COVID-19 AND THE LATINO COMMUNITY IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

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STUDY OVERVIEW

This study draws on data from USC’s Understanding Coronavirus in America tracking survey that monitored COVID-19 related outcomes amongst a representative sample of approximately 1,800 adult residents of L.A. County. We also drew upon qualitative data collected by our research team through community meetings and public townhalls held with Latino residents and community stakeholders in East L.A. from September 2020 to January 2021.

KEY FINDINGS

Latinos in L.A. County have been more likely to get a COVID-19 infection and to suffer many of the negative secondary consequences of the pandemic. Although there is enthusiasm for getting the COVID-19 vaccine, much work remains to improve vaccine access and equity among Latinos, and to support their pandemic recovery.
Latinos in L.A. County have been nearly twice as likely to get a COVID-19 infection, compared to other residents (Los Angeles Times, 2020). Additionally, Latinos are more likely to experience many negative secondary consequences of the pandemic, like unemployment, missing rent payments, and experiencing food insecurity.

Disparities in COVID-19 impacts for L.A. County Latinos

- **Household income below the poverty line**: 11% for Latinos, 27% for non-Hispanic Whites.
- **Unemployed**: 12% for Latinos, 23% for non-Hispanic Whites.
- **Employed & working from home**: 38% for Latinos, 67% for non-Hispanic Whites.
- **Renters who missed last rent or didn’t pay in full**: 18% for Latinos, 4% for non-Hispanic Whites.
- **Food insecure (between April and December 2020)**: 21% for Latinos, 40% for non-Hispanic Whites.

*Income, employment, and rent data was measured from February 3 to March 2, 2021. Food insecurity was measured from April 1 to December 23, 2020.*

*Source: USC Understanding Coronavirus in America tracking survey*
At the time of writing this, there are 'service deserts' and significant structural and access barriers to vaccination that impact Latinos, especially older adults (Los Angeles Times, 2021). Reasons include lack of access to transportation to a vaccine site, lack of access to smart devices to book a vaccine appointment, and lack of information on how immigrants and undocumented individuals can access vaccines.

Likelihood of getting the coronavirus vaccine, when available

LATINOS IN L.A. COUNTY ARE TAKING SAFETY PRECAUTIONS BUT CONTINUE TO FACE COVID-19 RISKS

Latinos in L.A. County are wearing masks, social distancing, and washing their hands frequently during the pandemic. However, challenges remain for families adopting behaviors that lessen the risk of COVID-19 exposure (Los Angeles Times, 2020).

Quotes from discussions with Latino residents at our townhalls:

"The guards come down at home -- family members follow safety behaviors out of the home, but relax when they are around family."

"Kisses and hugs, physical contact -- these are part of our culture."
The county's Latino community is clearly in need of ongoing support and resources that will help their physical, emotional, economic, and social recovery.

- Increase ease of access to the vaccine
- Encourage vaccine uptake
- Continue to encourage safety behaviors, such as wearing a mask, social distancing, and handwashing