

National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health Blueprint for Action

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Latinas stand at a unique historical juncture in the reproductive justice movement. A new wave of Latinas are coming of age, changing the political and social landscape of this country. Without question, Latina civic and political influence will grow exponentially over the next decade, making their involvement and leadership in the reproductive rights movement a prerequisite for success.

The need for reproductive justice for Latinas has never been greater. Latinas continue to face serious health care access barriers and consequently poorer health outcomes, especially in the area of reproductive health. By all measurable standards, Latinas are faring far worse than other groups in numerous areas of reproductive health, including breast and cervical cancer, HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections and teen pregnancy. For example, the rate of cervical cancer among Latinas is twice the rate of white women, the rate of HIV infection for Latinas is seven times higher than white women, and Latinas have the highest teen birth rate of any racial/ethnic group. A number of factors contribute to Latinas' reproductive health problems, such as lack of health insurance, language barriers, institutional challenges in the public health care system, and poverty.

In an effort to highlight these problems and provide concrete steps toward change, the *National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health (NLIRH)* presents a set of policy recommendations and action strategies to address Latinas' specific reproductive health needs. The seven-point policy action program, entitled **Blueprints for Action**, is intended to guide efforts to affect policy change at the federal, state and local level. The Blueprints for Action is framed from a social justice perspective that takes into account the intersection of race and ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, and immigration status, among others. The seven policy action priorities identified by NLIRH include:

- ⊗ Expanding Access to Health Care
- ⊗ Demanding Culturally Competent and Linguistically Appropriate Services
- ⊗ Ensuring Access to Family Planning and Contraceptive Equity
- ⊗ Promoting Comprehensive Sexuality Education
- ⊗ Protecting and Enhancing the Reproductive Rights of Latinas
- ⊗ Fostering a Pipeline of Latina/o Health Professionals
- ⊗ Generating Accurate and Unbiased Latina Focused Public Health Research

Undoubtedly, Latinas are and will continue to play an increasingly pivotal role in the fight to increase health care access and the struggle to protect and enhance the reproductive rights and freedom of women. We recognize and applaud efforts that are occurring throughout the country to develop Latina reproductive health and rights strategies founded on the real life experiences of Latinas and their communities. It is our hope that the Blueprints for Action will contribute to this unique Latina dialogue on reproductive justice and serve as a catalyst for change.

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