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## The Role of Advocacy in Promoting Health Equity and Social Justice in the Latino population



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## Introduction

The PASOs Program promotes Health Equity and Social Justice by addressing barriers to care that are specific to the Latino immigrant population in the Southeast.

PASOs advocate with and for the community to increase access to health care and improve health outcomes.



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## Latinos in South Carolina States with Largest Hispanic Population Growth 2000-2010

State	Growth 2000-2010 (%)
South Carolina	148
Alabama	145
Tennessee	134
Kentucky	122
Arkansas	114
North Carolina	111

Source: Pew Hispanic Center, U.S. Census Bureau, Redistricting Files-PL\_94-171 for states  
PEW HISPANIC CENTER, March 2011



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## Latinas living in SC face considerable challenges to accessing health care services

- Latinas had higher rates of inadequate prenatal care and birth defects.  
Late initiation or no prenatal care:  
38.3% per 1000 population (2006) verses (13.6 Whites;  
29.6 African Americans)
- Health services inadequately prepared for addressing the needs of Latina women and their families.
- Barriers to care include: language, discrimination, fear, cost, lack of understandable information, and various logistical barriers.
- Southern Poverty Law Center: Latinos in the "New South" face widespread hostility, exploitation, and racial subordination.



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## The PASOs Program

- Created in response to an Maternal and Child Health needs assessment (2005) in two South Carolina counties which revealed gaps in services for pregnant Latinas.
- Our mission: To empower Latino families to optimize maternal and child health within their social and cultural context through education, outreach, partnership, and advocacy.



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- Currently exists in 13 of 46

## PASOs Participants Demographics

N = 301 Prenatal Class Participants

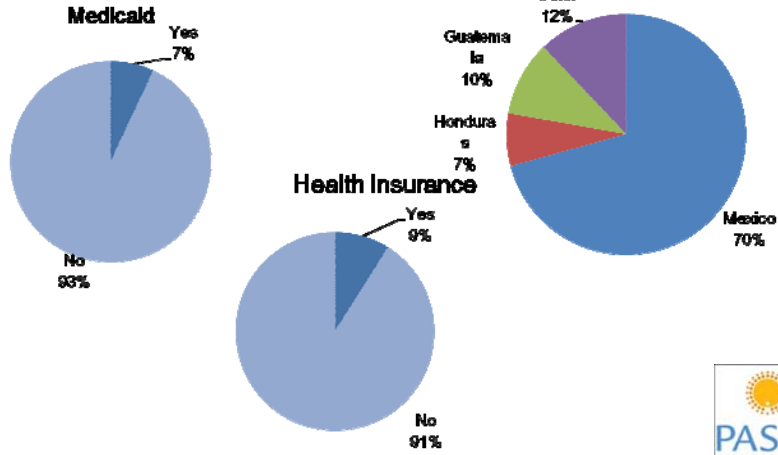
<b>Average age</b>	27 years old
<b>Average number of years in the US</b>	6.2 years
<b>Average education level</b>	Less than 9 <sup>th</sup> grade
<b>Average annual household income</b>	\$15,600



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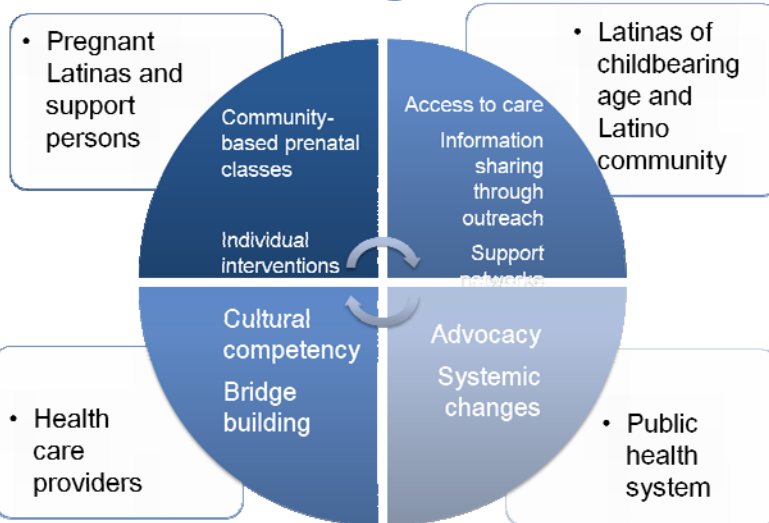
# PASOs Participants Demographics

N = 301 Prenatal Class Participants



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# PASOs Program Model



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## Purpose of Study

- **ADVOCACY** plays a key role in the PASOs Program model. Qualitative data was collected and analyzed to understand the unique way that advocacy is performed with the Latino immigrant population.
- **Advocacy** = Relationship-based, individual interventions with systems navigation that increase access to resources and have the capacity to lead to systems change.
- **Health Equity** = Everyone has the opportunity to “attain their full health potential” and no one is “disadvantaged from achieving this potential because of their social position or other socially determined circumstance.”

Source: [Promoting Health Equity: A Resource to Help Communities Address Social](#)



## Study Design

- Data was collected from the following sources:
  - 17 monthly program coordinator conference call transcriptions
  - 2 focus groups with program participants
  - 5 interviews with peer health educators (promotoras)
  - 25 program coordinator monthly reports
- Method
  - Compiled using NVIVO Software
  - Content analysis of the data using both preset and emergent categories
  - Second evaluator provided additional analysis and interpretation
- Categories
  - Barriers to Optimal Maternal/Child Health
  - Advocacy Strategies
  - Challenging the Health Care System
  - Examples of Advocacy through Intervention



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## Barrier Themes

- Language Differences
- Fear due to Immigration Policy
- Knowledge of Services

### Example Quotes:

*“And sometimes, you lose your appointment or you don’t go to your appointment because of fear... And also there is the other factor of immigration status, that we are scared that because we go to this clinic they can report us to the Migra [immigration police]. And all of these are factors that make it difficult to receive good prenatal care.”*  
– Focus Group Participant

*“A participant who had a miscarriage told me that in the ER she was not provided with a towel for her bleeding for a long time after attempting to ask with hand signals... They thought she spoke English because she nodded a few times.”*

– Program Coordinator Report

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## Barrier Themes

- Poor Treatment by Providers
- Poor Communication with Providers
- Financial Difficulty
- Cultural Differences

### Example Quotes:

*“[At the clinic] there is always a nice person who is a translator, and when the translator arrives, the providers behave very well, but when the translator leaves, they behave very badly. There is a lot of racism against the Hispanic community.”* - Focus Group Participant

*“They say that if you get angry, your breast milk isn’t good anymore....And if you are busy you have to rest because your milk turns bad, and if you give it to your baby, he will get sick.”*

- Focus Group Participant

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## Advocacy Solution Themes

PASOs promotes health equity through

advocacy on three levels:

1. Individual Interventions
2. Community Level
3. Policy Level



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## Advocacy Solution Themes

- Personal Relationships Built on Trust or “Personalismo”

- Knowledge of Community Needs and **Connecting to Services**  
*“At PASOs, they care about us... it surprised me because [the coordinator] calls me and asks if I need any help... if I need transportation... and I am really thankful for her. You feel relieved that you can count on someone.”*

- Focus Group Participant

*“I wanted to go to the clinic but I didn’t know anything. I needed someone who could open my eyes. Or someone who would come alongside me and say: look, this is this and that is that.”*

- Promotora Interview

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## Advocacy Solution Themes

- Challenging the System
- Participant Empowerment

*“When in the clinics, sometimes they are treating us poorly, because we don’t have health insurance and they don’t want to serve us, I ask myself, what can we do? We are working on coming up with a solution right now, so that [Latinos] can receive better medical attention, because it is an injustice sometimes what they do.”*

- Promotora Interview

*“Now we know how to make our appointments, and which clinics to go to, and also what papers we need to bring so that we can receive prenatal care... We are not lost*



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## Promoting Health Equity and Social Justice


- Lessons Learned
  - Advocacy with the Latino immigrant population hinges on relationships and trust, which take time to earn and develop.
  - Organizations often depend on PASOs’ expertise and relationship with the community in order understand how to better serve Latinos.
  - Program Coordinators and Promotores are brokers of information and use their trusted status in the community to intervene on behalf of others.
  - Through interventions where power is shared, individuals can become empowered to advocate for themselves and for their communities.



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## Conclusions

- New immigrants experience social factors that place them at risk for poor maternal and child outcomes and health inequity.
- PASOs has been successful in advocating with and for this underserved population by developing trusting relationships, connecting individuals to resources, challenging injustices, and empowering participants.
- Some interventions that begin on the individual level have the capacity to create systems change.
- Advances in health equity and social justice are being attained individual levels,   
community/organizational levels and policy levels.

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## Thank You!

PASOs Funders include:



THE DUKE ENDOWMENT



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