez and de la Cruz, 2002*) makes the Hispanic community in the U.S. particularly vulnerable to

substance abuse. Adding to the vulnerability for substance abuse is the higher frequency of other environmental risk factors such as low socioeconomic status (SES) and educational levels, poor access to healthcare, and language barriers (*Ramirez and de la Cruz, 2002; Stevenson et al., 2004*).

Recommendations

1. Research is needed in the study of Hispanic/Latino substance use/abuse in Oklahoma. Improving this area is essential to develop effective strategies to prevent substance use/abuse.
2. To find means to reward schools that participate in surveys such as the Oklahoma Prevention Needs Assessment.
3. In addressing distinctive issues related to drug abuse in Hispanics, it is important to recognize the tremendous diversity of the Hispanic community that shares a common language, but is constituted of ethnically and culturally diverse groups.
4. The changing demographics in the United States pose a challenge to develop optimal strategies in the prevention and treatment of drug abuse and addiction that are sensitive not only to the original culture, but also to pressures of acculturation. (The facility with and degree to which one assimilates the values and practices of a different culture are influenced by the person's age, stage of development, emotional well-being, and cognitive abilities, which in turn influence the vulnerability for substance abuse)
5. Better coordination and collaboration among agencies, organizations or institutions that at the present are providing substance abuse prevention efforts. The Latino community is not aware of available services. RPCs need to market their services better.
6. Current staff providing services should have access to ongoing cultural competency trainings. There are not enough providers who are bilingual (people are more likely to join the efforts if the individuals providing the

- services reflect their culture). Therefore organizations providing substance abuse prevention should make a greater effort to recruit Preventionists of Latino descent.
7. It would be beneficial to the mental health and health care higher education to provide student loan breaks, stipends or incentives in the areas of math, science, social work and rehabilitation counseling waivers, so that our students have an opportunity to be award not only for their cultural language but also address the need of shortage of bilingual professionals in our state and across the nation.
 8. More publicity in the Spanish language about public laws and policies that limit access to substance use. (i.e, Social Host Law).
 9. Need to do mapping to discover access/availability to drugs and target those areas.
 10. Partnering with special populations is crucial. ODMHSAS should make every effort to find and secure funds for these populations.
 11. Even though ODMHSAS focuses in the environmental strategies approach to prevention of substance abuse, some populations require a one-to-one approach to be more effective. We need to pay attention to individual risk factors associated with adolescent substance use that include behavioral, cognitive and mental health factors.
 12. An effective approach for substance abuse prevention among Latinos must include working with the entire family.
 13. Substance abuse prevention efforts should consider activities that address family issues, peers, school, neighborhoods and the entire community.
 14. The youth's normative beliefs about drug use by peers as well as actual drug use by peers are major risk factors for youth substance use. It is important to reduce social stigma of the ethnic group's use of drugs by collaborating with a university on the use of social media.
 15. There is a need to increase parental involvement, family bonding, parent-adolescent communication, and parental monitoring among Latino families. Resources in the community in these areas are scarce or nonexistent.

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16. It is important to consider that prevention services are so tied to providing treatment to family members that may be using substances.
17. To promote more protective factors in schools such as academic achievement, educational aspirations, how to finance higher education, how to apply for college, and parental involvement. All to help make education a family goal.
18. ODMHSAS needs better collaboration with the police departments statewide and the Office of Juvenile Affairs.

Conclusion

The workgroup members feel it would be beneficial to the focus population and to the ODMHSAS for the workgroup members to continue to meet on a quarterly basis in an advisory capacity to the ODMHSAS. The Workgroup would also like to receive feedback upon SAMHSA's approval of the ODMHSAS Five-year Strategic Plan.