



NLIRH Policy Priorities for Health Care Reform

The National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health (NLIRH) supports healthcare reform that will move our current system toward one that will improve the health, and well-being of all Latinas, their families and communities. NLIRH embraces a human rights approach to health care, ensuring that all health services are accessible, available, affordable, and of good quality for everyone.

Under the current efforts to reform our health care system, NLIRH's policy priorities are the following:

- ❁ **Support Family Eligibility.**
 - Under individual eligibility models for health care reform, proposals could bypass many eligible persons. A recent report found that immigrants tend to live in mixed-status households.
 - Individuals' health is inextricably linked to the health of their families. A model that covers individuals without regards to family is incomplete and insensitive to the ways in which people access health care.
- ❁ **Eliminate the Five-Year Bar on Accessing Public Benefits for Latina Immigrants & Families.**
 - Currently, 17.5% of women of reproductive age on Medicaid are Latinas.
 - Medicaid reduces financial barriers that exist to provide essential reproductive health care services for low-income women. The exclusion of new immigrants from Medicaid is not only unjust, but also bad public health policy.
 - Any restrictions to access health care programs and services will not only negatively affect the health of a single individual, but also the health of their children, their families and their community.
- ❁ **Support the Development & Maintenance of Community Health Worker Models.**
 - Community health worker models, such as the *promotoras de salud* model, promote positive health behaviors and connect underserved communities to services in a culturally and linguistically competent manner.
 - Studies have shown community health workers to be effective in increasing vaccinations, breastfeeding, breast cancer and other chronic disease screening among Latinas and in other communities.
 - Public health professionals and research have called for the community health worker model to be incorporated into the U.S. health system.
- ❁ **Expand Medicaid Eligibility.**
 - Medicaid is an essential program to Latinas and women of color. Because Latinas and women of color are disproportionately poor, it is important to expand Medicaid eligibility to address disparities in access to health care services and health outcomes.
- ❁ **Expand Access & Increase Funding for Community Health Centers (CHCs) & Title X Clinics.**
 - Over 20% of Latinas receive reproductive health care services from Title X clinics and family planning programs and nearly 25% of Title X clinic clients are Latinas.
 - Latinas have the highest uninsured rate, over 38%, of any racial and ethnic group.
 - CHCs and Title X clinics are an essential source of reproductive health and preventative services especially for low-income Latinas and immigrant women.

For more information and additional documentation to support these priorities, please contact Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas, Deputy Director (212/422.2553); jessica@latinainstitute.org, Jenny L. Jourdain, Associate Director of Policy (202/393.8580); jenny@latinainstitute.org, or

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