

Minority Workers At A Disadvantage As Unemployment Rises

Washington, DC—Citing March 2009 figures released today by the U.S. Department of Labor, four national organizations called attention to the dire situation facing African American and Latino workers, who are suffering the most dramatic rise in unemployment compared to all other groups. The National Council of La Raza (NCLR), the Center for American Progress (CAP), the Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs (AFOP), and the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) have joined together to highlight the growing labor market disparities between minorities and their peers.

In March, 13.2 million workers were unemployed. The overall unemployment rate rose to 8.5%, up from 8.1% in February. For White workers, the March unemployment rate was 7.9%, while it reached 11.4% for Latinos and 13.3% for Blacks.

"With unemployment rates for Blacks and Hispanics above 10%—nearly double the rate for Whites—the current recession is clearly demonstrating just how precarious the economic situation is for many minorities. It will take many months before the economy gets back on track, but President Obama is starting to put in place the policies necessary to create good jobs and higher wages, laying the

foundation for long-term, broadly shared economic growth," said David Madland, Director of the American Worker Project at CAP.

"Even in the best of times, minority workers struggle to access high-quality jobs due to low education, skills, and English language levels," said Janet Murguía, NCLR President and CEO. "As we look forward to economic recovery, the stakes are especially high for Latinos because they are the fastest-growing segment of the workforce. NCLR is calling upon state and local governments to make sure that resources aimed at jump-starting the economy are used to improve job opportunities for African Americans and Hispanics."

"America continues to shed jobs at an alarming rate. Overall unemployment has not been this high since 1983, and we are in the midst of what will be a long and deep recession. Yet, African American, Latino and foreign-born workers all have unemployment rates well over 10%—leaving those minority workers experiencing what is more accurately described as a depression," said Christian Dorsey, Interim Communications Director at EPI. "Congress passed a stimulus package that looks to create around 3.5 million jobs, half of what is

needed to keep pace with lost jobs and additions to the labor force. Clearly, there is more work left to do."

Funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)—which the White House has said will create or save 3.5 million jobs over the next two years—are just beginning to be distributed to states and local communities, so the jobs numbers may not reflect the impact of the legislation for some months.

"The new job-loss figures are especially bad news for our nation's migrant and seasonal farmworkers. They rely on us to help them get trained and placed into jobs that, unlike farm work, allow them to earn a living wage. Today's data make it clear that it will be increasingly more difficult to help farmworkers get out of poverty and realize the American Dream," said David Strauss, Executive Director of AFOP.

"Our goal is 'full steam ahead' for our economy. That cannot be achieved unless African American and Latino workers are an integral part of states' plans for implementing the economic recovery legislation," said Murguía. "We are counting on states to use the resources provided by ARRA in ways that reach minority workers and the community organizations that serve them."

Local healthy lifestyles program for non-English speakers unveiled

New state law requiring health plans to provide interpreters for limited-English speaking Californians also highlighted

California Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) Director Cindy Ehnes and leaders from La Maestra Community Health Centers and the California Office of the Patient Advocate gathered on the eve of Caesar Chavez day to announce a \$164,123 grant to implement a culturally and linguistically-sensitive lifestyle modification program targeting low-income, immigrant and minority residents in San Diego.

"We communicate with our patients in 19 different languages and know they are more likely to seek help and to return if we provide a comforting environment where they feel at home," states Zara Marseljan, CEO, La Maestra Community Health Centers. "We have learned that our patients are more receptive to positive information delivered in their own language and their beliefs and customs are respected, which is what this program is about."

In 1990, La Maestra developed the Medically Trained Cultural Liaison model (M.T.C.L.) which is a highly trained group of core staff members that are recruited from the diverse populations they serve. Approximately 90 percent of La Maestra's patients are first-generation refugees and immigrants. The M.T.C.L.'s are cross-trained in the areas of eligibility, health education and outreach. This ensures that there is a high level of cultural competency within the medical home. The grant funding will be used to support the M.T.C.L.'s work in the areas of health education, training on nutrition and exercise.

The funding for the grant comes from a \$50 million charitable investment required by the DMHC and the California Department of Insurance from PacifiCare Health Systems when it merged with UnitedHealth Group in 2005. As part of the \$50 million in charitable grants, \$25 million is dedicated to grants to be distributed to community organi-

zations.

Director Ehnes also highlighted a new state law, put into effect by the DMHC, making California the first state in the nation to require that medical services, materials, and information are provided to commercial health plan members in their spoken languages. This law also requires that interpretation services be offered to those of no or limited English proficiency (LEP) at each point of service, such as the doctor's office, a laboratory, or a therapy facility. This landmark law is expected to make a profound, positive change in the way millions of LEP Californians communicate with their doctors.

"In today's complex medical world, it is crucial that patients understand the instructions given by their doctors, and perhaps more importantly, that doctors understand their patients — which can be nearly impossible when a language barrier prevents them from communicating with each other," said Ehnes. "This landmark language assistance law will end the unnecessary distress and confusion many health plan members with LEP have when attempting to access care. It will ensure that California health plan members receive their health care services in a language that they can speak and understand."

"I commend all the people and organizations that have worked for years to make these regulations possible. Finally, more consumers can receive medical services in their language," said Sandra Perez, Director of the Office of the Patient Advocate. "I encourage patients and consumers to contact us if they have questions or problems."

Health plan members should tell their plans, doctors, or other providers that they need language assistance when they make an appointment. If consumers have a problem getting an interpreter or translated materials, they should call the

DMHC Help Center at 1-888-466-2219, or file a complaint at www.healthhelp.ca.gov.

La Maestra Community Health Centers is dedicated to transforming the health and well-being of low-income and immigrant residents that has treated an estimated 68,000 patients since 1990. In 2008, La Maestra reported 85,000 patient visits. As a member of Southern California's Council of Community Clinics, it is the only health center of its kind in the communities it serves - City Heights, El Cajon, Lemon Grove, National City and a school based clinic in San Diego. Low-income and immigrant residents rely heavily on La Maestra to be the "safety net" for their health and non-medical needs.

COMMUNITY NOTES:

Alpha Pi Sigma Visits Casa Hogar Sion in Tijuana

Latino Greeks at San Diego State University united forces to help those in need across the border. The Ladies of Alpha Pi Sigma Sorority Inc. Alpha Chapter and the gentleman of Nu Alpha Kappa Fraternity Inc. Beta Chapter dedicated a Sunday to the children of Casa Hogar Sion in Tijuana Baja California.

The two Greek organizations in addition to allocating money form their yearly budget co-hosted a fundraiser to be able to buy the needed supplies for the orphanage. Members of the organizations also donated new and use items. Together they were able to collect toiletries, sanitary napkins, toys, clothing, undergarments, baby formula and more.

What made this visit stand out from past ones for this two organizations was that they did not just take the items and spend time with the children, they also took paint and other equipment to work on the nursery room that was in need of

LA COLUMNA VERTEBRAL
El Soporte Informativo Para Millones
de Hispanos
Por Marangely Rodríguez



Por Marangely Rodríguez

Proteja a quienes ama

Para muchos, una póliza de seguro de vida es algo innecesario, costoso o que debe adquirirse cuando se es mayor. La realidad es que si alguien de su familia depende financieramente de usted, debe considerar seriamente en adquirir una póliza de seguro de vida.

Un seguro de vida le brinda seguridad en momentos de crisis financiera, como los que vivimos y es muy posible que descubra que los beneficios son superiores a los costos.

Una póliza será muy útil si está soltero pero su familia depende de su asistencia económica, si está casado, para que su cónyuge no se vea desprovisto de sus necesidades, si tiene hijos, si tiene una vivienda, o si está retirado o está por retirarse, es hora de considerar un seguro de vida.

Existen dos tipos de seguro de vida: el seguro de vida a término y el seguro de vida permanente. El seguro de vida a término o temporal es aquel que paga al beneficiario en

caso de muerte del asegurado. Esta póliza tiene una vigencia de 1 a 30 años y es la póliza ideal si tiene un presupuesto apretado, ya que ofrece una cobertura alta por una prima más baja. Según el *Insurance Information Institute* las primas de los seguros a término están hoy día en su momento más bajo.

Otra de las ventajas de éste seguro, es que si opta por la renovación garantizada (renewal guarantees), al final del término no tiene que someterse a un examen físico para comprobar que está en condiciones o califica para la póliza.

El seguro de vida permanente es aquel que no está sujeto a un término específico, paga los beneficios en caso de muerte sin importar si es en 10 o 100 años. Sus primas son más altas pero tiene la flexibilidad de que en caso de que no pueda continuar pagando, por un tiempo limitado, lo que haya acumulado puede seguir sosteniendo el seguro. Además, si se mantiene pagando

sus primas no tiene que preocuparse por problemas de salud futuros.

Para asegurarse de conseguir la póliza que más se ajuste a sus necesidades y condición financiera, adquiera el seguro cuando se encuentre en buena condición de salud. De no ser así, trate de llevar un estilo de vida saludable para que la póliza sea más baja.

Asegúrese con una compañía de prestigio y revise su póliza cuando haya cambios en su estilo de vida; si compra una vivienda, se casa o se divorcia, tiene un hijo o un nuevo dependiente.

Haga sus cálculos, piense en los que ama y la tranquilidad que significa que se encuentren protegidos si usted falta.

Amigo lector de La Columna Vertebral, para acceder a servicios en su comunidad llame a La Línea de Ayuda de La Red Hispana al 1-800-473-3003.

Eating Well at Family Gatherings



By Andrea Callahan
Graduate Student, SDSU
School of Public Health

When your family and friends get together for special occasions, what is the one thing that you know there will be plenty of? That's right, food! Everyone brings something tasty to share. Your aunt may bring her famous tamales and your cousin may pick up a dessert from the local grocery store. When all of the people you care about get together to celebrate, it is easy to forget to make healthy food choices. How many times have you had so much to eat at a family gathering that you felt really full and tired?

Here are some tips to help you and your family eat healthy and feel good at family gatherings, and every day:

Tip 1: Use a small plate

Instead of grabbing the largest plate you can find, pick a small plate, or only put food on one side of a large plate. This will help limit the amount of

food you eat.

Tip 2: Eat small servings

You may want to try some of everything because it all looks so good. Take a little bit of a few different foods and avoid putting several scoops of one food on your plate (except vegetables!). When it is time for dessert, cut your slice of pie in half and share it with someone else.

Tip 3: Wait 20 minutes to go back for more

After you eat your first plate of food, wait 20 minutes to go back for more. This will give your stomach enough time to decide if you are full or ready for more food. You may find that you are not so hungry after all!

Tip 4: Balance your meal

Combining different foods to balance each meal you eat will keep you from feeling tired and give you more energy during the day. So how do you combine foods to create a balanced meal?

- Fill most of your plate with colorful vegetables and fruits. These can be fresh, frozen, or canned.
- Add a helping of meat that fits in the palm of your hand
- Avoid foods covered in dressings and sauces
- Avoid sugary foods, like

sweet breads and desserts. If you crave something sweet, try eating fruit, like strawberries or peaches.

Tip 5: Drink plenty of water

Instead of drinking alcohol, have some fun and blend a tropical smoothie with mango, papaya, strawberries, and orange juice.

Tip 6: Don't forget physical activity!

You might find yourself spending a lot of time in the kitchen or around the dining table and forget to go outside and move around! Take a walk around the block; kick a ball around in the yard with the kids; get the entire family involved in a relay race or scavenger hunt. The most important thing is to have fun!

Making good food choices and being physically active on a daily basis is the best way to keep you and your family happy and healthy all year.

This public health message is brought to you by the San Diego Prevention Research Center and Familias Sanas y Activas. For more information about free physical activity programs or public pool facilities in South Bay, please contact Sara Solaimani at: 619-594-2965.

repairs.

Liliana Medrado Alpha Pi Sigma, President stated, "The *TJ orphanage* is not about the material things that we take to the kids, to them is about the few hours of quality one on one time that we dedicated to them out of our free time... watching their faces as we said goodbye and knowing that they were wondering when would we come back is heartbreaking".

These two organizations plan events like this one through out the year to give back to the Latino Community which has been a positive influence in their pursued for hire education. Sindia Zapparipa, Liberal Studies major said, "It's about being a role model for the young ones".
Story submitted by Lizeth Romo

Western Revitalization Subcommittee - topic: Community Gardens in Western Chula Vista

Tuesday, April 14 at 5:00 p.m.

Location: Maria Candelaria Restaurant, 323 Third Avenue, Chula Vista, CA 91910

City Councilmembers Pamela Bensoussan and Steve Castaneda will hold a Western Revitalization Subcommittee meeting on Tuesday, April 14, 2009. After introductions and introductory comments, the topic of discussion will be potential sites for pilot garden project. Public comment and discussion will be welcomed.

Chula Vista Proposition A Debate

Chula Vista's Northwest Civic Association monthly Town Hall Meeting will be held at 6 p.m. Monday April 13th, in the Chula Vista Civic Center Library Auditorium. Topic: Proposition A - Educational Debate. Prop A is the proposed 1% sales tax increase for Chula Vista. Debate panelists include Mitch Thompson and Patricia Aguilar (For), Ed Herrera and Chris Altbaum (Against). The meeting will also feature NWCA Board Member elections.

Public comments welcome on all Chula Vista topics. Free. Information: (619)

307-3460 or www.northwestchulavista.org.

Go Gree & Clean Family Day

Bring the family to a free event to learn all about the City's environmental programs, exchange inefficient light bulbs and dispose of electronic waste. The City of Chula Vista will be hosting a "Go Green and Clean" Family Day on Saturday, April 18 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Friendship Park, located at Fourth Avenue and Davidson Street.

Fun activities, giveaways and important environmental information will be shared. In addition, residents can exchange up to five 75-watt (or higher) light bulbs for more energy-efficient ones. Residents can also receive a free indoor water-savings kit featuring an efficient showerhead and faucet aerators.

At the same time, down the street at the Ken Lee Building parking lot (430 F Street), the Environmental Services division will hold an electronic and universal waste recycling drop off.