

Hispanic Social Justice Issues

Name:

Institution:

Hispanic Social Justice Issues

The Hispanic community in the United States faces numerous issues related to social justice. They concern different spheres of people's lives and various segments of society. One of them that has a direct tangible impact on the everyday wellbeing of the Latino community is health inequity. Due to social and economic factors, Hispanic Americans have insufficient access to care services and are disproportionately affected by a set of diseases, and demonstrate a worse health status in comparison to their Caucasian counterparts.

Hispanics are one of the fastest-growing ethnic groups in the United States. Polls conducted in 2017 indicated them as making up approximately 18 percent of the country's population (Gray-Akpa, 2018, par. 1). Nevertheless, a significant part of the community finds itself in unfavorable socioeconomic conditions, which has an adverse impact on different spheres of their lives. One aspect that has great influence is the health status of Hispanic Americans. According to existing studies, they are "disproportionately affected by conditions such as asthma, diabetes, obesity, and liver and cervical cancer" (Gray-Akpa, 2018, par. 4). A more precise grouping with the consideration of such factors as ethnicity and nationality makes the statistics even more pessimistic. Hence, the Americans of Mexican and Puerto Rican origin have a disproportionately high chance of suffering from diabetes and asthma, while Afro-Hispanics experience increased rates of hypertension (Gray-Akpa, 2018, par. 6). Data demonstrates that Hispanic Americans have a significantly worsened health status than their Caucasian counterparts.

The adverse tendency described above has a direct relation to social justice, as it is a result of social and economic circumstances surrounding a significant part of the Hispanic community. These include such aspects as family income and educational attainment. The studies conducted back in 1999 indicated that 23 percent of Hispanic Americans lived in conditions of poverty (Escarce and Kapur, 2006, par. 2). Although this statistical data is two decades old, the economic circumstances in the Latino community are still adverse. Thus, according to the reports, the earnings gap has not undergone any significant change since the beginning of the century. In terms of education, Americans of Hispanic origin also experience disproportionate disadvantages. Only 22 percent of Latino Americans attended colleges or educational facilities of higher levels, while the same indicators for African Americans and white Americans are, approximately, 30 and 47 percent (Barshay, 2018, par. 3). Therefore, the social and economic status of the Latino community is significantly worse than those of most other ethnic groups in the United States.

Issues with income and education have a direct impact on the health of Hispanic Americans. First and foremost, due to their low average income, they “are less able to afford the out-of-pocket costs of care, even if they have health insurance coverage” (Escarce and Kapur, 2006, par. 3). Therefore, they are frequently incapable of seeking medical help in non-emergency cases. The availability of insurance is another income-related factor. A significant amount of Hispanic Americans cannot afford to acquire insurance policy with their savings, so they must rely on their employers. In turn, as statistics demonstrate, a lot of them work in occupations that

provide either low-rate coverage or no insurance at all. Educational issues in the community also influence the health status of its members adversely. They can directly impair individuals' ability to navigate the healthcare system in its complex nature, understand the instructions of care providers, and communicate with them (Escarce and Kapur, 2006, par. 3). Language barriers that are more frequent among Hispanic Americans than in any other significant ethnic group in the United States create a problem of a similar nature, raising a barrier between a provider and a receiver of medical services. As these facts demonstrate, health inequity experienced by Hispanic Americans is a consequence of poor social and economic conditions in which a significant part of the community dwells.

Poor health status of the Hispanic community and the reasons causing this problem are topics of active discussion in which both society and official bodies take part. However, an effective strategy to address the issue is yet to be developed. Currently, a set of non-governmental organizations work in this field. As practice has shown, they demonstrate the best results when functioning at the local level and focusing on specific communities they can help. One example of such organizations is the San Joaquin Valley Health Fund, an entity that "advances health equity by building the capacity of communities and organizations to pursue policy and systems change" (Gray-Akpa, 2018, par. 10). It focuses on developing reformative policies in the region of San Joaquin Valley, funding organizations engaged in the provision of care to its inhabitants and establishing partnerships with nonprofit organizations working in this field. Another notable participant of the struggle for health equity in the same region is the

organization called Fathers and Families of San Joaquin. Based on the grassroots self-organization of the community, it does not only advocate for the institutional improvement of the medical sphere but also “offers culturally responsive community-based treatment services” (Gray-Akpa, 2018, par. 13). Therefore, the Hispanic community seeks ways to address the health inequity from which it suffers.

The grassroots initiatives described above are an adequate foundation for the struggle against the problem under analysis. However, they are still not sufficient. Both governmental and civic society should add their efforts to this common cause and contribute to solving the problem. Authorities are capable of initiating programs at state and federal levels to facilitate access to health care for socially and economically disadvantaged members of the Hispanic community. Meanwhile, nonprofit organizations and funds can direct their efforts to long-term change investments in “advocacy and policy, providing flexible funding and multiyear grants, and exploring nontraditional funding techniques” (Gray-Akpa, 2018, par. 19). Also, they may initiate community programs aimed at addressing the root causes of the problem: the living conditions of community members, public safety, affordable housing, employment, and facilitation of access to education. Another aspect at which nonprofit entities can direct their efforts is the creation of new partnerships with philanthropic organizations to establish a complex cross-cultural approach to solving the issue. In their combination, these measures can have a highly positive influence on the improvement of health indicators in the Latino community.

To conclude, among a broad scope of problems that Hispanic Americans face, health inequity is the one that influences people's lives the most. The members of the community have insufficient access to medical services; there is increased exposure to a set of dangerous diseases, and overall, Hispanic Americans have a worse health status than their counterparts belonging to other social and ethnic groups. A core determinant of this situation is the poor socioeconomic state in which a significant part of the community finds itself. It includes such aspects as low family income and educational attainment, the rates of which are inferior in comparison with those of other ethnic groups. This combination of factors demonstrates that health inequity faced by Hispanic Americans is a social justice issue, and addressing it requires the combined efforts of the government, nonprofit organizations, and civil society.

References

- Barshai, J. (2018, June 18). Behind the Latino college degree gap. Retrieved August 14, 2019, from <https://hechingerreport.org/behind-the-latino-college-degree-gap/>
- Escarce, J. J., & Kapur, K. (2006). Access to and Quality of Health Care. In M. Tienda & F. Mitchell (Eds.), *National Research Council (US) Panel on Hispanics in the United States*. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK19910/>
- Gray-Akpa, K. (2018, September 14). Investing in Latino Leadership for Health Equity and Justice. Retrieved August 14, 2019, from <http://www.gih.org/Publications/IssueFocusDetail.cfm?ItemNumber=9606>

Academic Experts

Your paper can be even better than this one.
Get help from real experts in academic writing.

**REQUEST
HELP**

**GET A FREE
QUOTE**