



# Center for Worker Health

Wake Forest School of Medicine

## POLICY BRIEF

### Providing Information About the Affordable Care Act to Latino Immigrants

#### Summary

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) provides the opportunity for low-income residents to obtain highly-subsidized health insurance. Many Latino immigrants have low incomes or work in jobs that do not provide access to health insurance. Efforts to inform these Latinos about eligibility and assist them with enrolling are important, but these efforts need to use effective approaches, attuned to this population. During 2015, Latino immigrants living in one rural area (farmworkers) and one urban area of North Carolina (Winston-Salem) completed interviews in which they described their knowledge of the ACA, their sources of information about the ACA, and the ways they would prefer to receive such information. Most knew of the ACA as “Obamacare.” About half of the rural residents had received information about the ACA due to efforts by service and advocacy organizations to reach farmworkers. Few of the urban residents had received any information. The primary sources of ACA information were community organizations (rural) and insurance companies (urban). Health care providers (doctors, nurses, clinics) and community organizations were the preferred sources for receiving further information about the ACA, with most wanting a personal, oral presentation and a printed pamphlet, rather than electronic media.

#### Why does it matter?

The Affordable Care Act enables individuals living legally in the US (except DACA recipients) to obtain health insurance – often with substantial subsidies. Enrollment among eligible Latinos is lower than in any other racial/ethnic group, and barriers to information and enrollment are especially great for immigrants. This study provides critical information for those who seek to improve outreach and enrollment by Latino immigrants.

#### What did the researchers do?

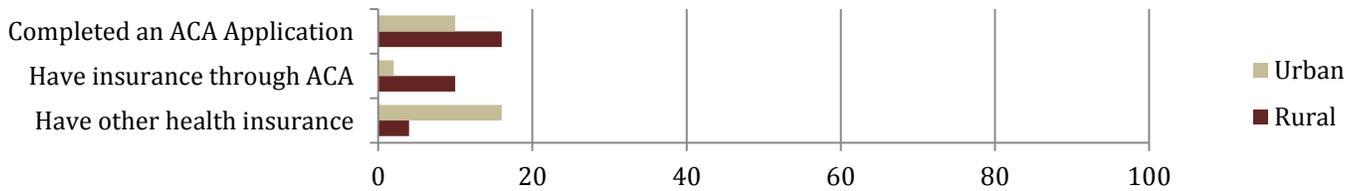
From June through August, 2015, the researchers interviewed immigrant Latino populations in two different areas. In the rural area surrounding Benson, NC, which includes Harnett, Johnston, and Sampson Counties, 100 immigrant Latino adults (80 men and 20 women) in farmworker families were interviewed. Service and advocacy organizations had, within the prior six months, made special efforts to inform farmworkers in this area about the ACA by conducting outreach and making oral presentations on the topic at farmworker housing sites and Latino churches. In the urban area of Winston-Salem, NC, 100 immigrant Latino adults (50 men and 50 women) were interviewed. All interviews were conducted in Spanish by trained, bilingual staff. The interviews included questions on personal characteristics, knowledge of the ACA, trusted sources of information about the ACA, and enrollment through the ACA. The Center for Worker Health collaborated with the Health Law and Policy Program, School of Law, Wake Forest University; North Carolina Farmworkers Project; and El Buen Pastor Latino Community Services in completing the interviews.

#### What did the researchers find?

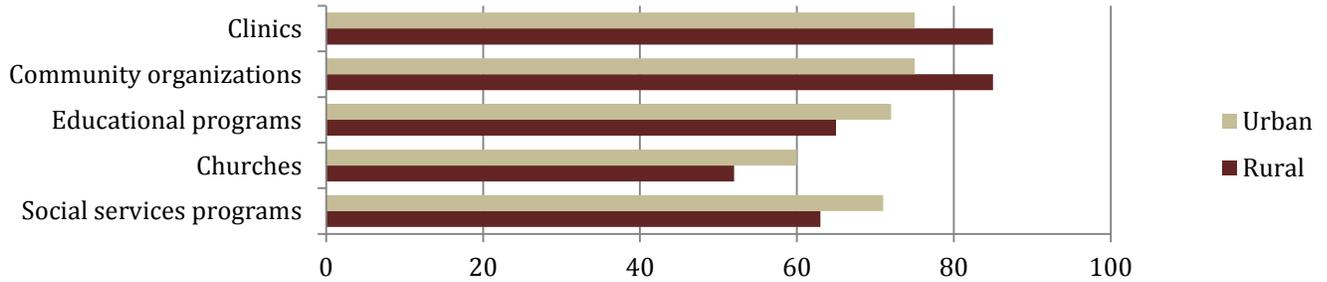
##### Current Knowledge about the ACA

- “Obamacare” was the most widely known name for the ACA (76% rural, 87% urban).
- Rural residents
  - 52% had received information about the ACA. Efforts by service and advocacy groups to increase participation in the ACA among farmworkers accounted for the large percentage receiving information.
  - Community organizations were the most common source of information (52%).
- Urban residents
  - 12% had received information about the ACA.
  - Health insurance companies were the most common source of information (11%).

## Actual experience with the ACA is limited

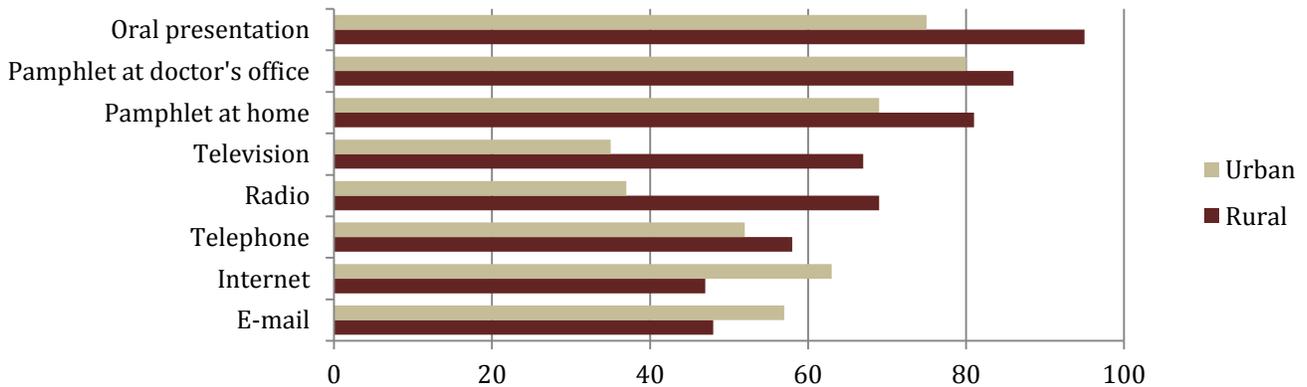


## Trusted Sources for ACA Information



For accurate information about the ACA, participants trusted health care providers, community organizations, educational programs (schools, migrant education programs, migrant Head Start), churches, and social services. None trusted health insurance companies.

## Preferred Mode for Receiving ACA Information



Participants preferred oral presentations and pamphlets for receiving information about the ACA. Electronic media were less popular, with rural participants using television and radio more, and urban residents using internet and e-mail more.

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## Recommendations

- Rural and urban North Carolina immigrant Latinos need additional information about the ACA.
  - Characteristics of successful ACA education programs include:
    - Collaboration with community organizations and health care providers,
    - Oral presentations about the ACA, and
    - Providing Spanish language pamphlets with ACA information.
  - Electronic media are less used by this population.
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For further information about the study, contact:

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