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Medicine : Public Health

Buki, Lydia P., Piedra, Lissette M (Eds.), University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign Dept. Kinesiology & Community Health, Champaign, IL, USA

Creating Infrastructures for Latino Mental Health

- **Interdisciplinary approach to understanding Latino mental health disparities**
- **Systematic and practical approaches on how to remove barriers to mental health care**
- **Addresses the mental health needs of a growing yet underserved population**

Latinos are the fastest growing and largest minority group in the United States. In 2008, this group numbered over 47 million; by 2050, the population is expected to triple, reaching 133 million. Traditionally, Latinos have immigrated to large urban centers (e.g., New York, Los Angeles) that over long periods of time developed a complex infrastructure to receive new immigrants. Increasingly, new Spanish-speaking immigrants are moving into areas of the country previously unfamiliar to them. Although urban co-ethnic communities continue to be the destination of many newcomers, immigrants from Mexico, Central America, and South America in pursuit of low-skilled labor opportunities are settling in small towns and rural areas of the South and Midwest. This new demographic trend has resulted in the creation of the term "new growth communities," which refers to small rural areas that are now home to a small but rapidly growing Hispanic population. Unfortunately, these communities, which are now present in many states across the country (e.g., Illinois, North Carolina), lack the infrastructure necessary to meet the needs of Latino immigrants (e.g., access to health care, immigration assistance, and breaking down language barriers). The lack of an infrastructure and the lack of an established ethnic community to facilitate the assimilation of new immigrants present an ongoing challenge, especially in the area of Latino mental health. The volume focuses on dealing with systemic issues and on providing innovative ideas for development of infrastructure of services. This text will advance ways to understand and ameliorate mental health disparities both from research and experiential perspectives.

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