

Latino Asthma Epidemic

- Approximately 2 million Hispanics in the U.S. have asthma and Puerto Ricans are disproportionately impacted.¹
- In 2002, over 1.7 million Hispanic Americans reported that they currently have asthma and 1.1 million experienced an asthma attack in the past year.²
- In Chicago 34% of Puerto Rican and 14% of Mexican children have asthma.³
- Puerto Ricans had a current asthma prevalence rate 125% higher than non-Hispanic white people and 80% higher than non-Hispanic black people.⁴
- The prevalence of asthma attacks is highest among Puerto Ricans.⁵
- Hispanics may have an elevated risk for exposure to air pollution since a disproportionate number live in areas failing to meet one or more national standards for air pollutants. (It is estimated that 80 percent of Hispanics live in areas that failed to meet one U.S. EPA air quality standard, compared to 65 percent African Americans and 57 percent of Whites.)⁶
- Approximately 15% of all Latinos in the US live within 10 miles of coal-fired power plants. These 5.5 million Latinos have an elevated risk of developing asthma and other respiratory conditions from continuous exposure to the pollutants released by these facilities.⁷
- Puerto Rican children with asthma were more likely to be sensitized to both indoor and outdoor allergens than were white children with asthma.⁸
- Hispanic children with asthma were 39% less likely than white children to have a specialist visit for asthma and 41% less likely to receive a follow-up visit within 5 days of being seen in the ED for asthma.⁹

1 http://www.epa.gov/asthma/pdfs/asthma_fact_sheet_en.pdf

2 National Center for Health Statistics: National Health Interview Survey, 2002

3 Improving Community Health Survey. Sinai Urban Health Institute, Chicago, IL. January 2004

4 National Center for Health Statistics: Asthma Prevalence, Health Care Use and Mortality: United States, 2003-05

5 National Center for Health Statistics: Asthma Prevalence, Health Care Use and Mortality, 2002

6 "Environmental Health Perspectives," Environmental Health and Hispanic Children, 1995

7 Quintero-Somaini, A. and Quirindongo, M. "Hidden Danger: Environmental Health Threats in the Latino Community". Natural Resources Defense Council 2004.

8 Celedón JC; Sredl D. and Weiss S., et al. "Ethnicity and Skin Test Reactivity to Aeroallergens Among Asthmatic Children in Connecticut," Chest, 2004

9 Shields, A.E., et al. "Variation in Asthma Care by Race/Ethnicity Among Children Enrolled in a State Medicaid Program". Pediatrics, 2004