



## Hispanic/Latino Health Status Overview

The Hispanic/Latino population is comprised of people of any race who share a common Hispanic/Latino ethnic or cultural heritage. This includes a wide variety of cultures from Latin American and other nations. In 2010, people of Hispanic/Latino heritage made up 16.3 percent of the United States population and 5.7 percent of Pennsylvania's population. It is one of the fastest growing subpopulations, having increased from 2000 to 2010 by 43 percent nationally and 82.6 percent within Pennsylvania.<sup>1</sup>

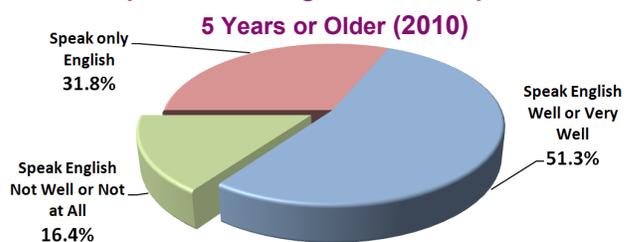
### Demographics

Nearly three quarters of a million people comprise the Hispanic/Latino population in Pennsylvania. Although the arrival of the first Hispanics/Latinos in the commonwealth can be traced back to colonial days, this population experienced significant growth in the latter part of the twentieth century. The population has more than tripled since 1990, growing from 232,262 to 719,660 in 2010. In the last decade alone, the Hispanic/Latino population increased 83 percent.<sup>1</sup>

The Hispanic/Latino population in Pennsylvania has also become increasingly diverse. In 1990, 64.1 percent of the Hispanic/Latino population were of Puerto Rican heritage, while today, they represent only 50.9 percent of Hispanics/Latinos. There has been large growth in the Mexican and Dominican populations in Pennsylvania, as well as increases in the numbers of Central Americans and South Americans.<sup>1</sup> It is likely that this growth and diversification will continue, not only through migration, but also because Hispanics/Latinos have lower death rates<sup>2</sup> and higher fertility rates<sup>2</sup> than most other Pennsylvanians.

According to the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS), 69.3 percent of Hispanics/Latinos over the age of 5 in Pennsylvania were English fluent - 31.8 percent were English-only speakers and 51.3 percent are bilingual in Spanish and English.<sup>3</sup> That leaves at

### Speakers of English and/or Spanish



Source: US Census - American Community Survey

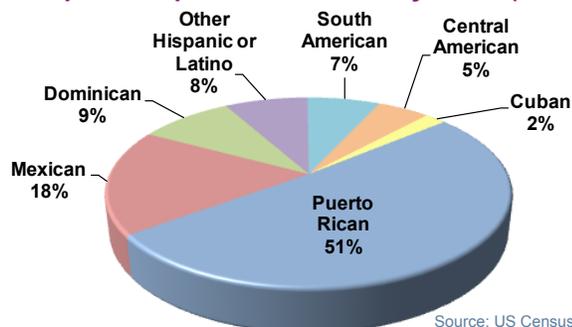
least 16.4 percent of the population (approximately 105,000) over 5 years of age with little or no English fluency to be considered in the provision of linguistically and culturally appropriate health services.

While socioeconomically diverse, Hispanics/Latinos in Pennsylvania generally have lower educational levels and are often at the bottom rung of the economic scale, with a concentration of poverty among Hispanic/Latino female-headed households as compared to White non-Hispanic (NH) populations<sup>3</sup>. In general, lower socio-economic and less English fluent Hispanics/Latinos are concentrated in the urban areas where there is easier access to services and transportation, as well communities where others speak their language.

Overall, Hispanics/Latinos experience similar socio-economic conditions as the Black/African-American (AA) population. In 2010, 33.5 percent of Pennsylvanian Hispanics/Latinos lived in poverty, compared with 28.4 percent of Black/AAs and 10.6 percent of Whites. Forty-one percent of Hispanic/Latino children lived in poverty, compared with 37 percent of Black/AA children and 13 percent of White children.<sup>3</sup>

High poverty rates have generally been linked to worse health outcomes for low-income families, regardless of race. Yet, despite their socioeconomic and educational status and language limitations, Hispanics/Latinos had lower overall rates of death than White or Black/AA populations and lower rates of death in the top three causes of death in Pennsylvania for 2009: heart disease, cancer, and stroke.<sup>2</sup>

### Hispanic Populations of Pennsylvania (2010)



Source: US Census 2010

## Hispanic Health Paradox

While 36 percent of Hispanics/Latinos have achieved some post-secondary education in 2007-2009, in general, Hispanics/Latinos experience lower educational levels and higher levels of poverty.<sup>3</sup> As they often face significant challenges in accessing quality health care and lack health insurance,<sup>2</sup> this would lead us to believe that their health status data would be comparable to that of Black/AAs with similar socioeconomic and educational demographics.

Much of the health status data for Hispanics/Latinos, however, contradicts conventional expectations as they tend to have health outcomes that are, in most cases, equal to or better than those of the White population. This is often referred to as the Hispanic health paradox.

While this epidemiologic paradox is being studied and has not been satisfactorily explained, evidence suggests many Hispanic/Latino immigrants arrive in the United States healthier than the average native-born residents. Even though continued residence in the United States is often connected to greater access and utilization of health care, it is found that immigrants' overall health declines over time. This phenomenon is known as the acculturation effect. This effect is generally more influential on men than on women.<sup>4</sup>

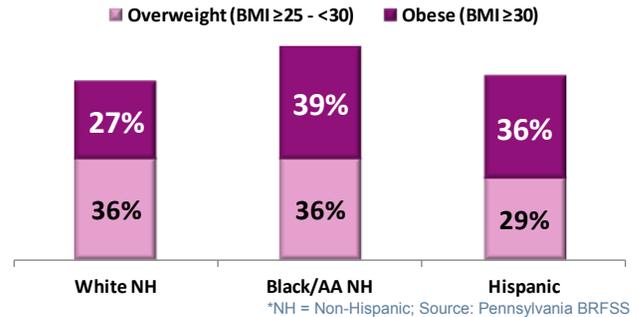
## Health Disparities

Although Pennsylvania Hispanics/Latinos did have lower rates of death and better health outcomes in many key areas, including significantly lower rates of death from cancers, cardiovascular disease, and strokes,<sup>2</sup> there are some areas where they also have worse health outcomes. For example, in 2007-2009, Hispanics/Latinos had:

- The highest rates of death from liver disease/chronic cirrhosis and viral hepatitis;
- Significantly higher rates of death from HIV than Whites;
- The second highest rate of death by homicide after Black/AAs, primarily among males;
- The highest percentage of persons with asthma.<sup>2</sup>

Twenty-one percent (95 percent confidence interval: 16-28) of adult Hispanics/Latinos needed to see a doctor in 2008-2010, but could not because of cost. Twenty-two percent (CI: 16-28) of Hispanics/Latinos did not have a personal health care provider, compared to 17 percent (CI:

**Obesity in Pennsylvania Adults (2008 - 2010)**



14-20) of Black/AAs non-Hispanic/Latino (NH) and 9 percent (CI: 9-10) of White NHs. In 2009, 65 (54-74) percent of adult Hispanics/Latinos did not have dental insurance and, of those with dental insurance, 16 percent (CI: 8-29) had difficulty in finding dentists that would accept it.<sup>2</sup>

## Obesity

Obesity is a critical and growing health concern among most racial/ethnic groups. It is strongly connected with higher rates of diabetes and heart disease. Obesity rates among Hispanics/Latinos rose from 27 percent (CI: 18-40) in 2004 to 34 percent (CI: 25-44) in 2009.<sup>2</sup> As shown in the chart above, from 2008-2010, while the combined percent of Hispanics/Latinos who were overweight and obese (65 percent) was comparable to White NHs (63 percent), Hispanics/Latinos had a higher percentage of obesity than White NHs.<sup>2</sup>

## Cancer

In 2008, the top four cancers diagnosed in Pennsylvania Hispanic/Latino populations were male prostate, female breast, colorectal, and lung. The incidence rates and rates of death are the lowest for these four and many other forms of cancer among Hispanics/Latinos than for either the White or Black/AA populations in Pennsylvania.<sup>2, 5</sup>

However, Hispanics/Latinos suffer from disproportionately higher incidence rates than White NHs for certain cancer types. For example, in 2006-2008, liver and intrahepatic bile duct incidence rates were two times higher among Pennsylvania Hispanics/Latinos when compared to Whites (11.9 per 100,000 vs. 5.6). Cervical cancer incidence rates were also slightly higher in Hispanic women than in White women (10.2 vs. 7.6 ).<sup>2</sup>

**Top 5 Cancers by Rates of Incidence and Death in Pennsylvania Hispanics (2006-2008)**

	Incidence	Death	Incidence	Death	Incidence	Death	Incidence	Death	Incidence	Death
	Male Prostate		Lung/Bronchus		Female Breast		Colorectal		Liver/Bile Duct	
White	145.9	24.2	69.2	51.7	125.0	24.0	51.3	18.5	5.6	4.7
Black/AA	228.6	54.5	89.1	67.2	131.9	32.0	55.5	24.0	13.0	9.0
Hispanic	102.5	16.5	29.1	15.9	68.9	13.0	32.5	8.9	11.9	6.0

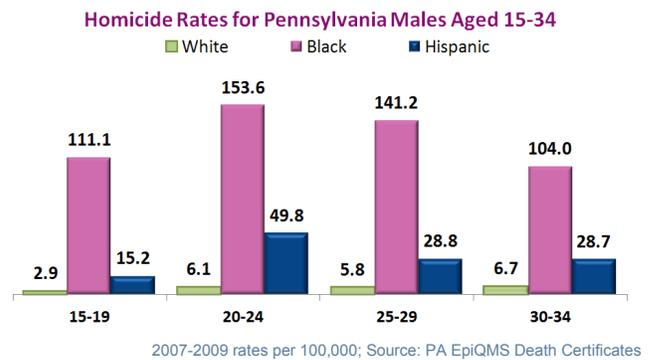
Age adjusted rates out of 100,000; Source: Pennsylvania EpiQMS Tumor Registry & Death Certificates

## Homicide, Violence, and Accidents

Among the most serious health concerns affecting Hispanics/Latinos is the impact that violent crime has on their communities, especially among young males. In 2009, accidents and homicides were the third and fourth leading cause of death of Hispanics/Latinos in Pennsylvania. They were also the top two leading causes of death for Hispanic/Latino males aged 5-24 and 25-44 years old.<sup>6</sup>

The homicide rate for Hispanic/Latino residents overall (11.9) was over four times higher in 2009 when compared to Whites (2.5). The homicide rate, however, among Hispanics/Latinos was much lower than the rate among Blacks (25.0). Homicide rates for males in specific age groups are shown in the chart on the right. The homicide rate in 2009 for Hispanic/Latino males (19.9) was significantly higher than the rate among Hispanic/Latino females (4.1).<sup>2</sup>

Rates of death by accidents (36.5) and suicides (12.1) in



2007-2009, however, are much lower in male Hispanics/Latinos aged 15-34 than for White males. Rates for Black/AA males are comparable to Hispanic/Latino males. Hispanic/Latino males were also least likely to be killed in automobile accidents.<sup>2</sup>

Hispanic/Latino males in this age group also had the second highest rate of drug-induced death in 2007-2009 (16.1) when compared to their Black/AA (9.6) and White (28.8) counterparts.<sup>2</sup>

## Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)

Sexually Transmitted Diseases are a growing problem among the Hispanic community. Large disparities exist between White NHs and Hispanics/Latinos in regard to almost every major STD.

In Pennsylvania for 2005-2010, the most prevalent modes of AIDS transmission for Hispanics/Latinos were through heterosexual sexual contact (42 percent) and injected drug use (29 percent), followed by male-to-male sexual contact (15 percent).<sup>7</sup>

In 2005, 15.1 percent of AIDS cases were diagnosed among Hispanics/Latinos. By 2010, Hispanics/Latinos accounted for 20.8 percent of AIDS diagnoses.<sup>5</sup> In 2010, adult Hispanics/Latinos were more likely to be tested for HIV than White NHs (age 18-64, except when tested with blood

donation: 55 percent [CI: 43-66] vs. 29 percent [CI: 28-31]).<sup>2</sup>

Chlamydia and gonorrhea are two common bacterial STDs that can damage the female reproductive organs and raise the HIV/AIDS infection rate in both sexes, if left untreated.<sup>8, 10</sup> Chlamydia rates among Hispanic women are four and a half times that of White NH women in Pennsylvania and nearly seven and a half times higher among Hispanic men than White NH men.<sup>9</sup>

Gonorrhea can cause pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) in women or epididymitis in men (a painful infection and inflammation of the sperm duct), if left untreated.<sup>10</sup> Gonorrhea occurs four times more often among Hispanic women than non-Hispanic White NH women. In men, Hispanic rates are seven times higher than their White NH counterparts.<sup>9</sup>

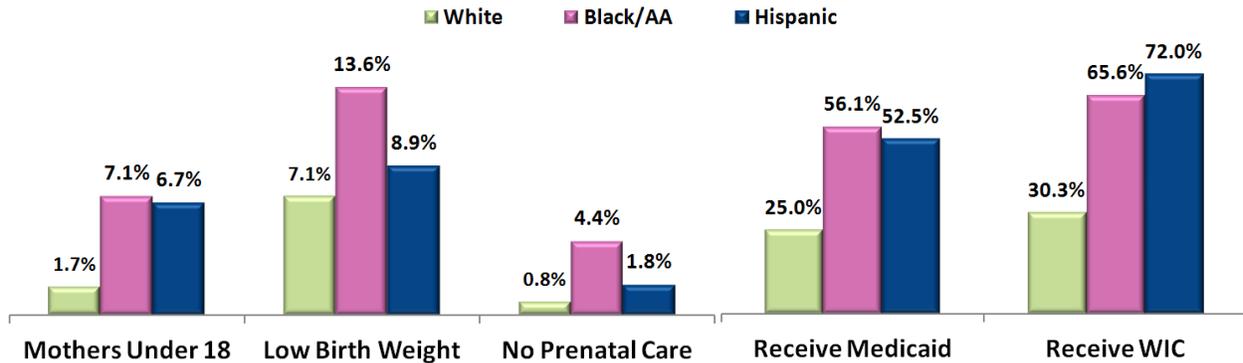


Source: National Library of Medicine | History of Medicine

**21%** of newly diagnosed AIDS cases in 2010 were Hispanics/Latinos.

**5.7%** of Pennsylvania's population in 2010 was Hispanic/Latino.

## Percentage of Pennsylvania Mothers Who Gave Birth in 2007-2009



Source: Pennsylvania Birth Certificates EpiQMS 2007-2009

### Fertility and Birth

Hispanics/Latinos have the highest fertility rate in Pennsylvania. From 2007-2009, the fertility rate was 97.8 per 1,000 mothers aged 15-44, compared to 71.0 for Black/AA women and 52.0 for White women. However, Hispanic/Latino mothers and children face significant health challenges. In 2010, 42 percent of Pennsylvanian Hispanic/Latino children under the age of 18 lived in poverty, along with 29 percent of adults.<sup>3</sup> As shown in the chart above, Hispanic/Latino children in Pennsylvania are also the most likely to be born to a mother receiving government assistance through the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program and second most likely through Medicaid. Because of such socioeconomic hardships, these children will likely face disparities from birth.

**45%** of Pennsylvania's Hispanics/Latinos did not receive prenatal care in their first trimester in 2007-09.

Nearly 9 percent of Hispanic/Latino mothers gave birth to underweight babies in Pennsylvania during 2007-2009. Hispanic/Latino mothers were slightly less likely to breastfeed (67.2 percent) than White mothers (68.6 percent) and more likely than Black/AA mothers (55.4 percent). As shown in the chart above, Pennsylvania's Hispanic/Latino and Black/AA NH mothers are significantly more likely than White mothers to be under 18 years of age.<sup>2</sup>

Hispanic/Latino teen mothers (15-17 years of age) were significantly less likely to terminate, miscarry or otherwise lose their pregnancy (13 percent) when compared to their White (33 percent) or Black/AA NH (42 percent) counterparts. However, overall Hispanic/Latino infant mortality rates in 2007-2009 (6.7 per 1,000 live births) were similar to White NH populations (6.3). Hispanics/Latinos were less likely to smoke while pregnant (10 percent) when compared to their Black/AA (15 percent) and White (19 percent) counterparts.<sup>2</sup>

All of these factors are vital to both healthy child development and lifelong health achievement.

## References

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau: Census 2010, 2000, 1990

<sup>2</sup> Pennsylvania Epidemiologic Query & Mapping System (EpiQMS); Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS); PA Birth Certificates; PA Death Certificates; Cancer Incidence/Tumor Registry; PA STD Registry; Teen Pregnancies; Infant Deaths  
<http://app2.health.state.pa.us/epiqms>

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey

<sup>4</sup> Gorman, Bridget K. (2010) Gender, Acculturation, and Health among Mexican Americans. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 51(4)

<sup>5</sup> Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center:  
<http://www.fhcr.org/patient/cc/hispanic.html>

<sup>6</sup> Pennsylvania Department of Health (2011) *Pennsylvania Vital Statistics 2009*

<sup>7</sup> Pennsylvania Department of Health HIV Surveillance Summary Report: December 2010

<sup>8</sup> CDC Chlamydia Factsheet:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/std/chlamydia/STDFact-Chlamydia.htm>

<sup>9</sup> Pennsylvania Department of Health Bureau of Communicable Diseases

<sup>10</sup> CDC Gonorrhea Factsheet:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/std/gonorrhea/STDFact-Gonorrhea.htm>

Please visit our website for more information:  
<http://www.health.state.pa.us/healthequity>



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