



## Latino Asthma Epidemic

- In 2004, over 3.4 million Hispanic Americans had been diagnosed with asthma in their lifetime, more than 2.1 million reported that they currently have asthma and 1.2 million of them experienced an asthma attack in the past year.<sup>1</sup>
- The rate of asthma among Puerto Ricans is 125% higher than non-Hispanic white people and 80% higher than non-Hispanic black people.<sup>2</sup>
- Asthma mortality rates among Latino sub-populations vary substantially. One study found that from 1990-95, Puerto Ricans had an age-adjusted death rate of 40.9 per million, followed by Cuban-Americans at 15.8 per million and Mexican-Americans at 9.2 per million. Death rates among non-Hispanic white people and non-Hispanic black people were 14.7 and 38.1 per million, respectively.<sup>3</sup>
- In some Chicago communities, 34% of Puerto Rican children have asthma.<sup>4</sup>
- The prevalence of asthma attacks is the highest among Puerto Ricans.<sup>1</sup>
- Hispanics may have an elevated risk for exposure to air pollution because a disproportionate number live in areas failing to meet one or more national standards for air pollutants. It is estimated that 80% of Hispanics live in areas that failed to meet one U.S. EPA air quality standard, compared to 65% of African Americans and 57% of Caucasians.<sup>5</sup>
- 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.<sup>6</sup>
- Puerto Rican children with asthma were more likely to be sensitized to both indoor and outdoor allergens than were white children with asthma.<sup>7</sup>
- 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 emergency department for asthma.<sup>8</sup>

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5 "Environmental Health Perspectives," Environmental Health and Hispanic Children, 1995.

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

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

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