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**PRESS RELEASE**  
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**For Immediate Use**

**American Children of Mexican immigrant parents face healthcare  
inequalities**  
**Study highlights the obstacles that millions of children encounter**

**(October 3, 2009)** – One in every 15 children under 18 years old in the United States (6.3 million) has at least one parent who was born in Mexico. Most of these children are U.S.-citizens (85%), yet they face daunting obstacles in obtaining health insurance, needed health care, and staying healthy.

A new report, *“Migration and Health: The Children of Mexican Immigrants in the United States”* documents the widespread inequality of children under 18 years old to the U.S. health care system. The study was a collaborative effort between the Mexican National Population Council (CONAPO), the UC-Berkeley School of Public Health, Health Initiative of the Americas, the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, and the Migration and Health Research Center, a joint program of UC Berkeley and UC Davis.

The disadvantage that these children face is linked to the unfavorable socioeconomic and migratory conditions in which they live. Their environment is characterized by low paid jobs, limited English skills and lack of documentation.

**Key findings of the study include:**

- The children, most of whom are U.S. citizens, face barriers to health insurance, experience challenges in accessing health care and are at high risk for some health conditions. **Over 1.5 million children of Mexican immigrants** in the U.S. have no health insurance. Children of immigrants are **about three times** more likely than other children in the U.S. to be uninsured.
- Lack of private medical health coverage and access to public programs constitutes the main barrier to receiving timely medical care. This may lead to a tendency to postpone the diagnosis or treatment of some health problems among children of Mexican origin.
- The report shows that despite their situation, children of Mexican immigrants use medical emergency units less frequently than other population groups, including children of U.S. born whites.
- **Over half of the children of immigrants’ population are dependent on public clinics and health centers (52%).**
- Young Children under 3 years of age of Mexican immigrants are more likely to have anemia than children of U.S born whites and have high rates of obesity.

The landmark report highlights the pressing need to ensure that US-born children of immigrants have access to benefits to which they are entitled, regardless of their parent’s migratory status. The report

concludes that “A country’s health includes the well-being of all the persons living in it. The fact those immigrants and their families have good health not only benefits this group in particular, but all of society in general. Particularly in the case of children, investment in their medical care will guarantee the future of upcoming generations under more equal conditions and therefore with more dignity”.

The United States is currently undergoing wide ranging reforms, a pivotal one of which is health. The current situation provides a historic opportunity to design inclusion policies. Taking advantage of this opportunity will be an important step towards increasing the country’s democratization, more in keeping with the founding values of this great nation.

The report will be released during the Ninth Policy Forum on Migration and Health to occur October 5-6 in Santa Fe, New Mexico. This event inaugurates the Annual Binational Health Week, which has become one of the largest mobilizations of volunteers in the Americas, serving vulnerable and underserved populations.

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