

# Migrant Health Fact Sheet

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## Latinos in the U.S:

According to a briefing paper by the University of California:

(California Policy Research Center, University of California, Office of the President)

- There are over 38.8 million Latinos in the U.S.
- 67% of these are of Mexican origin
- Latinos wield \$580 **billion** in buying power according to the 2002 US Census and Selig Center for Economic Growth at the University of Georgia.
- Undocumented workers generate goods and services worth more than **\$120 billion** a year in the U.S
- Documented and Undocumented Mexican Immigrants pay **\$25-30 billion** in taxes each year but only 5% of these receive public assistance.

Although these workers clearly make substantial contributions to the U.S. economy, 70% of agricultural workers do not have health insurance.(National Center for Farmworker Health. 1999) As a result, this highly productive community has some of the worse health outcomes. For example:

- 1.2 million Mexicans in the U.S. have been diagnosed with diabetes
- Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death among Latinos Nationwide
- Despite high levels of employment, nearly 60% of Latinos live in families with incomes below 200% of the poverty level, compared to 23% of whites
- The risk of Tuberculosis among farm workers was estimated to be six times greater than the general population of employed adults(CDC, unpublished data, 1985-1989).

## Migrant Workers in Oregon:

According to the Oregon Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Enumeration Profiles Study completed by Alice Larson, Ph.D., September, 2002:

- The Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker population is estimated at 174,484. This number includes workers and their dependents.
- In Oregon, Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers are integral to creating over 3billion of annual agricultural economic activity.
- There are 14,558 Migrant Children and Youth
- 44,905 Seasonal Children and youth
- There are only seven (7) Migrant Health Center Grantees in Oregon.
- The statewide service penetration rate for the MSFW population is only 10.18%.

## **The Health of Agriculture in Oregon**

According to Oregon USDA Statistics:

- In 1999 Oregon's production of five principal vegetable crops (sweet corn, storage onions, carrots, snap bean, green peas) totaled over 1.2 metric tons, up 21% from 1998. The area harvested for these five crops was 129,600 acres (up 13% from 1998)
- In 1999 Oregon farms harvested 315,960 pounds of berry crops, the total value of all berry crops in 1999 was \$98.4 million (up 17% from 1998).
- In 1998 894,386 cases of wine were sold. In 1999 17,900 metric tons of wine grapes were produced (worth over \$23,000,000 in wholesale value).
- In 1998 Oregon's nursery and greenhouse industries totaled \$532 million in sales. This marks the 8<sup>th</sup> consecutive year of record sales.
- Oregon ranks first in the country in production of Christmas trees, Hazelnuts, Blackberries, boysenberries, peppermint, black raspberries, plums, snap beans, onions, bulbs, blueberries, nursery crops, strawberries, pears and hops.
- Total value of fruits and nuts produced in Oregon was over \$305 million in 1999 alone. Oregon is the 4<sup>th</sup> highest state in production value of fruits and nuts behind only California, Florida and Washington.
- Total Oregon production value of vegetable, fruits and nuts in 1999 was over \$569 million, 5<sup>th</sup> highest in the US.
- Oregon, however, tops the nation in prevalence of hunger and was tied for 4<sup>th</sup> worst nationally in rankings for food insecurity.

## **The Health of Migrant Workers in Oregon**

According to a report by OHSU entitled 'Reducing Pesticide Exposure in Minority Families:

- Migrant farmworkers are among the most disadvantaged, medically indigent persons and have the poorest health of any group in the US.
- The infant mortality among Migrant Workers is 125% higher than the general population
- The life expectancy of Migrant Farmworkers is 49 compared to the national average of 75.
- Commonly reported health problems among Migrant Farmworkers and their children include: lower height and weight, respiratory disease, parasitic conditions, skin infections, chronic diarrhea, vitamin A deficiency, accidental injury, heat-related illness and chemical poisoning.

A health survey done by Providence Medical Center and La Clinica del Cariño of all people living in Hood River County illustrates disparities even between the comparison of Hispanics who are Farmworkers and those who are not Farmworkers.

- 55.1 % of Hispanic Farmworkers reported not having health insurance and 34.9% of Hispanics who were not farmworkers who also had no insurance
- 61.9% of Hispanic Farmworkers had not seen a doctor in the last 12 months and 41% of other Hispanics had not seen a doctor in the last 12 months.
- 8.4% of Hispanic Farmworkers did not have water, toilet or bathing facilities in their home and 10.6% reported having only some of these facilities in their home.
- Oregon currently does not offer prenatal care to undocumented women. Washington and California do.

According to a “Farmworkers in Oregon 2000 Report” published by the League of Women Voters:

- More than 40% of all farmworkers who visit health clinics have multiple and complex health problems. Because of limited access to health care, farmworkers often are seen only when their health problems are at an advanced stage.

According to an Oregon CD Summary, 1999, on Health issues Among Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers obtaining regular prenatal care for migrant mothers is difficult and many pregnancies are high risk

According to the General Accounting Office(1992) farm work is the most dangerous occupation in the United States.

The National Agricultural Workers Survey of 1997-1992 conducted by the Department of Labor found that:

- Five out of six Farmworkers spoke Spanish(84%)
- Farmworkers had on average completed six years of education.
- Just one tenth of foreign born Farmworkers spoke or read English fluently
- Less than 5% of Mexican-born and other Latin-American born Farmworkers reported they could read and speak English well
- 52% of hired farmworkers lacked work authorization(making them weary of seeking out state sponsored services)
- Just 5% reported being covered by employer provided health insurance

The national Agricultural Workers Survey of 1997-1998 reports that the typical worker tending and harvesting fruits, vegetables, nursery, field and other crops in the U.S is:

- Young (2/3 are under age 35).
- 80% Male
- Hispanic, (90%, mostly from Mexico)
- Low Income, (half of the workers earned less than \$7,500 a year)
- Most incidents of pesticide poisoning go unreported as they are mistaken for flu or because workers may fear losing their jobs if they report.

The Title 1 Migrant Education State Performance Report,(1998) estimates that approximately 800,000 children under the age of 18 work in Agriculture in the U.S.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health estimates that nationally as many as:

- 100,000 Children are injured and 100 are killed in farm work yearly.
- Farmworkers’ dental health is that of a third world population.