

Crisis de Nuestro Bienestar: A Report on Latino/a/x Mental Health in Oregon

Barriers affecting access to services

- Not knowing where to seek services;
- Experiencing economic strain,
- Lack of health insurance
- Lack of transportation and facility locations
- Fear because of residence status
- Mental health services are still stigmatized and not well integrated in places where Latinos/as/x engage with other services, such as schools and schoolbased health centers, housing, and churches
- Mainstream mental health services are often not culturally or linguistically inclusive for Latinos/as/x in Oregon

Workforce Challenges

- There is a shortage of mental health professionals in Oregon
- Oregon's health care workforce does not reflect the population it serves, and there is a shortage of bilingual and bicultural mental health professionals
- Training and credentialing programs do not prioritize recruitment from Latino/a/x communities or define clear career paths
- There is no clear process for re-credentialing or transferring licenses of Latino/a/x immigrants with existing training
- Oregon's mental health system does not adequately pay for or support the professional development of culturally specific mental health providers
- Mental health work environments do not account for cultural complexity in provider caseload or supervision, and thereby contribute to inequitable workloads and provider burnout
 - Culturally specific providers are also often asked to consult on or provide translation and support to their mainstream coworkers for Latino/a/x patients, or to take on extra clients, over and above their own already heavy workloads.

Key Recommendations

- Build on Oregon's work toward health equity by increasing diversity in and providing training for the workforce, pipeline and credentialing of culturally and linguistically specific, trauma-informed mental health providers.

- Increase systemic resources and implement policy and organizational structures to address the scarcity of and support for mental health providers that serve Latinos/as/x and rural populations.
- Increase access to behavioral and mental health services by building systemic supports for comprehensive care in school districts and schools. Scale down existing culturally specific providers' caseloads to account for the time and labor needed to manage cultural complexity. This will decrease the number of clients existing providers can serve. This recommendation highlights the urgency for Oregon to simultaneously train and develop more mental health providers qualified to serve the Latino/a/x community.
- Establish as standard practice the appointment of practitioners of color, Communities of Color and other historically underserved groups on all licensing boards and public bodies.
- Community integration is key: Integrating culturally and linguistically specific mental healthcare with community services that Latinos/as/x in Oregon regularly use will address three prominent barriers for Latinos/as/x in Oregon — access, retention and stigma.
 - Create dedicated spaces and places for Latino/a/x clients by increasing systemic resources and implementing financial incentives to increase culturally specific mental health programming that combats stigma.
- Ask the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to work with the Oregon Department of Education to address provider workforce needs for Latinos/as/x and other Communities of Color in Oregon.
- Increase funding for Latinos/as/x and other historically under-resourced behavioral and mental health services in Oregon, with specific targeted resource allocations for funding increases that ensure equity.
- Resource and support a Latino behavioral health task force that centers equity for Latinos/ as/x. Also create a larger culturally specific behavioral health task force for historically underserved communities. These task forces will focus on:
 - Applying culturally specific lenses to behavioral and mental health, and
 - Using the Crisis de Nuestro Bienestar: A Report on Latino Mental Health in Oregon to inform an action agenda for the Oregon Legislature