

California Senators Introduce Mental Health for Latinos Act

The bill aims to address the cultural and language needs of Latinos regarding mental health.

August 1, 2025 By Laura Schmidt

To address some of the barriers to [mental health](#) care among Latinos, several U.S. legislators have introduced the Mental Health for Latinos Act, according to a [press release](#).

In 2023, only about 48% of Latino adults who needed mental health services received treatment.

U.S. Senators Alex Padilla (D-Calif.) and Ruben Gallego (D-Ariz.), along with Representatives Andrea Salinas (D-Ore.) and Nanette Barragán (D-Calif.), introduced the Mental Health Act for Latinos to provide culturally relevant mental health resources, education and outreach to Latinos.

“No one should suffer in silence,” Padilla said in the release. “We need to break down the barriers that keep Latinos from getting the mental health care they need, when stigma and language access can make it even harder to ask for help.”

Between 2010 and 2020, the [suicide](#) rate among Latino men ages 20 to 64 increased by almost 36%. For Latinas, the rate increased by 40.6%, according to the release.

The new bill would require the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to develop and implement an outreach and education strategy to encourage behavioral and mental health among Latinos.

“Too many Latinos, especially men, shy away from seeking help because they’re afraid of being judged, and that only makes the problem worse,” Gallego said. “This issue is personal to me. This bill would help break the stigma around mental health and make it easier to get care from people who actually understand our community. I want everyone to know that they’re not alone and that getting help is not a weakness.”

According to the release, the bill aims to implement outreach that:

- Meets diverse cultural and language needs and is developmentally and age appropriate;
- Increases awareness of symptoms of mental illnesses;
- Provides information on evidence-based, culturally and linguistically appropriate adapted interventions and treatments;
- Ensures full participation of community members; and
- Uses a comprehensive public health approach to promoting behavioral health by focusing on the intersection between behavioral and physical health.

“The Mental Health for Latinos Act would improve mental health outcomes by reducing stigma in the Latino community and encouraging people to reach out for help,” Padilla said.” As we tackle the rise in mental health challenges, it’s critical that we acknowledge the distinct needs of our diverse communities and develop solutions that meet people where they are.”

The legislation is cosponsored by U.S. Senators Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.) and Mazie Hirono (D-Hawaii) and endorsed by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, National Alliance on Mental Illness, UnidosUS and more.

The full text of the bill is available [here](#).

To read more, click [#Mental Health](#). There, you’ll see headlines such as “[Peer-Led Program Improves Mental Health in New Latina Mothers](#),” “[Trump Executive Order Targets Harm Reduction](#)” and “[National Association of Hispanic Journalists Launches Wellness Initiative](#).”