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“Unauthorized and Uninsured” Fact Sheets
New research sheds light on California’s undocumented immigrant populations and the state of health insurance coverage in these communities

Los Angeles -- Today, USC Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration and San Diego State University researchers will release new fact sheets entitled “Unauthorized and Uninsured,” which estimate current levels of medical insurance coverage among undocumented immigrants in a range of California communities, counties and statewide.

Despite expanded access to medical insurance through the Affordable Care Act, about one million undocumented Californians remain excluded from state insurance exchanges like Covered California (according to pre-Executive Action estimates). The 15 fact sheets offer a detailed and representative portrait of insurance coverage as well as the economic and social conditions affecting unauthorized and authorized immigrants compared to their US-born counterparts.

In addition to information about all Californians, the fact sheets also focus on the 14 sites in The California Endowment’s Building Healthy Communities (BHC) initiative and their corresponding counties. These sites are in urban, suburban, and rural areas, and often represent some of the most economically disadvantaged neighborhoods in the state.

Downloadable fact sheets are available for the following BHC sites: Boyle Heights; Central Santa Ana; Central, Southeast and Southwest Fresno; Central West Long Beach; City Heights; Del Norte County; East Coachella Valley; East Oakland; East Salinas; Richmond; South Kern; South Los Angeles; South Sacramento; Southwest and East Merced; and for the state of California with all BHC sites.

Authored by Drs. Enrico Marcelli and Manuel Pastor, this research features updated estimates on the number of undocumented residents in these areas, their current levels and types of health insurance, and other characteristics such as: ages, gender, poverty levels, countries of origin, labor participation, and key industries and occupations.

“Our estimates – generated using both local community-based and publicly available data -- help fill a research gap concerning medical insurance coverage and other socioeconomic characteristics among unauthorized and other Californians at the county and neighborhood levels with unprecedented specificity,” said lead author and SDSU demographer Enrico A. Marcelli.”
Key findings include:

- Nearly one million people reside in the BHC sites, with the undocumented representing 13% of the population – almost double that of the state’s total share.

- Central Santa Ana in Orange County has the highest share of the undocumented across the sites, with 22% of the total population. Three sites in Los Angeles County – Boyle Heights, South Los Angeles, and Central West Long Beach – also have some of the highest shares of undocumented with 17%, 19%, and 13% of the total population, respectively.

- Although each site has unique demographic and economic characteristics, the lack of medical insurance is a consistent theme. Only 38% of the working age unauthorized population in the BHC sites have medical insurance coverage, compared to the rates of native-born residents (79%).

- The share of medical insurance coverage for this population is even lower in some sites, including: South Los Angeles (28%), City Heights (31%), and Central Santa Ana (33%).

Providing healthcare access for the unauthorized remains essential – and will benefit all Californians. While it is only one of many determinants of health, expanding access to insurance is likely to not only improve health but also economic stability for those left out by healthcare reform.

“We hope this data can help impact state and local policy that provides comprehensive access to medical insurance for undocumented Californians,” said Dr. Manuel Pastor, Director of USC’s Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration. “Undocumented immigrants represent nearly 1 in 10 of the state’s workers, so covering a population that contributes an estimated $130 billion to our state’s GDP makes sense given the positive spillover effects on the economy.”

This research was funded by The California Endowment, who seeks to highlight the contributions of undocumented Californians to our state’s communities and economies while raising awareness of their lack of access to affordable health care coverage.

More information and all fact sheets are available for download at [http://dornsife.usc.edu/csii/unauthorized-and-uninsured](http://dornsife.usc.edu/csii/unauthorized-and-uninsured)

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About CSII: The mission of the Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration (CSII) at USC is to remake the narrative for understanding, and to shape the dialogue, on immigrant integration in America. CSII brings together three emphases: scholarship that draws on academic theory and rigorous research, data that provides information structured to highlight the process of immigrant integration over time, and engagement that seeks to create new dialogues with government, community organizers, business and civic leaders, immigrants and the voting public. Visit [http://dornsife.usc.edu/CSI](http://dornsife.usc.edu/CSI).

About Dr. Enrico A. Marcelli: [http://sociology.sdsu.edu/faculty/marcelli.html](http://sociology.sdsu.edu/faculty/marcelli.html)
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