Nearly Half of Latinos Lack Health Insurance in Georgia

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Nearly half of the 850,000 Latinos living in the U.S. state of Georgia lack health insurance—a level of coverage that's significantly below the national average, according to a study from Emory University's Rollins School of Public Health reported by the Emory University News Center.

For the study, researchers analyzed data regarding health status and outcomes from a variety of sources, including the U.S. Census Bureau, federal and state health agencies, various other health organizations and prior studies. Research focused on four key health areas—health of mothers and children, obesity and diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer and behavioral health.

The researchers found that extending health insurance to all Latinos in Georgia would greatly increase their overall health, and that Georgia's Latinos are especially lacking in employer-provided health insurance when compared with black or white residents. The study authors call out the importance of improving such coverage—especially in fields such as construction and service industries, where Latinos are most prevalent.

"We hope the data this study provides will serve as a baseline from which future progress can be measured," said lead author Karen Andes, assistant professor at the Rollins School of Public Health in Atlanta, "and it can also serve as a call to action to join together with the partners and sponsors of the Latino Health Summit to address key health issues among Georgia Latinos and contribute to a healthier Georgia."Researchers also found that Latino children in the state—two-thirds of whom came from "mixed nativity" households, having been born in the United States while their parents were born elsewhere—were significantly less likely to have health insurance than children of other ethnicities.

"These mixed nativity families face particular challenges in terms of health status as well as health care access," Andes said. "Latino children in this state have significantly lower access to health insurance than their black and white peers, and while they begin life with relatively good health, a number of indicators suggest that their health status has declined by the time they are old enough to start school."

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