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HEALTH OF LATINX, IMMIGRANT FAMILIES IN THE CENTRAL VALLEY AND SALINAS

This community health assessment analyzed the health status of Latinx, immigrant families in the Central Valley and Salinas, as well as the effect of the social determinants of health in these communities on the health status of the children who utilize RMHC services.

The assessment found that the Latinx, immigrant families utilizing RMHC services face significant economic burden from poverty, leading to housing and food insecurity. Moreover, the report revealed disproportionately elevated levels of pollution in the areas where Latinx families live. The report also found decreased access to healthcare services and educational attainment in this population. These poor socioeconomic indicators were associated with increased risk of pediatric asthma, diabetes mellitus, delayed child development, congenital birth malformations, elevated infant mortality rate, depression, and certain pediatric and adult cancers.

Analysis of the Family Registry Data over the past 5 years revealed that over one fifth of the families utilizing RMHC services come from 19 zip codes in the Central Valley and Salinas. All the zip codes are determined to be in medically underserved areas by the HRSA and are among the most polluted zip codes in the state (80% or greater of the pollution burden). The most common reasons for admission among children at the RMHC include cardiovascular disorders (30%), oncology/neuro-oncology (17%), “not specified” (14%) and neurosurgery (8%). The risk or odds of a multitude of pathologies in these categories, namely certain congenital heart disorders (atrial septal defect, AOR: 1.70 [1.34, 2.14], PDA AOR: 1.50 [1.22, 1.85]), pediatric leukemias (AOR: 2.09- 3.62) and central nervous system tumors (RR: 2.36 [1.27- 4.39]] have been found to be elevated in agricultural workers exposed to high levels of pesticides, insecticides and/or herbicides.

Recommendations include program planning that integrates a strong referral system for families that utilize RMHC services. This referral system should link families returning to their home communities to resources like stable housing, safer occupations, pesticide-free foods, and educational programs for children.

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