



BCHD PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Baltimore City Health Department Releases Latino Health Report

BALTIMORE, MD (October 20, 2011) – The Baltimore City Health Department is releasing a new report, *The Health of Latinos in Baltimore City*, today. This is the first time a report specific to the health of Latinos is being released in Baltimore City. The report examines the health status and trends among Baltimore’s Latino residents.

In general, Baltimore’s Latino population is ethnically diverse and relatively young (median age is 27 years, compared to 35 for Baltimore overall). Among the positive health indicators, Latinos in Baltimore City were found to have lower mortality and infant mortality rates compared to Baltimore overall. Fewer Latinos are smokers – 16 percent of adults, compared to 28 percent of all Baltimoreans.

“As we work to improve the health of all Baltimoreans, it is important to understand the strengths and health challenges faced by the fastest growing segment of our City” said Baltimore City Commissioner of Health Dr. Oxiris Barbot.

Among the health challenges Latinos face are lack of health insurance and medical homes, high incidence of binge alcohol drinking, and death by accident (unintentional injuries) which is the third leading cause of death.

The report was released during an event held at Baltimore Medical System’s Highlandtown Healthy Living Center. The center sits in one of the largest Latino communities in Baltimore. BMS has served between 8,500 and 9,000 patients for whom English isn’t their first language, including individuals from 60 countries, encompassing about 28 languages and dialects.

BMS employs bilingual physicians and other staff, many of whom also have multi-cultural backgrounds that help them understand the needs of patients from other countries. For Baltimore’s growing refugee population, BMS also provides foreign language interpretation for initial health screenings and ongoing medical care.

“As one of the largest providers of health care to the Latino community, Baltimore Medical System has long recognized the important of providing culturally appropriate healthcare and language access services,” shares President & CEO Jay Wolvovsky. “It is our mission to provide healthcare to all residents of the community especially the underserved. Over the years, the demographics in Baltimore City have changed

dramatically, and we have had to change with them. Today, 25% of BMS' staff is bilingual, and we offer many services that help patients overcome barriers to care.”

Electronic copies of the report are available at the Health Department's Website, <http://www.baltimorehealth.org>.

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