

Strategies for Behavioral Health Organizations to Promote New Health Insurance Opportunities

In Latino and Hispanic Communities

The **Affordable Care Act (ACA)** provides new health care options for Americans. The ACA brings affordable health insurance coverage and expanded access to mental health and substance use disorder



services to millions of Americans. Community outreach and enrollment efforts can play a vital role in making sure that uninsured individuals learn about new health insurance opportunities. Organizations, including behavioral health providers, working with Latino and Hispanic individuals and families face unique outreach and enrollment challenges. Some of those challenges include homelessness, isolated communities with few English speakers, past experiences with discrimination, and financial barriers such as high out-of-pocket medical expenses and prescription costs.

This strategy brief provides **10 strategies** that your organization can use to help introduce Latino and Hispanic individuals and families to the new health insurance options. Examples are provided from organizations that have successfully used these strategies.

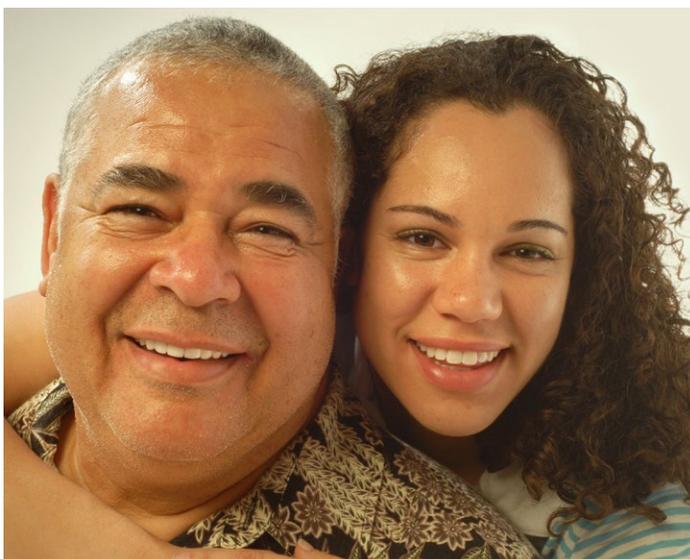
Outreach and Enrollment Strategies

1 Adapt Materials to Be Appropriate for Your Community

There are a number of federal and state resources available for educating individuals about health care enrollment and insurance plans. Translate resources into different languages or consider putting the information into a format that is more likely to be accepted in your community. Campesinos Sin Fronteras (CSF), Arizona, found that using *fotonovelas* is a powerful way to provide health and behavioral health care information and education to Latinos in the border region. *Fotonovelas* are short booklets that usually portray a dramatic story using photographs and captions.

2 Provide a Personal Approach

There is diversity within Latino and Hispanic communities. A one-size-fits-all approach is not likely to work. Hire bilingual, diverse staff from the community to help build understanding and trust into your outreach and enrollment efforts. Bienvenido Community Solutions, Indiana, trains community members nationwide to serve as facilitators. These community members support discussions with immigrants to improve their mental health and quality of life, and to engage with their local community.



3 Use a Behavioral Health Peer Model

Involve community members and behavioral health consumers in your outreach and enrollment activities. Staff should reflect the population you are serving in terms of ethnicity, language, and socioeconomic status. The New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addictions Agencies, Inc. (NJAMHAA) assigns peer specialists to places of worship in the community. Peer specialists and community support workers make resources available during Sunday church services. They are also available to answer questions from congregants.

4 Use Language Familiar to Your Community

Providing assistance in Spanish is important to reaching monolingual Spanish speakers or limited English proficient (LEP) individuals. *Promotores de salud*/community health workers (CHWs) are bilingual individuals from the community who have an understanding of the community served. CHWs generally share the ethnicity, language, and socioeconomic status of the community members they serve. These social attributes and trusting relationships enable CHWs to serve as a liaison or intermediary between health and social services and the community. They facilitate access to and enrollment in services and improve the quality and cultural and linguistic competence of service. There are several examples throughout this document of potential roles for *promotores de salud*/CHWs.

5 Engage Community Members on Their Own Terms

It is important to provide many opportunities for individuals to learn about and enroll in health care programs. Find ways to become involved in existing community celebrations. The HOY Recovery Program, New Mexico, conducts pilgrimages in association with local churches. The pilgrimages commemorate significant social and spiritual events and help raise awareness about risk factors associated with community problems.

6 Partner With Community Organizations

Maximize your outreach through partnerships with neighborhood programs, schools, hospitals, churches, and cultural centers. The NJAMHAA works with schools and hospitals to inform and enroll individuals in their state health care programs. They train partner organizations to become culturally sensitive and competent. The partner organizations use bilingual individuals as *promotores*, peer specialists, community support workers, educators, and patient navigators.

7 Host Community Events

Health fairs (*ferias de salud*) are an effective and popular way to engage a broad range of Latino community members. The Albuquerque Center for Hope & Recovery (ACHR), New Mexico, organized and hosted a *Feria de Salud* focused on behavioral health and the ACA. The *Feria de Salud* provided a safe and trusted venue for businesses and individuals in the community to learn about, and discuss, health care options and emerging health care opportunities.

8 Communicate Directly with Community Members

Ensure that outreach campaigns reach individuals and families in places that they already go to, such as schools, doctor's offices, homeless shelters, and public transportation and on communication channels they regularly access, such as the Internet and television. Outreach campaigns using culturally appropriate and in-language messaging ensures that campaign messages are engaging and easily understood. The "Asegúrate" Latino media partnership, known as "Get Covered," aims to educate Latinos about the ACA and how to enroll in health coverage. The Get Covered campaign is a partnership between the California Endowment; Covered California, the state's health insurance marketplace; and the largest Spanish-language media outlets including Univision, Telemundo, and La Opinión-impresMedia. The campaign slogan "tu bienestar al alcance" ("your well-being within reach") was chosen based on research indicating that prevention messaging resonates strongly within the Latino and Hispanic communities.



9 Use Media As a Resource

Media such as talk radio, television channels, church newsletters, and community magazines provide opportunities to expand outreach efforts. Media outlets geared toward Latino audiences are especially effective. The Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing, with partners, developed and produced the video series, "Encrucijada: Sin Salud no Hay Nada." The series consisted of 12 half-hour episodes that provided information on health insurance programs and ways to access health care. The format was developed to meet the interest of the community through a Spanish-language soap opera (*telenovela*). The *telenovela* involves health issues affecting Hispanics and the services the state provides.

10 Address Barriers

Be aware of the challenges that keep individuals in your community from receiving services and understanding their health care options. Barriers can include homelessness, childcare challenges, inflexible work schedules, lack of transportation, low levels of reading comprehension, need for English translation, and more. CSF finds that recent immigrants and families in their area have problems accessing services due to immigration status and the fragmented health system. Through their *promotores* program, Ventanillas de Salud, staff work with the Mexican Consulate and U.S. health care facilities to help clients identify and navigate medical care.

About the Strategies for Behavioral Health Organizations to Promote New Health Insurance Opportunities Series

This strategy brief is part of a series that highlights strategies that behavioral health organizations can use to disseminate information on the Affordable Care Act and help individuals with behavioral health conditions learn about health insurance opportunities. Strategy briefs are available that address strategies for working with the following communities:

- **African American,**
- **American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN),**
- **Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI),** and
- **Latino and Hispanic.**

The content for each strategy brief was developed in partnership with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration based on case studies provided by the National Latino Behavioral Health Association, National Leadership Council on African American Behavioral Health, National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association, and National Council of Urban Indian Health.

Please visit the National Network to Eliminate Disparities in Behavioral Health NNEDshare website at <http://share.nned.net> for more outreach and enrollment practices or for more information about any of the organizations featured in the series.

Acknowledgments

This publication was prepared for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) by Westat under contract number HHSS2832007000061/HHSS28342001T, with SAMHSA, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Juliet Bui and Pamela J. Fischer, Ph.D. served as the Government Project Officers.

Disclaimer

The views, opinions, and content of this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views, opinions, or policies of SAMHSA or HHS.

Public Domain Notice

All material appearing in this report is in the public domain and may be reproduced or copied without permission from SAMHSA. Citation of the source is appreciated. However, this publication may not be reproduced or distributed for a fee without the specific, written authorization of the Office of Communications, SAMHSA, HHS.

Electronic Access and Printed Copies

This publication may be downloaded or ordered at <http://store.samhsa.gov>. Or call SAMHSA at 1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727) (English and Español).

Recommended Citation

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Strategies for Behavioral Health Organizations to Promote New Health Insurance Opportunities in Latino and Hispanic Communities*. HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4820. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014.

Originating Office

Division of System and Services Integration, Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 1 Choke Cherry Road, Rockville, MD 20857. HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4820. Printed 2014.

Additional Resources

The Marketplace Call Center provides educational information about the Health Insurance Marketplace and assists consumers with application completion and plan selection. In addition to English and Spanish, assistance is available in more than 150 languages through an interpretation and translation service. Contact the call center at 1-800-318-2596; hearing impaired callers using TTY/TDD technology can dial 1-855-889-4325.

HealthCare.gov is the official website of the Health Insurance Marketplace, providing the latest information about health insurance coverage and enrollment. **CiudadDeSalud.gov** is the Spanish language version of this website.

Resources for individuals and organizations providing outreach and enrollment assistance are available at <http://marketplace.cms.gov/>.

The Center for Consumer Information and Insurance Oversight (CCIIO) provides regularly updated information on health insurance policies and regulations at <http://cms.gov/CCIIO/>.

More resources focused on outreach and enrollment of Latinos are available from the National Latino Behavioral Health Association at <http://www.nlbha.org/>.



SMA-14-4820
First printed 2014.