

Culture, Collaboration, and Capacity

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Commissioned by
Destino: The Hispanic Legacy Fund
An Endowment Fund at the Ventura County Community Foundation



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Fall 2006



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Prepared for
Ventura County Community Foundation
Destino: The Hispanic Legacy Fund

by



RESEARCH AND FUND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

K&M Enterprises

CREATING INTELLIGENT SOLUTIONS

Fall 2006

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The Destino: The Hispanic Legacy Fund Vision Committee extends sincere thanks to the scores of individuals who took the time to assist us with our research by sharing their opinions and observations about the challenges of adequately serving the health care needs of our County's Latino population.

The research project survey was completed by 98 nonprofit, governmental, and private health care providers located in Ventura County. Although all provided vital information to the research, listing in this document was optional to encourage participation. We would like to thank all survey respondents who took the time to help us to understand better the health care environment that Ventura County Latinos must negotiate on a daily basis. A partial list of these dedicated health care providers is provided on the following page.

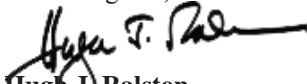
In addition, 18 key informant interviews were conducted to develop an in-depth understanding of the factors discovered during the survey phase. The interviews were important in identifying agencies with capacity building needs that could be supported by the Ventura County Community Foundation's *Resource Center for Nonprofit Management* through specific organizational development activities. We appreciate the contributions made by all of the key informants in making this research project truly effective. A list of the key informants who assisted in defining important variables in the research project is also provided on page 3.

We also gratefully acknowledge the financial support for this project provided by The California Endowment – Focus Funders Program, which shares our vision of expanding effective health care to all segments of our community. It is with great hope that we present these findings, particularly in their ability to stimulate further action.


We also thank the research and writing team at K & M Enterprises for conducting the thorough investigation of the study and preparing this report. In addition, grateful thanks and acknowledgement goes to Rigoberto Vargas, the administrator for Ventura County Public Health's Chronic Disease Prevention Programs, for assisting in providing needed research, editing, and verifying that this report was prepared in a culturally competent manner.

Finally, we pay particular note to the Latino community itself, whose challenges in navigating the health care system to provide for their families was the inspiration to drive this research; we want to understand more completely the problems it faces in order to develop effective solutions. We look forward to moving to the next phase of this project – assisting key organizations in prioritizing capacity building activities and in finding ways that together we can strengthen the community's health in the coming year. It is time to answer the call to a healthier community, and we look forward to working with others to further this important work.

Warm Regards,



Hugh J. Ralston
President and CEO



Henry L. "Hank" Lacayo
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*Destino is the bridge to a stronger,
well-informed and involved Latino Community.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Ventura County policymakers, health care providers, and stakeholders have long struggled to solve the problems associated with inadequate access to and availability of health care services for the Latino community. Not only do socio-economic conditions within the Latino community itself serve as barriers that prevent some Latino families from optimizing health care services, but organizational limitations of some health care providers may actually aggravate the already delicate balance between culture and need for health care services.

The Ventura County health care community has a history of collaboratively seeking solutions to complex problems in a local context. The *Culture, Collaboration, and Capacity* report endeavors to facilitate this effort by detailing the health care status, barriers, and gaps in health care services that affect Latinos in Ventura County, and examining strategies to overcome the current limitations in the Ventura County health care system. The research study was specifically designed to determine the organizational capacity building needs of Ventura County health care providers to enable them to serve their Latino clients more effectively. In partnership with The California Endowment – Focus Funders Program, Destino: The Hispanic Legacy Fund and Ventura County Community Foundation (VCCF) seek to: 1) heighten the visibility of health care issues impacting Latinos; 2) engage a wide community dialogue about potential strategies among diverse stakeholders; and 3) determine how tailored programming, provided through the VCCF Resource Center for Nonprofit Management, can build and strengthen the operational capacity of organizations providing health care services.

METHODS

This report was compiled based on a stepped research process that began with a review of current literature, needs assessments, and studies that relate to the first three sections of the report, followed by a research study involving surveys and interviews. This process was based on and a continuation of the health status and health access data revealed in the 2003 Destino Fund commissioned *Latino Health Needs in Ventura County*. The research study was designed to guide Destino grantmaking priorities by determining results related to observed health care priorities, barriers to access, gaps in services, strategies to improve access and availability issues, organizational capacity building needs, and preferred training topics. The research project was conducted in two stages: an on-line survey and key informant interviews of Ventura County health care providers deemed to be representative of the health care community. A total of 49 nonprofit organization, 34 governmental agency, and 13 private provider representatives completed the survey. A total of 18 key informant telephone interviews were conducted to more explicitly delve into areas from the survey that were significant and required more in-depth data collection to determine the underlying reasons for those survey results. Key informants were included in the data based on their self-selection on the survey, type of organization (nonprofit, governmental, or private provider), and geographic dispersion in the county.



RECURRENT THEMES

A number of recurrent themes were uncovered through the research process, and in particular through the key informant interviews, in the manner of data collection, the prioritized strategies to be taken to help overcome barriers and gaps in services, and the organizational needs that participants said would help them better serve the Latino community.

The Dual Filter Perspective: The interview participants highlighted some important insights regarding the data collection methods and how they relate to how society itself views race-related issues, termed the “Dual Filter Perspective.” It was expressed that rigid adherence to traditional methods of collecting, quantifying and analyzing information may hinder the creation of truly innovative solutions. Respondents noted that pre-existing (albeit unintended) racism may have colored survey participants’ perceptions of what are priority issues. This came up mostly around alcohol and drug abuse as being over-prioritized and HIV/AIDS as being under-prioritized.

There were three recurrent themes in strategies that would help the interview participants’ organizations address the myriad of access issues that Ventura County Latinos face: community partnerships, the *promotores* model, and “growing” health care professionals from within the Ventura County Latino community.

Community Partnerships: The consensus is that collaboration fosters expansion. By coming together, different agencies would complement one another, thus services could be delivered in a much more effective and efficient way, without actually using any additional resources to create something new.

The Promotores Model: The consensus among interview subjects is that trust is paramount in reaching the Latino community. Lay health workers or *promotores* foster trust because they know the community, language and culture. *Promotores* can improve access through one-to-one outreach and health promotion, connecting the Latino community with needed services.

Growing Health Care Professionals: By “growing” health care professionals from within the local Latino population, health care specialists could be provided that the Latino community can trust and with whom they can communicate, while at the same time providing young Latino adults with academic direction and exciting, promising career choices.

The interview results about health care provider organizational needs that would help improve the organization’s ability to serve the Latino community can be classified into four areas: aligning service delivery with client base, improving cultural competency, strengthening effective board leadership and focus, and the lack of consistent funding.

Aligning Service Delivery with Client Base: Three issues repeatedly surfaced in key informant interviews surrounding what organizations need operationally to better serve the Latino community: accessing the Latino community, hiring and retaining bilingual/bicultural staff, and increasing cultural competency within the organization.

Improving Cultural Competency: Insufficient cultural competency was seen by the interview respondents as not only an issue that individual organizations must address, but a problem that the health care system as a whole must consider when developing strategies for health care improvements. Even representatives of organizations that have a strong cultural competency component to their programs felt that their organization could use improvement in this area.

Strengthening Effective Board Leadership and Focus: Areas of focus that would help to improve the abilities of organizational boards to govern the organization include: the perceived disconnect between board leadership and service delivery, the lack of adequately diverse ethnic representation, board inexperience, and the lack of ability to effectively lead the organization.

Lack of Consistent Funding: Not surprisingly, the lack of funding for programs is universally mentioned as a primary barrier to providing the expansion of services that are needed to fully bridge health care gaps and address priority health care concerns.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The findings of the research study reinforced many of the findings from other studies and the 2003 Destino Fund commissioned *Latino Health Care in Ventura County* report. That report concluded with the following results and recommendations:

- ❖ **Target Population:** Focus on assisting uninsured and underinsured working poor and their families, with priority emphasis on monolingual/indigenous language individuals, farmworkers, and recent immigrants.
- ❖ **Grantmaking Goals:** Expand knowledge of existing resources, promote healthier lifestyles, and provide culturally and linguistically sensitive services.
- ❖ **Preferred Strategies:** Increase the use of interpretation services and bilingual staff positions; provide cultural competency training; expand the use of promotores, case managers, and patient advocates; and use mobile health care units or community-based institutions to bring services into Latino neighborhoods.
- ❖ **Priority Health Issues:** Chronic diseases, communicable diseases, family strengthening, nutrition and hunger, oral health, substance abuse, teen pregnancy and parenting, and women's health.

Other findings from current research that was uncovered through literature review that is significant, but not prioritized by respondents within this report include the fragmentation of health care services within Ventura County, with multiple entry points for different programs. The complicated application processes and confusing eligibility requirements further aggravate this problem. Respondents, however, did acknowledge that one of the key solutions to access barriers is the increased use of “one-stop” health service centers, which would ease problems relating to these issues. Respondents also did not prioritize poor nutritional habits, lifestyle choices, and the lack of access to healthy food as problems that are significant, even though these problems are directly linked to the priority health issues of diabetes and obesity.

There were some surprising results that came from this research study's data. For example, the result of dental health being the fourth highest priority health issue was surprising, given that other concerns, such as heart disease, has much more devastating effects on the Latino population. But, the widespread problem of dental disease among Latinos, especially among Latino youth, has a great impact on their health status. Survey respondents also prioritized transportation as the foremost barrier to access among Latinos in Ventura County, even though other studies clearly pointed out that the lack of insurance may be the predominant reason why Latinos do not access services. Clearly, none of the prioritized strategies for success or recommendations will be as effective without the assurance of access to universal public and/or employer-based health insurance options.

With this in mind, the following results summarize the prioritized findings from the *Culture, Collaboration, and Capacity* research study.

- ❖ **Key Health and Social/Economic Issues:** Diabetes, obesity, alcohol and other drug use, oral health, unsafe working/living conditions, teen pregnancy, and depression and stress problems.
- ❖ **Key Barriers:** Transportation, cultural influences that affect behaviors and attitudes concerning seeking out health care providers, clients do not access services until the condition becomes an emergency, and lack of insurance.
- ❖ **Key Gaps in Services:** Lack of insurance options for low/middle income families who do not qualify for Medi-Cal and cannot afford private insurance, lack of a prevention focus among Latino clients, inability to bridge the cultural gap that keeps Latinos from accessing needed services, and insufficient Mixtec-focused staff and services, and lack of physical access to specific specialty services in certain areas of the county.

- ❖ **Key Solutions:** Expanding existing services into underserved communities, increasing the use of patient advocates to help patients navigate the health care system, increased use of “one-stop” health service centers, community partnerships, the *promotore* model, and growing health care professionals.
- ❖ **Key Organizational Capacity Building Needs:** Increasing knowledge and awareness of the organization in the community (outreach, networking, and marketing); cultural competency; increasing the number of bilingual staff; getting/retaining the right staff; board development; and funding/fundraising.
- ❖ **Key Training Topics:** Outreach to the Latino community, cultural competency, donor development, grant writing, nonprofit governance, board leadership, meeting management, recruitment techniques, *promotore* training, and target marketing.

seminars/workshops on donor development, grant writing, and fund development.

Recommendation 3: Human Resource Training on Finding, Training, and Retaining Bilingual/Bicultural Staff – Organizations must focus on “growing” health care professionals from within the Latino community, with a special emphasis on identifying and training Mixteco-speaking staff to address the huge health disparities associated with access issues for this population.

Recommendation 4: Cultural Competency Training – VCCF could use the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health’s Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) standards and tools to develop a series of cultural competency training curricula along a continuum of progression.

Recommendation 5: Expanding Health Outreach through Promotores Training – VCCF could support *promotores* training for peer educators identified by local nonprofit organizations in partnership with the Ventura County Public Health’s Mixteco Health Education Program and the Promotora and Promotora Foundation, and provide workshop/seminar trainings for nonprofit directors about the recruitment, training, retention, and use of *promotores* as outreach resources within their organizations.

Recommendation 6: Expanding Health Outreach through Marketing – VCCF could consider providing workshops/seminars on “Health Outreach: Marketing Your Organization to the Latino Community” and possibly offering individual capacity building consultation to some organizations by assessing the organization’s readiness for outreach expansion and assisting in developing a marketing plan.

Recommendation 7: Health Promotion through Latino Media – VCCF could support projects that are designed to increase health promotion within the Latino community by supporting media messages through appropriate community organizations, as well as training organizations about how to conduct media campaigns.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made by the researchers to the Destino Committee based on the statistical evidence of health disparities between Latinos and other populations, and the results of the *Culture, Collaboration, and Capacity* survey and key informant interviews. These recommendations are presented by category, with Recommendations 1-4 falling within organizational capacity building activities, Recommendations 5-7 relating to expanding outreach and marketing, and Recommendation 8 responding to the need for health care community strengthening activities.

Recommendation 1: Board Development – VCCF could offer nonprofit organizations workshops on building board leadership and provide individualized one-to-one consultation involving: an assessment of the board, its mission, and policies; collective planning of structural and operational improvements; and educating board members about effective board operations depending on assessed needs.

Recommendation 2: Learning How to Fund Solutions – VCCF could improve the financial vitality of organizations serving Latinos by offering training

Recommendation 8: Convene a Latino Health Care Coalition – VCCF could facilitate the creation of partnerships between Ventura County private nonprofits, government agencies, and private-sector providers by convening stakeholders to create a coalition for countywide strategic planning and collaboration with the goal of improving health care access and services for Latinos. Critical functions of this coalition may include advocating for health policies that support Latino health outcomes and acting as a central repository or clearinghouse for data, research, and reports on Latino health issues.

FIRST STEPS

- 1. Prioritize Recommendations:** The Destino Vision Committee should prioritize the recommendations and needed strategies and develop an action plan to move forward.
- 2. Develop a Report Marketing Campaign:** The Destino Vision Committee should develop a marketing campaign to assure that the health care community is aware of the findings and recommendations in the report so that effective implementation of the recommendations can take place.
- 3. Convene a Meeting of Health Care Providers to Form a Latino Health Care Coalition:** VCCF should convene and help to set the agenda for the first meeting of a Latino health care coalition to assist them in developing the collaboration and strategic planning needed for improvement in the current health care system.
- 4. Develop a Culture, Collaboration, and Capacity Training Program:** VCCF, in its role as capacity builder, should develop a series of training and development activities specifically designed to improve countywide health care services for Latinos as defined by this report. The training program should be a series of capacity building workshops specifically tailored for five to eight Latino-focused Ventura County organizations that can demonstrate the capacity to strengthen their mission and leadership, leading to an improvement in services for Latino residents. Participating

organizations would be represented by a team, including staff, board members, and volunteers, to assure organization-wide improvement in capacity to serve Latino clients. Training topics should include the prioritized training needs presented in this report, including outreach to the Latino community, cultural competency, building board leadership and diversity, donor development, and grant writing.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The role of Destino and VCCF in advancing Latino health care agenda presented in this report should be as both a service provider and a catalyst. The needed focus of VCCF and Destino concerning Latino health care is not to proscribe solutions but to gather together the resources, talents, and individuals who can, together, devise strategies to make a difference. VCCF's and Destino's efforts need to raise the visibility of issues and challenges to help the health care community understand what is not working, what could be done to change the situation, and what strategies will make a difference. Through VCCF's Resource Center for Nonprofit Management and other avenues, training opportunities can be facilitated that are aimed at advancing cultural competency, building strong community partnerships, and strengthening board and staff appreciation and understanding of organizational mission, values, challenges, and opportunities among health care organizations as it pertains to serving the Latino population of this county. Policymakers, community leaders, and healthcare providers must redouble efforts to reduce obesity and promote active and healthy lifestyle habits as a first priority. To accomplish this, stakeholders must reach across traditional divisions to work together. Community planning to address and overcome obstacles pointed out in this study must include efforts that increase the numbers of Latinos accessing health care on a regular basis, promote seamless insurance coverage, and focus community attention on identifying a medical home for all residents. As a cornerstone for a healthy community, collaboration and capacity are critical issues for those organizations who deliver and sustain health care, as well as for all those who are committed to improving health and well being for all Ventura County residents.

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