The Colorado Health Foundation™

Hispanic Heritage Month: Lessons in Heritage, Reminders in Solidarity

From September 15 through October 15, we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month*, honoring the many Latin American countries that celebrate their independence days within these dates. This is a time to reflect on the culture, the history, and the contributions of Latine communities in Colorado. In recognizing the interconnectedness of the experiences and identities across the Latinidad, we are reminded that now is the time to more deeply embrace the traditions of community, solidarity, and cultural resistance.

Across generations, Latine communities have drawn strength from one another, preserved traditions, supported family and neighbors, and created pathways for future generations to thrive. Yet, this moment calls upon Latine communities to manifest their collective strength, to safeguard their families and neighbors and preserve the pathways for future generations. Changes in SNAP, WIC, Medicaid, inflation, and immigration enforcement have made it more difficult to afford housing and seek care. Unsurprisingly, The Colorado Health Foundation Pulse Poll shows that many Latine families are facing compounding stressors, including significant gaps in access to food and stable housing, and a general sentiment of being worse off financially than a year ago.

While the Pulse Poll is an important data set, a more compelling narrative is coming through loud and clear from our communities themselves. Across Colorado, Latine communities are helping shape the future of our state every day,

as business owners, educators, health care workers, artists, elected officials, and advocates whose contributions strengthen neighborhoods and local economies. The same spirit of connection and responsibility that helps families navigate difficult times also fuels efforts to create opportunities, build community, advocate for lasting change, and work relentlessly for a brighter future for those who follow.

And yet, while this demonstration of resilience and strength deserves recognition, it should not be required. Resilience is worthy of celebration, but it is not a substitution for addressing the systemic barriers Latine Coloradans are facing. The fact that communities continue to overcome these challenges does not make them acceptable.

This Hispanic Heritage Month, we are reminded of the strength that Latine communities continue to demonstrate throughout our state. While Latinidad encompasses a wide range of identities and experiences, from those who have been here days to families who have lived here for generations, these communities are an essential part of who we are. In its commitment to health equity and racial justice, The Colorado Health Foundation believes this moment of solidarity belongs to all of us. Whether that means stepping into conversations on behalf of those that are forced to live in the shadows, caring for neighbors who have lost access to critical supports, or exercising your right to vote, we hope you'll join in building a more just, healthy, and equitable future for everyone.

*We're referring to this observance as Hispanic Heritage Month, as it is recognized nationally. At the same time, we recognize that the term "Hispanic" does not fully capture the diverse identities and experiences of Latino/a/x/e, Hispanic and Chicano communities. Learn more here.?

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