

**Binational Policy Forum on Migration and Health  
October 14-16, 2007**

**Executive Report**



Photo taken by Jim Bracken

**Report Prepared by the Health Initiative of the Americas,  
University of California, Berkeley  
School of Public Health**

**Binational Health Week 2007  
Binational Policy Forum on Migration and Health**

**Executive Summary**

***Introduction***

Binational Health Week (BHW) commenced with an Inaugural Ceremony and a Policy Forum on Migration and Health that took place on October 14-16, 2007 in Los Angeles, California. More than 700 representatives from federal, state, and community organizations attended the event to exchange ideas on the challenges facing transnational populations and to discuss novel collaborative approaches to improve the health conditions of Latino immigrants residing in the U.S.

Forum topics included global health and migration, chronic and emergent diseases of mobile populations, occupational health and safety, access to health services, workforce development, and the health of vulnerable people, including those with disabilities and agricultural workers.

The list of participants included representatives from approximately 276 agencies and 10 international organizations from Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Montserrat, and Puerto Rico. The international delegation's significant presence was composed of 125 emissaries of whom five were under-secretariats from the Ministries of Health and Foreign Affairs of the represented countries. The academia sector was represented by 38 universities from seven countries and 85 students, researchers, professors, and administrators from the University of California.

The Mexican delegation was lead by Dr. José Angel Cordova Villalobos, Ministry of Health, who was accompanied by key federal and state elected officials including the governor from the state of Morelos Marco A. Adame, six state health department officials, and other assembly members. Comprised of one hundred key stakeholders, the participant list included officials from the Ministry of Health; Mauricio Hernández, Maria de los Angeles Fromow, Miguel Angel Lezana, Heriberto Vera Hermosillo, Daniel Karam, Jorge Saavedra, Carlos Magis, Remedios Lozada, and Carlos Campillo; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Carlos Rico, Carlos González Gutiérrez, and Ruben Beltran; the Mexican Institute for Social Security; Carolina Gómez Viñales; the U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission; Eleazar Ruiz; the United Nations; Alfredo González; and the Pan American Health Organization; Phillippe Lamy, among others.



Inaugural Event, Los Angeles City Hall

## Sequence of Events

### ***Cultural Event***

Sunday evening's reception took place at the *Placita Olvera*, a historic and identifiable part of Latino history. The night's activities initiated with welcoming remarks from key figures representing all participating countries. Speakers included the Honorable Hilda Solis, U.S. House of Representatives; Michelle Roland, California Department of Health; Ernesto Navarro, Ministry of Health from El Salvador; Gabriel Restrepo Marin and Jaifa Mezher, Ministry of Foreign Affairs from Colombia; Pablo Garcia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs from Guatemala; and Vanessa Calva, Ministry of Foreign Affairs from Mexico. The reception allowed for participants to enjoy a demonstration of each country's cultural exhibitions and an array of gastronomic delicacies, as well as the opportunity to create networks that provide important opportunities for future collaborations.

### ***Inaugural Ceremony: A Display of Political Endorsement***

The Inaugural Event opened with a highly publicized press conference that took place at City Hall in Los Angeles. Keynote speakers consisted of high level government and elected officials, health care administrators, and community representatives. Leading the event were José Angel Cordova Villalobos, Minister of Health, Mexico; the Honorable Gilbert Cedillo, California State Senator; Martha Altolaquirre, Vice minister of Foreign Affairs, Guatemala; Margarita Escobar, Vice minister of Foreign Affairs, El Salvador; Jaifa Mezher, Director of *Colombia Nos Une*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Colombia; and Wyatt R. Hume, Provost & Executive Vice President, University of California (to view complete list of panel members see appendix A).



From left to right: Jaifa Mezher, Margarita Escobar, José Angel Cordova Villalobos, Martha Altolaquirre and Wyatt R. Hume

This event also witnessed the unveiling of an anticipated publication titled: *Immigration, Health and Work: The Facts Behind the Myths*. This report is the third of an intensive research series that was produced by the Health Initiative of the Americas, the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, and UC Berkeley's School of Public Health. The research findings show that the U.S. economy relies heavily on Mexican immigrant workers for many agriculture, construction, and service jobs. When compared to other populations living in the U.S., many Latinos employed in these jobs earn substantially lower wages, suffer increased incidents of occupational injury and death, and usually have limited or no access to health insurance. The report aims to promote a more open dialogue among policy makers in order to step away from the myth that Latino migrants and immigrants over utilize U.S. public health programs. The success of this report resulted in the distribution of approximately 2,000 copies during the two day event.

In addition to the press conference, the inaugural ceremonies concluded with two plenary sessions that focused their attention on globalization, migration, and health; chronic-degenerative diseases; health of vulnerable populations; and access to health.

### ***Binational Forum: An Immigrant's Reality from a Polyphonic Perspective***

The forum's organizing committee reflects the diverse and dynamic audience that this program has attracted year after year. It was comprised of the Governor's office and the Legislature of California; the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors; the Mayor and the City Council of Los Angeles; and the governments of Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador and Colombia in collaboration with the University of California and The California Endowment, among others. The design and implementation of BHW forum events depended on the valuable contribution of members comprising the steering, fundraising, academic, political and cultural committees (see appendix E).

Forum activities were successful in large part because of the strong collaborations among the Los Angeles Consuls of Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Mexico; staff members from the offices of the Honorable Gilbert Cedillo and Los Angeles Councilmember Richard Alarcon; the Board of Mexican Federations in North America (*COFEM* in its Spanish acronym); the California Endowment; and the Health Initiative of the Americas, University of California, Berkeley, among others.

Highly recognized researchers, health care professionals, county representatives, and institutional leaders provided expert analyses and policy recommendations during eight concurrent workshops that focused on topics such as infectious diseases (HIV/AIDS, TB), access to services, at risk groups (a binational perspective and health and human rights), social investment in health, chronic-degenerative diseases, health and safety in the work place, clinics and resources for migrant health, best practice and workforce development, mental health, global health, and oral health.

The unique composition of the workshops conveyed true binational perspectives as each session proved to be a successful model by including two expert moderators, four expert panelists, and one reporter from persons representing North, Central, and South American countries. Moderators, panelists, and recorders represented prominent universities, prestigious research institutions, and federal, state, and local health administrations (to view selected workshop presentations see appendix F).

For the first time, the Binational Policy Forum on Migration and Health provided participants the opportunity to attend site visits to agencies in Los Angeles with programs that focused on immigrant and migrant health. These visits were very successful, and will most likely be incorporated into the agendas of future forums as well. Site visits took place at the following locations: UCLA Hispanic International Medical Graduate Program, Homeboy Industries (Gang Intervention Services), Promotoras Comunitarias Training Program of Planned Parenthood, Los

Angeles, AltaMed: East LA Commerce Community Primary Care, and AltaMed: Senior Buena Care Clinic for the Elderly.



From left to right: Gilbert Cedillo and Carlos Rico

### ***The Unveiling of the Binational Health Week 2007 Mural***

Every year, BHW hosts an international contest to choose the commemorative illustration that is used as the campaign's symbolic image. Muralists, painters, and other artists work on creating a picture that captures the spirit of an immigrant's experience, the essence of their cultural backgrounds, and the importance of health in their lives. This year, American artist Merle Reivich won the competition by depicting lush amounts of rich colors that represents much of the Latino culture. The mural was titled *Your Health, Your Future*. The unveiling of this mural took place at the central offices of The California Endowment (TCE) during Monday afternoon's lunch. TCE's President and CEO, Robert Ross served as the Master of Ceremonies where he introduced speakers Cynthia Telles, Chair, TCE Board of Directors; and Alfredo Gonzalez Reyes, Executive Coordinator, National Information Office for Human Development, United Nations Development Program. Culminating the forum's lunch was the presentation of the mural by Dr. Ross and Merle Reivich.



Dr. Robert Ross and Merle Reivich

## **Gala Dinner**

As is accustomed, the Binational Health Week Policy Forum held a gala dinner for all of its participants. The dinner took place at the famous St. Vibiana Cathedral, another of Los Angeles' historical landmarks developed by *Pico House* architect Ezra Kysor. During the banquet, Minister José Angel Cordova Villalobos on behalf of Mexico's Ministry of Health and Foreign Affairs along with the National Institute of Anthropology presented a cultural donation to the "*immigrant community*" living in the U.S., which was received by the Honorable Gilbert Cedillo on behalf of the California Latino Caucus. The evening's celebration also included the recognition of BHW funders and supporters and an extraordinary buffet sample of traditional foods that represented Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Mexico (to view a complete list of BHW sponsors see appendix A).

## **Conclusions**

The Binational Policy Forum on Migration and Health has been one of BHW's most notable accomplishments and popular traditions. Past BHW forums have resulted in the development of programs such as the network of researchers on migration and health (*REMIS* in its Spanish acronym), the creation of directories on binational health care professionals and researchers, an immeasurable amount of networking and development of strategic partnerships, funding opportunities for new and existing programs, and a holistic view of the migrant experience as perceived from professionals that work with migrant and immigrant populations in the countries of origin as well as the countries of destination.

The involvement of key policy makers still proves to be a necessary factor in the improvement of academic, community, and government sponsored programs that allow for positive impacts in the lives of Latino populations; the same factor that has been a BHW priority for the last seven years. Strong political endorsement along with academic and community support have been the main ingredients in the successful transmission of migrant health issues at the international level, so much that the working relationships among countries with high levels of international migration such as Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Mexico have been strengthened as a result. BHW not only thrives each year to expand its scope of work to reach more countries and more Latino immigrants, but to continue to convene invested governments, academics, professionals, and the community to develop solutions that one day will better the lives of such a vulnerable group of people.



**VII Binational Health Week Launching Event & Policy Forum on Migration and Health  
Participant Profile  
Los Angeles, California | October 14-16, 2007**

<b>Number of Participants:</b>	<b>700</b>
<b>Total Number of Agencies:</b>	<b>276</b> agencies: international, federal, state, local, and private entities; state and private universities, foundations, and community organizations.
<b>International Delegation:</b>	<b>125</b> participants are traveling from <b>6</b> countries: Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Montserrat, and Puerto Rico.
<b>U.S. Cities &amp; States:</b>	<b>118 cities from 14 states</b> are represented: Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Nevada, Ohio, Oregon, Washington; and the District of Colombia.
<b>Number of Universities:</b>	<b>38</b> universities are represented from 7 countries.
<b>University of California:</b>	A delegation of <b>85 UC</b> students, researchers, professors, and administrators from a wide variety of departments and programs.
<b>Foundations:</b>	<b>13</b> foundations (The California Endowment, The California Wellness Foundation, The California HealthCare Foundation, Hablamos Juntos, Fundación Mexicana para la Salud, San Diego Foundation for Recovery, Self Reliance Foundation, California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation, Health Professions Education Foundation, San Benito Health Foundation, AIDS Healthcare Foundation, Border Health Foundation, Dental Health Foundation, National Health Foundation, Ventura County Medical Resource Foundation, California Medical Association Foundation, Fundación Paisano)
<b>International Organizations:</b>	<b>10</b> international organizations (United Nations Development Program, Pan American Health Organization, Medecins du Monde, US-Mexico Border Health Commission, Population Services International, Global Educational Facilitation, Union de Campesinos y Emigrantes Mexicanos, Ambassador Care, Consejo de Federaciones Mexicanas en Norteamerica, and Fundacion Carecen International)
<b>Community Organizations:</b>	Over 102 community agencies, including health clinics and hospitals, legal assistance organizations, unions, non-governmental entities, and faith-based groups.
<b>Farm Workers:</b>	The Binational Policy Forum on Migration and Health received direct input from <b>13</b> U.S. farm worker leaders from " <i>Poder Popular Program</i> ".