

## **Baseline Health Assessment of a Primarily Latino and Underserved Population in Colorado**

In the United States (US), the largest and fastest growing minority group is Latino persons less than 18 years old. In 2003, 19% of US children and adolescents were of Hispanic descent, increased from 9% in 1980. In 2004, Latinos represented 19.2% of the Colorado population; increased from the 17.1% identified in the 2000 Census. Asthma is a significant and growing burden among all US children with the proportion of asthma cases doubling from 1980 to 1995. Colorado has the second highest estimated prevalence of asthma in the United States at 7.1%. According to the Center for Disease Control's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), Latino children are more likely to experience an increased burden of asthma. Challenges remain in understanding chronic health conditions potentially associated with disparities involving occupation, environment, economics, education, culture, language, and immigration status. The majority of occupations in rural areas of Colorado are agricultural. In the US, farm workers continue to be one of the most impoverished and underserved populations and greater attention has recently been focused on agricultural-related illness among children living and working on farms. Eliminating disparities will require the development of longitudinal epidemiologic research that can be translated into culturally-appropriate public health initiatives. This pilot study will build upon a long-term partnership with the Salud Family Health Center (Salud), an organization providing health care to underserved and primarily Latino populations (approximately 64% of Salud clients are Latino). We will characterize the Salud Family Health Center child population with respect to asthma and risk factors thought to adversely affect Latino populations. In addition, we will assess via questionnaire the prevalence of environmental and occupational risk factors also disproportionately affecting Latino populations. Latinos are frequently not included in child health research. Therefore this study in the Salud population is critical to identify research questions for future larger-scale research initiatives aimed at evaluating potential environmental and occupational risk factors (either directly to the children themselves or indirectly via exposures from the parents) and eliminating health disparities among underserved children in Colorado.