

- The U.S. Census Bureau shows there are nearly 14,000 Washtenaw County residents who identify themselves as Hispanic or Latino. This represents 4% of the total population, which is similar to the rest of Michigan (4%), but lower than the nation (16%).
- Public Health partnered with Casa Latina and the University of Michigan School of Public Health to conduct a health survey of 500 Latino residents to assess and enhance the health, wellbeing, and social support of this population. Members of the local Latino community helped to design and administer the survey. Surveys were collected from September 2013 – January 2014, and results are now being presented to stakeholders and to the community.

## Latino/a Health Equity in Washtenaw County

### Encuesta Buenos Vecinos (Survey of Good Neighbors)

During 2000-2010, the proportion of Washtenaw County Latinos rose 125% and is projected to continue to increase substantially. In addition, Washtenaw Latino birthrates increased 151% between 2000-2009. This young and growing population are critical cultural and economic contributors to our local economy. Unfortunately, this population also faces tremendous obstacles. The average age of death of Washtenaw Latinos (58 years) is 17 years younger than for Washtenaw Whites and six years younger than Washtenaw Blacks. Also, in 2011-2012, Latinos only had a 39% graduation rate from the Ypsilanti School District, which is significantly lower than any other cohort. Access to healthy environments, social support and health care provides greater opportunity for mental and physical health, as well as productivity of these vital community members.

Title IV of the Affordable Care Act emphasizes the need to “...(P)rioritize strategies to reduce racial and ethnic disparities, including social, economic and geographic determinants of health...” as well as collect “...data on race, ethnicity, sex, primary language and disability status... at the smallest geographic level...”

To address the chronic lack of population health data on Washtenaw County Latinos, Public Health, academics and members of the local Latino community collaborated on a community assessment called Encuesta Buenos Vecinos (EBV), or “Survey of Good Neighbors.” Over 500 Washtenaw County Latinos responded to face-to-face, group and internet surveys. Results showed that compared to the Washtenaw County population as a whole, Latinos reported higher rates of obesity, diabetes, poor mental health, and fair/poor health; and lower rates of social and emotional support. In addition, fears of deportation and difficulty interacting with others due to lack of English ability ranked high.

As a result of the survey, the following were identified as the top ten issues currently facing Washtenaw County Latinos:

- |                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| [1] Physical activity                | [6] Depression/social support           |
| [2] Access to dental and vision care | [7] Access to English language learning |
| [3] Healthy nutrition                | [8] Access to community resources       |
| [4] Unplanned pregnancy              | [9] Parental influence                  |
| [5] Substance abuse                  | [10] Education                          |

### **What is WCPH doing to address this issue?**

- Partnering with the Latino community in interpreting and disseminating results of the EBV.
- Working with the Accion Buenos Vecinos (ABV) coalition to identify proven strategies to address issues prioritized by the Washtenaw County Latino community.
- Partnering with the ABV to assure sustained momentum and resources to address priority issues.
- Partnering with the Jovenes Tejedores (Young Weavers) project to organize and promote hope and high school graduation in Washtenaw County Latinos.

#### **For more information:**

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