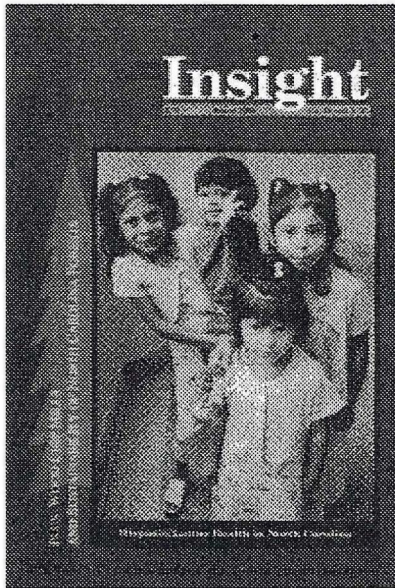


# FROM THE CENTER OUT

The Newsletter of the North Carolina Center for Public Policy Research ... A voice for good government  
September-October-November 1999



## New Insights on the Rising Hispanic/Latino Population in N.C.

One of the most dramatic changes in North Carolina's population this century is the rise of the Hispanic/Latino population this decade. The surge in this population and its impact on local health departments is featured in the latest issue of the Center's *North Carolina Insight* magazine.

"North Carolina is experiencing a wave of Hispanic/Latino immigration," says Mike McLaughlin, editor of *Insight*. "But the image of Hispanics only as migrant farmworkers no longer applies. Hispanics now hold a growing number of jobs in construction, food service, landscaping, and slaughterhouses. They work in lower-wage and more dangerous jobs with fewer benefits like health insurance, and they use local health department services in greater numbers. State government needs to help these local departments meet the need."

The U.S. Bureau of the Census says that Hispanics/Latinos comprise about 2 percent (200,000) of the state's population. Some estimates range as high as 350,000. But because Hispanics are mostly in low-wage occupations, they rely more heavily than the rest of the state's population on local health departments for health care services. In Durham County, for example, where Hispanics comprise only 2 percent of the population, they represented almost 23 percent of the health department's total caseload for 1997-98. In Wilson County, a total of 30 percent of health department patients were Hispanic/Latino. And in Randolph County, the numbers reached 40 percent.

The Center's study includes a survey of all 87 local health departments, 22 community and migrant health centers, 34 rural health centers, and 75 rural hospitals. An amazing 94 percent of the health departments responded, as did a majority of each of the other groups.

Survey results identify the language barrier as the primary hurdle to attaining adequate health care for Hispanics/Latinos. Lack of health insurance and lack of transportation are widely cited as other significant barriers to care. By age and gender, the primary health issues are prenatal care for women, on-

the-job injuries for men, and low immunization rates for children.

Only 68 percent of Hispanic/Latina females in North Carolina receive prenatal care in the first trimester of pregnancy, compared to 87.7 percent for whites and 72.6 percent for African Americans. And Hispanic/Latino males are more likely to be injured or killed on the job than whites or African Americans. In 1998, Hispanics/Latinos represented only 2 percent of the state's population but accounted for 6 percent of its workplace deaths.

Finally, both national studies and a previous 1995 Center study in North Carolina show that Hispanic/Latino children are less likely than the overall population to be immunized against childhood diseases. In a 1996 North Carolina rubella outbreak, 79 of the 83 cases occurred in Hispanic/Latino children, endangering them and the general population. These are good examples of how improving Hispanic health also protects the public health, says McLaughlin.

The Center makes seven recommendations to address these health problems. They include: (1) that the Governor include in his 2000 budget state funds for interpreters in 79 local health departments; (2) that the Governor include in his 2000 budget \$250,000 for Maternal Care Coordination services for women ineligible for Medicaid; (3) that the legislature make an annual appropriation to fund immunization outreach workers in the 20 counties with the largest Hispanic/Latino populations; and (4) that the N.C. Department of Labor devise and implement a plan for enhancing workplace safety among Hispanic/Latino workers.

The Center's research has been well received by the media, with *The News & Observer* of Raleigh devoting its Sunday, August 15 "Q" perspective section to the project. This effort was paired with a half-hour television program on WRAL-TV in Raleigh. The report also was featured in 30 articles in 20 newspapers across the state. Broadcast coverage included a one-hour talk show on WPTF-AM and news coverage on the 90-station North Carolina Radio News Network.

McLaughlin presented the Center's research and recommendations to the Governor's Advisory Council on Hispanic/Latino Affairs. The panel endorsed all seven of the Center's recommendations and forwarded them to the Governor for action. The meeting was televised on the Agency for Public Telecommunications "OpenNet" program on October 5th and will be rebroadcast on November 23<sup>rd</sup>. The Center thanks the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust of Winston-Salem for its generous support of this project.

## If a Tree Falls in the Forest...

The Center made sure its report on wood chip mills and sustainable forestry did not go unnoticed with a special release in mid-September. Published in the latest edition of *Insight*, the report notes that the number of satellite wood chip mills in North Carolina has grown from two to 18 since 1980, with four in the mountains, 10 in the Piedmont, and four in the east.

Chip mills typically employ a small number of people who oversee the placement of whole logs into a machine that strips off the bark. The logs are then fed into a grinder, which spits out little chunks of wood, each about the size of a potato chip. Satellite chip mills have an average capacity of 250,000 tons per year and can consume up to 2,600 acres of hardwood and softwood annually.

The Center makes four recommendations toward the goal of sustaining the state's forests and replenishing trees as fast as they are cut. Those recommendations are: (1) that the N.C. General Assembly eliminate a tax credit for exporting wood chips that may encourage more harvesting of trees than would otherwise occur; (2) that state law be clarified as to Best Management Practices in preventing sedimentation and erosion on timber sites; (3) that forest landowners be required to notify the state in advance when they plan to harvest timber so state water quality inspectors can help prevent erosion and resulting pollution of rivers and streams; and (4) that the N.C. Division of Forest Resources develop a plan for enhancing its reforestation program to meet a goal of sustainable forestry.

A Forest City *Daily Courier* editorial said, "At long last an independent agency has weighed in on the chip mill controversy and is recommending measures for the N.C. General Assembly to consider. The N.C. Center for Public Policy Research is influenced neither by loggers nor environmentalists. The group spent months investigating charges and countercharges made by both sides and issued realistic measures to help protect forest interests.... The General Assembly should take a close look at their study and be ready to act on it by the next business session." The Center's research and recommendations also gained editorial endorsements from *The Charlotte Observer* and *The News & Observer* of Raleigh.

The Center thanks the Blumenthal Foundation of Charlotte and the Mary Norris Preyer Fund of Greensboro for their generous support of this project.

## Higher Education Governance in N.C.

In June, the Center released *Reorganizing Higher Education in North Carolina: What History Tells Us About Our Future*, the first report in an extensive four-part study of key issues in the governance of the state's public universities. This first report shows that North Carolina's public university system faces many of the same issues today that it did when it was founded in 1971. These issues include how to handle booming student enrollment, provide equity in funding among the 16 campuses, improve access to higher education for minorities,

prevent independent lobbying by single campuses, and keep tuition affordable.

The second report in the series is nearing completion and is scheduled to be released early next year. *Governance of Public Universities in the 50 States* is a comparison of the types of governing and coordinating bodies overseeing public university systems across the country. The report describes the three types of higher education systems in the 50 states, highlights strengths and weaknesses of these models, and compares them to the UNC Board of Governors, which governs North Carolina's 16-university system.

### What They Are Saying About Our First Report on Public University Governance

*"I think [the report] is a fine piece of writing based on extensive in-depth research. I am confident the publication will always be an important resource document for researchers, historians and others."*

**Robert W. Scott, N.C. Governor, 1969-1973**

*"The historical perspective is tremendously valuable to me as Chancellor of N.C. State. The report was helpful... in connecting the history of 1971 legislation and the issues we face today in North Carolina."*

**Marye Anne Fox, Chancellor, N.C. State University**

*"[Y]ou have done a great job in this report and I feel sure that it will be very well received."*

**William A. Dees, Jr., Chairman of the UNC Board of Governors, 1973-1976**

*"You've produced a fine and even-handed account of the complex goings-on surrounding North Carolina's higher education controversy of the 1960s and 1970s. The history needed to be written -- even though many of its complicated nuances made the writing of it difficult and the results often overwhelming in minute detail."*

**William D. Snider, Author, *Light on the Hill: A History of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill* and former editor, *Greensboro News & Record***

*"To understand the issues of the University of North Carolina system, the N.C. Center for Public Policy Research suggested we take a look at 1971. Carolyn Waller, policy analyst at the Center, put it this way: 'It's been said that our only real crystal ball is a rearview mirror.'... We're glad the Center provided that mirror for legislators."*

**The Lexington Dispatch**

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## Coming in the Next *Insight*

Does North Carolina engage in stop-and-start education reform? You be the judge when you read about two decades of public school reform in the Tar Heel state. Seven separate reform efforts come under the microscope as the Center attempts to answer this question raised by the national publication, *Education Week*. Also in this issue, the Center explores whether North Carolina still has a citizen legislature and whether that makes any difference. Finally, the Center looks at legislative efforts to curb what has become known as predatory lending – aggressive above-market-rate lending which has the effect of capturing the equity in a borrower's home.

## **Sustaining Fund Campaign**

Over the last two years, the Center undertook a \$2 million campaign to create a Sustaining Fund for the Center's Future to help ensure our independence and enable us to continue bringing you meaningful research on public policy issues that affect your daily life. With more than \$1.93 million raised, we've attained more than 97 percent of our \$2 million goal.

The Sustaining Fund is designed to: (1) provide a sustainable source of revenue to help with general operating support; (2) expand the Center's audience, especially among the media, public libraries, and teachers of government; (3) adapt the Center to the new ways people are getting their information about government through the Internet, radio, and public and cable TV; and (4) allow modest expansion of Center programs in the future.

We really need your help to complete our campaign. Will you make a pledge or gift today? Please call Laurita Ray or Ran Coble at (919) 832-2839 for more information or if you can help put us over the top.

### **Special Thanks to the Following Companies and Foundations for Their New Pledges to the Sustaining Fund for the Center's Future:**

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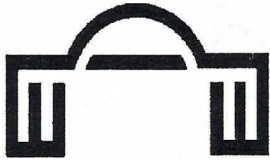
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North Carolina Center for  
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