The Center for Salud/Health and Opportunities for Latinos (centro SOL) was established in 2013 with the purpose of addressing healthcare needs of Baltimore’s emerging Latino population. Positioned in the intersection of healthcare delivery and the surrounding community, the faculty and staff at Centro SOL have the knowledge, experience, and community and institutional relations in order to address the disparities faced by Latino immigrants in Baltimore.
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Executive Summary

Centro SOL is a dynamic space where committed faculty and staff work tirelessly to promote equity in health and opportunities for Latinos.

The goal of the 2019 report is to summarize the ongoing programs and highlight the most recent projects active in addressing Obesity, Adult and Children’s Mental Health, HIV, and others. We are presenting the outcomes of efforts to strengthen our research consultation and the dissemination efforts.

This document presents our progress on the five core areas:

**Education**

This year, an established mentoring and tutoring program hosted 14 high school immigrant-origin students attending Baltimore City Public Schools. The mentoring/tutoring program is an extension of our summer scholars program, established in 2014. Mentoring/tutoring sessions take place weekly and is staffed by our youth pipelines coordinator and volunteer mentors.

**Research**

Centro SOL is home for multiple small and large research projects including child health, maternal health, social determinants of health, mental health, and infectious diseases. This report summarizes the most prominent projects conducted in 2019.

**Clinical Innovations/Community Health**

Community-centered approaches to address the most pressing issues in public health has demonstrated to be effective when working with marginalized communities. Programs and research focus on prevention and building community cohesion, through the lens of those who better know their own needs. We do not bring the solution, but we promote our golden rule of community and patient centeredness. In 2019, we formalized more community advisory councils to guide our research and programming.

**Community Outreach**

In partnership with local organizations, Centro SOL has been at the forefront in community outreach since its inception. Every year, we host and co-host dozens of events to bring people together, to build community, to promote resilience and to advocate for our communities. An active social media and redesigned website support our efforts to reach out to our community.
Letter from the directors

Dear friends and partners,

Centro SOL reached its first fifth anniversary in 2019, an important milestone to organizations serving local communities. This period allowed us to reflect on our efforts, grow in projects and womanpower, and restructure our team supported since our early beginnings by the The Aaron and Lillie Straus Foundation.

One of our strongest endeavors has been improving children’s health and healthcare access for them and their families. The Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) funded our largest obesity effort in 2018, which consisted in a patient/community-centered approach to develop a set of recommendations to address childhood obesity. Additionally, PCORI supported efforts through a randomized control trial to assess anxiety outcomes among children.

Similarly, children’s health relies on healthy adults, and thanks to the generous support from the Leonard & Helen R. Stulman Charitable Foundation, in 2019 we established the Multi-level Approach to Depression among Latino Immigrants in Baltimore. This project is a major effort to address Mental Health Challenges through Community Engagement.

In early 2020, our co-director Kathleen Page was appointed medical director of The Access Partnership (TAP) program, which provides specialty care for underinsured patients and we are establishing partnerships with the Center for Adolescent Health, Center for Health Equity and the Urban Health Institute to promote children’s health.

Our mission will continue to spark our work in the clinical practice, the research and the community. Thank you for your continuous support!

Kathleen Page, MD
Co-Director
Associate Professor of Infectious Diseases

Sarah Polk, MD, ScM
Co-Director
Assistant Professor of Pediatrics
At Centro SOL we promote equity in health and opportunity for Latinos by advancing clinical care, research, education, and advocacy at Johns Hopkins and beyond in active...
“We need to help students and parents cherish and preserve the ethnic and cultural diversity that nourishes and strengthens this community—and this nation”

—Cesar Chavez

Summer Scholars
Mentoring & Tutoring
Seminars & Presentations
Program description
The summer scholars program was originally created in 2014 in order to offer bilingual high school students a variety of opportunities to work with and learn from the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine faculty in clinical settings that serve Latinx patients with limited English Proficiency. The goal of the program is to expose the students to the healthcare field, and opening doors to Spanish-English bilingual youth in Baltimore city.

Program background
This year, the program operated for five weeks, Monday through Friday, typically from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. Since 2016, the program expanded from accepting only six students to accepting up to six returning students in addition to six new students. Since 2018, the Pipeline Team developed a curriculum to standardize the Summer Scholars Program, and in 2019 the curriculum was piloted and evaluated for the first time.

2019 curriculum
The curriculum addresses three focus areas:
1. Healthcare exposure introduces students to careers in healthcare, medicine, and research, as well as exposing them to the different facets of caring for Latinx patients.
2. Professional and academic development facilitates students’ professional development and strengthens the students’ readiness for post-secondary education.
3. Community engagement provides tools and opportunities for students to raise awareness of Latinx health disparities.
Participants
This year we accepted 7 students to participate in the program. Most students were first
generation Americans, and others came from Mexico, Central, and South America at a young
age. A collaboration with YouthWorks allowed the Summer Scholars program to host high
school students who would not have qualified to participate in the city program otherwise.

Factors of success
Overall, students expressed a positive response to the program. According to a final survey
administered by program coordinators, most students (57.2%) felt more prepared to apply to
college and all students had a better understanding of post-high school education paths.

“Once I started shadowing medical professionals all around Johns Hopkins, I was bombarded
with the variety of careers people have. I learned that is not just doctors and nurses that run a
hospital. There are administrators, medical assistants, interpreters, and many others working
together to create a hospital. Each person plays a major component in maintaining a fully
functional and exceptional medical facility that is open to everyone.”

-Jacquelyn Amaya, Summer Scholar 2019
Mentoring & Tutoring

Program description
Centro SOL aims to provide a meaningful mentoring experience for Latinx high school students in need of guidance and support throughout high school. We achieve our goal by enlightening students about the college application process, financial aid, course selection, homework help, employment opportunities, and other topics as deemed necessary.
The tutoring component of this program is primarily for middle and elementary school students. In having tutors, the goal is to provide immediate help with homework and class assignments. Tutors do not work with the same students as mentors, but they may step in the role of the mentor in the event that a mentor is unable to attend a session.

Mentors
Mentors were recruited through several Centro SOL community events as well as through different Johns Hopkins University clubs and the Centro SOL website. Many of our mentors are undergraduate students attending Johns Hopkins along with students in several graduate programs. Those not affiliated with Johns Hopkins are graduates of other Universities or work in the surrounding areas within Baltimore City. This year, we had 13 volunteer mentors participating in the program.

Mentees
Mentees were also recruited through community events and the Centro SOL website. Most students are enrolled in Baltimore City and School District Public or private schools. There were a total of 11 mentees enrolled in the program this year.
**Attendance**
The mentoring sessions take place three times a month, for an hour and a half each. In 2018-2019, attendance rate has been 77% for the mentors and 46% for the mentees.

**Major challenges**
- **Attendance:** The mentoring sessions take place three times a month, for an hour and a half each. In 2018-2019, attendance rate has been 77% for the mentors and 46% for the mentees. We are exploring incentives and ways to increase mentee attendance to the sessions.
- **Location:** Since students unanimously agreed on Monday evenings to meet up, we could not use the Southeast Anchor Library, as it was not available. This limited us to using the Patterson Park Library, which is a bit further from the students. We are working on finding other venues and locations in the community that are accessible and available at the times that the students need them.
Success stories:

“David started the program with little motivation for school. Most of his frustration came from being the only one who speaks English in his home, and lack of mentorship. After talking and engaging with David for a few sessions, he showed a lot of motivation and inspiring ideas for his future. He saw a great potential in himself, but felt that no one believed in him. After a few months in the mentoring program, David changed his mindset from feeling a failure to committing to pass his classes. David made it through the school year, and was able to apply and find his first job, thanks to the support he received in the program. Initially, he did not want to be in the program, but after a few sessions he started arriving to the meetings early so he wouldn’t miss anything. It is important to be there for our youth, to be present and support their dreams. We are very inspired to continue working with Latinx youth and see them succeed.”

-Monica Guerrero Vazquez, David’s mentor

“Ricardo is a positive and caring young man, who we at Centro SOL had the pleasure of getting to know over several months of mentoring. Throughout the mentoring sessions, I learned about Ricardo’s love for computers and community. Ricardo is sharp, resilient, and a creative thinker who always put his best foot forward as we worked through challenging schoolwork. Ricardo graduated high school this year, and we at Centro SOL are so proud of him and look forward to seeing him thrive!”

-Jennifer Acosta, Ricardo’s mentor
“Diverse perspectives often are associated with diverse research foci and the generation of new findings”

—Douglas L. Medin & Carol D. Lee

Research Projects

Childhood Obesity

Mental Health

Infectious Diseases
Childhood obesity

Active and Healthy Families

Program description
This study’s goal is to pilot and evaluate a family-centered intervention to address childhood overweight and obesity in Latinx children. The original curriculum was developed by Contra Costa Health Services in California, and draws on evidence-based national guidelines, while being culturally tailored for the Latinx population.

Each program lasts for 16 weeks, with eight bi-weekly sessions led by a pediatrician, a nutritionist, and a community health worker. During each appointment, participants learn about how nutrition, physical activity, and stress management. There are three bi-monthly follow-up sessions to check in with participants, evaluate their progress, and address any challenges they may be experiencing implementing the changes in the long term.

Milestones achieved
Since its inception, the program has recruited 40 participants, divided into 4 biannual cohorts. The program has had 1 pediatrician, 2 nutritionists, 1 community health worker, and 3 program coordinators leading it, as well as a group of dedicated researchers affiliated with the school of medicine to evaluate the effectiveness in the program. This year, we have had one cohort in the spring with 8 participant families.

A poster detailing the preliminary analysis of the project was presented at Obesity Week in 2019. Further analysis and a manuscript are currently ongoing.

BMI trajectory of participants by sex

Cohort 4 participants
Engaging Immigrant Latino Families and Community Stakeholders to Reduce Disparities in Child Obesity

Program description
In August 2019, our research team reached the one-year mark in working on ways to reduce childhood obesity disparities among Latino children in Baltimore. Through the work of this project, we will create a community action plan which will address sustainable and cost-effective ways to reduce childhood obesity among Latino children in Baltimore.

Milestones achieved
Thus far, our team has convened four separate subcommittees which meet on a quarterly basis. The subcommittees are comprised of four different domains: research, community engagement, patient engagement, and healthcare delivery. Through the creation of these subcommittees, our team has been able to engage various stakeholders ranging from healthcare professionals such as obesity experts and MCO representatives, to long-standing community partners such as Friends of Patterson Park and Living Classrooms. Much of our community engaged work has been led by local community organization, Comite Latino de Baltimore.

Photovoice
In early June 2019, a subset of the Patient Engagement Subcommittee hosted a photovoice exhibition. Photovoice is a Participatory Action Research methodology used to affect future intervention design and policy by including the voice and perspective of community members in discussing vital community needs.

We look forward to continuing the work with community members and healthcare professionals in reducing childhood obesity disparities for Latino children in Baltimore.

Members of the photovoice project
Prospective Research On Stress, Parenting, Environment, and Early Childhood Growth Trajectories (PROSPECT) study

Program description
This study aims to examine the relationship of the home environment to growth trajectories and obesity risk from birth to two years, and the mechanisms that underlie this relationship - including parental feeding practices, parenting stress, food insecurity, and obesogenic food availability. We aim to do this by combining quantitative and qualitative data collection with the collection and analysis of biospecimens to investigate epigenetic mechanisms of DNA methylation.

We aim to recruit 50 maternal-infant dyads prenatally, and follow the growth of the child through his or her first two years of life. The mother participates in quantitative questionnaires, and half of the participants are randomized into completing a qualitative interview. Furthermore, blood samples from the mother and the child are taken at delivery for posterior analysis of patterns of DNA methylation and weight trajectories in infancy.

Milestones achieved
We began participant recruitment in February of 2019, and so far have recruited 41 participants. Most of the recruitment took place at the biweekly centering groups, and a small portion of participants were recruited from the OB/GYN clinic at the Bayview hospital. From those 40 participants, 38 have completed their enrollment questionnaires, and 38 have delivered their babies. 33 maternal samples and 27 cord samples have been collected.

Recruitment of participants from clinic & centering
- Recruited from clinic
- Recruited from centering group

Primary language spoken by participants
- English
- Spanish

A protocol manuscript is currently being produced for publication.
Kids Face-to-Face And Computer-Enhanced Formats Effectiveness Study (Kids FACE FEARS)

Program description

Kids FACE FEARS aims to compare two different methods of delivering cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) for anxiety in kids—face-to-face versus online and is the largest randomized clinical trial to do so. We are one of four study sites and are collaborating with Boston University, Florida International University, and the University of Washington. Within Baltimore, we are partnering with Baltimore Medical Systems and accepting direct referrals from a number of local pediatric clinics.

Milestones achieved

In 2019, we focused on laying the groundwork for the study, which included training therapists on the CBT intervention, developing detailed standard operation procedures and safety protocols, and obtaining IRB approval.
Stulman/Depression

Program description
This project aims to work collaboratively with community members, healthcare providers and others to improve the acceptability and availability of care and services to treat for depression among Latino immigrants living in Baltimore City, by focusing on the following aims:

**Aim 1: Reduce stigma and increase mental health literacy in the community**

**Aim 2: Pilot and evaluate evidence-based, feasible, and sustainable mental health services for depression**

**Aim 3: Develop and disseminate the Latino Mental Health Equity Strategy: Opportunities for Lay-led Interventions for Depression**

Milestones achieved
In the first year of the project, our focus has been on ensuring that the proper research, leadership and administrative bases were in order. To this effect, we focused on establishing a multidisciplinary stakeholder network comprised of clinicians, healthcare professionals, researchers, community members, and patients. This multidisciplinary network includes a diverse set of backgrounds and experiences that will help enrich and lead our efforts to promote the health and wellbeing of the Latino immigrant community in Baltimore City. We have also made inroads into the implementation of various pilot interventions, some underway, and some starting early in 2020.

- **379** Stigma surveys administered in the community
- **2** Community outreach specialists recruited
CenteringParenting/Groupwell

**Study description**

2019 was the start of the CenteringParenting program at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center's Children's Medical Practice. CenteringParenting takes the typical Well Child check-ups for children 1-month to 2-years, and delivers typical individual pediatric care in a group setting. In CenteringParenting, parents attending 90-120 minute appointments which include individual exams with a pediatrician, followed by a facilitated group discussion with other mothers and babies of the same age. Conversations in group settings range from discussion about food to feed your baby, self-care, child development, and much more.

Throughout these visits, group facilitators and researchers also focus on topics that address disparities in the detection, management, and subsequent treatment of maternal depression in mothers. In delivering care in a group setting, we hope to build a space for social support between mothers and their healthcare providers, while addressing important pediatric-related topics.

![Graph of Participants recruited per month]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Participants recruited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Community-based mental health care for mothers of young children

Study description
The Mothers and Babies Program is an evidence-based intervention based on cognitive behavioral therapy and attachment theory to prevent postpartum depression. The purpose of the program is training a large group of mental health providers and educators from Judy Centers in order to create a pool of providers for future implementations at the Judy Centers. The training was recorded and will be available online for registered participants.

Milestones achieved
In collaboration with George Washington University and the Johns Hopkins’ School of Public Health, Centro SOL conducted a training workshop, on November of this year, for 29 health providers to be certified implementers of the Mothers & Babies Program.

Curriculum has:

6 Weekly sessions
7-10 Topics covered

Logo of the Mothers and Babies Program
Unifying Immigrant Families for Youth Suicide Prevention (UNIFY-SP)

Study description
There are over 11 million undocumented immigrants living in the US who have an estimated 4.5 million citizen children (Fry & Passel, 2009). Immigration policies may impact physical and mental health in Latinos, with recent studies suggesting that Latino residents of the US with more exclusionary policies towards immigrants have higher rates of poor mental health days among adults (Hatsenbuhler et al. 2017). However, there is little rigorous evidence regarding the links between immigration policies and Latino mental health. This study will fill the gap and will point toward interventions to assist this at-risk population.

Study Aims
A collaboration between Centro SOL and Massachusetts General Hospital defined the following aims:

1) To study the change in mental health indicators such as suicidal ideation and attempt before and after 2016 presidential election in Latino adolescent and young adults and their variation by immigration-related variables such as parent and child immigration status, nativity, and rears in the US using 3 complementary datasets.

2) To engage Latino youth, families and educators in qualitative interviews and focus groups.

3) To accelerate progress towards improved monitoring of suicide trends and suicide prevention interventions, we will establish a research action collaborative to summarize and synthesize the findings from data analyses and plan for next steps during a one-day meeting in Baltimore, MD.

Milestones achieved
1. We conducted 9 community forums in a faith-based organization in Baltimore to educate the community about suicide prevention.

2. We facilitated 13 focus groups in Baltimore and Boston that helped identify multiple risk factors for suicidality and advised on importance of parent education as a preventive approach
   - 8 groups with youth between 14 to 17 years old (n=56)
   - 5 groups of parents (n=41)

3. The first Latino suicide prevention summit UNIFY-SP was hosted and the following priorities were established at the UNIFY-SP forum:

   Need for advocacy on Latinx immigrant origin youth in research involving ‘big data’, partnership with community-based organizations to advance policies and funding to implement innovative solutions, collaborations to tackle suicide among immigrant-origin youth
Infectious diseases

A Campaign to Improve HIV Screening Among Latinx

Program description
HIV-Infected Latinos in Baltimore are more likely to be diagnosed late than other racial/ethnic groups. The program aims to address barriers to HIV screening such as HIV stigma, language, healthcare navigation, insurance, and fear of deportation. To do this, researchers at Centro SOL launched a campaign that seeks to address the HIV stigma in the Latinx community through educational and destigmatizing messages, as well as increase the number of Latinxs in Baltimore getting HIV screening, with attention to high risk populations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk factors</th>
<th>Exposed to Campaign (n=135)</th>
<th>Not exposed (n=292)</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Binge drinking in past month</td>
<td>28 (21%)</td>
<td>63 (22%)</td>
<td>0.913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Use</td>
<td>18 (13%)</td>
<td>21 (7%)</td>
<td>0.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condomless Sex with Risk</td>
<td>48 (36%)</td>
<td>89 (30%)</td>
<td>0.296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual partners in last months</td>
<td>3 1.5 (2.2)</td>
<td>1.1 (0.7)</td>
<td>0.027</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Implications
The VIVE campaign is Baltimore’s first public health campaign promoting HIV screening among Spanish-speaking Latinxs. The Vive campaign reached comparable rates of exposure to other campaigns addressing Latinx HIV testing and attracted high risk testers. Furthermore, social media, community events, and outreach services were key in reaching Latinxs.

Channels of Exposure to Vive Campaign

- Facebook: 45%
- Website: 40%
- Events: 15%
- Radio: 10%
- Billboards: 5%
- Other: 5%
Research at Centro SOL is driven by the unique health issues faced by the Latinx community in Baltimore, and is a central part of Centro SOL's activities. The Centro SOL faculty and staff offer guidance to investigators interested in conducting research surrounding issues affecting Latinx health in Baltimore. Centro SOL collaborates with researchers during different stages of the research process, from preliminary planning of the study, reviewing materials, recruiting participants, recruiting study staff, and translation of study materials. Centro SOL offers this program to assist researchers at Johns Hopkins and other universities in conducting high quality health research inclusive of Latinx populations, especially those with limited English proficiency (LEP). Centro SOL offers support for study planning, material review, participant recruitment, study staff recruitment, and translation. In 2019, we worked with researchers on 27 requests.

The role of patients in research
Centro SOL collaborates with the Latino Family Advisory Board (LFAB), a group of Spanish-speaking caregivers of pediatric patients at the JHBMC Children’s Medical Practice, as well as the similar Youth Advisory Board. With their help, researchers can incorporate the community’s perspective and opinions into research planning and implementation.

Research Projects
This past year, Centro SOL has made great strides in researching various health issues that affect the Latinx community in Baltimore. Some projects that Centro SOL has worked on this past year are summarized below:
As an emerging immigrant city, Baltimore has seen an exponential growth of Latinos in the past decade. Nonetheless, several factors such as poor access to healthcare, a lack of linguistically- and culturally-trained physicians, stress, and poverty may negatively affect health. Recent exclusionary policies may further exacerbate stress and the negative health outcomes that come as a result.

**TABLE OF MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS POLICY WORKGROUP**

Baltimore Medical System  
Bayview OB  
CASA Maryland  
Center For Clinical Global Health Education  
Centro SOL  
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health  
Johns Hopkins School of Medicine  
Johns Hopkins School of Nursing  
Maryland Health Benefit Exchange  
Maryland Medicaid  
Mayor's Office of Immigrant and Multicultural Affairs  
Office of City Council President Bernard C. “Jack” Young  
PG’s group  
State District 46 Legislative Officials  
The Access Partnership  
University of Maryland
Events

Latino Health Conference

Description
This year we hosted the 4th annual Latino Health Conference (LHC). The title of this year’s meeting was Mind Your Health: Community-Centered Solutions to Mental Health Issues. Since 2015, we have hosted the Latino Health Conference (LHC), a yearly event in which a multidisciplinary team of experts can meet and discuss how we can address issues affecting the Latinx community. In 2019, the theme of the Conference was mental health, and we discussed various issues that have affected the mental health of the community and things that we can do to address these disparities. The conference had 138 attendees, and 22 speakers, including Margarita Alegria, PhD and David Hayes-Bautista, PhD.

Conference attendees
Centro SOL works to recognize and address the most urgent public health issues through the Policy Workgroup. This program aims to:

1. Resolve difficulties presented by the Maryland Health Connection to allow eligible children to enroll/re-enroll in Medicaid.
2. Identify and address barriers to enrollment in emergency Medicaid for ACA-ineligible pregnant women.
3. Explore means of expanding health insurance to ACA-ineligible adults and to leverage Maryland’s all payer approach to promote community wellness programs for Latinos living in Maryland.
4. To advocate for the Latino community adversely affected by the Public Charge Rule targeting social benefits for mixed-status families.

Highlight of the Conference

Rating of Conference Sessions by Conference Participants
SPARK SUMMIT

Description

A meeting to build a multidisciplinary collaboration to consensus on an urgent and achievable agenda to reduce suicide in the Latinx immigrant population

Unifying Immigrant Families for Youth Suicide Prevention (UNIFYSP) is a multidisciplinary mixed-methods study funded in 2018 by the Bloomberg American Health Initiative at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health to address suicide in the Latinx immigrant community. The project is a multisite collaborative effort among faculty and staff from the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, Centro SOL, and Massachusetts General Hospital.

Experts have raised concerns about the effects of the current political environment with respect to immigration policy and its potentially broad-ranging effects on the health of Latinx families. Concerns raised have included decreased ability to engage families in needed health services, even when children qualify for those services.

The UNIFY-SP Summit is a meeting of researchers, community stakeholders, clinicians, and policymakers addressing questions in different domains of study on suicide and suicidal behavior in Latinx youth, with a focus on Latinx youth in immigrant families given the changing immigration policy climate.

The summit is co-sponsored by the Bloomberg American Health Initiative and the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. We had over 60 participants represented from California, Massachusetts, Maryland, and DC.
A big part of our research initiatives is to disseminate our findings to the greater United States-wide Latinx community. In 2019, Centro SOL faculty and staff made a great impact in research with publications, presentation and posters accepted in multiple outlets and conferences.

**Journals we published in**

![List of journals](image)

**Conferences we presented at**

![List of conferences](image)
Highlighted publications


Increasing the racial and ethnic diversity of the health care workforce is essential for the adequate provision of culturally competent care to our nation’s burgeoning minority communities

—Jordan J. Cohen
MENTAL HEALTH

Testimonios

Program description
Testimonios is a community-based support group for Latinx adults based in Baltimore. The groups are facilitated by a bilingual therapist in Spanish and aim to provide a safe space for participants to share experiences and learn culturally-appropriate mechanisms for stress reduction.

Milestones achieved
This year, we hosted 46 weekly sessions, 22 for men and 24 for women. The sessions were divided among 4 social workers and licensed therapists. 34 women and 18 men attended a session in the past year, and we counted with 10 volunteers to help support the sessions, provide child care, coordinate delivery of supplies, and ensure the safety of the building.

Volunteers
This year, we counted with 10 dedicated volunteers who helped support all our sessions.

Affiliation of volunteers

Testimonios participation

- Male participants
- Female participants
- Childcare volunteers
- Facilitators

- Centro SOL staff
- Johns Hopkins
- UMD
- Gallery
- Church
- Other
Teen Testimonios

Program description
Teen Testimonios was created originally as a school-based intervention to address stress and post-traumatic symptoms in youth recently arrived to the US. The program was expanded to a summer camp and this year we hosted 20 students-11 high schoolers and 9 middle schoolers for a 7 week program. The camp was led by four youth coordinators who were able to help thanks to Centro SOL’s partnership with YouthWorks to create the Extension Program as well as a music therapists. During sessions, the participants learned about self care and coping mechanisms to deal with stress, as well as practiced their English skills in different written and oral activities. We partnered with community organizations such as Art with a Heart, Planned Parenthood, and Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) to learn about art, healthy relationships, and nutrition.

Milestones achieved
There were 27 sessions, 14 with the middle schoolers and 13 with the high schoolers, as well as a closing ceremony where the participants and their families were invited to gather together, reflect on the program, and see a display of the artwork that the youth completed throughout the program.
Suicide Prevention Program

Program description
The goal of the suicide prevention program is to create a safe space for Latinx families in Baltimore to gather and learn about stress reduction and provide them with resources focused on suicide prevention. The program is offered as a “conversatorio” a term known in some countries as a community conversation, a safe and welcoming space for all. A bilingual social worker and a public health facilitator lead the presentation in Spanish and families have the opportunity to discuss and ask questions about this topic. The meetings occur monthly, and there were 11 sessions this year.
Program description
Embajadores de Salud (Health Ambassadors) is a community-centered wellness program that aims to educate the community about health and nutrition, as well as provide the opportunity to participants to engage in physical activity together. The program started as a lay-health education program in 2013, and has become a safe space for families ever since. The participants gather in Patterson Park, a community space that is easily accessible to most participants.

The program meets weekly and is becoming a peer-led group with educational sessions on health and nutrition delivered in Spanish by experts. The whole family is welcome and encouraged to come, and financial support is provided for participants who wish to compete in local races and competitions.

Milestones achieved
In 2019, more than 15 adult participants in the program run six 5K races in Baltimore and participated in the Baltimore Running Festival with 2 half-marathon runners and 4 relay participants.
Active and Healthy Families (AHF) is a family-based group medical appointment program, originally developed by Contra Costa Health Services. The AHF program is designed as an obesity prevention program for families with overweight and obese children. Each program lasts for 16 weeks, with 8 bi-weekly sessions led by a pediatrician, a nutritionist, and a community health worker. During each appointment, participants learn about how to eat healthy, live more active lives, and manage stress. There are three bi-monthly follow-up sessions to check in with participants, evaluate their progress, and address any challenges they may be experiencing implementing the changes in the long term.

Milestones achieved
As of 2019, we have had 4 cohorts of families complete the program. Each cohort had an average of 10 families (40 families total). We presented a poster about the program in the 2019 Obesity Week in Las Vegas, NV.
Program description
HIV-infected Latinos in Baltimore are more likely to be diagnosed late than other racial/ethnic groups. Due to various barriers to HIV screening, it is likely that Latinos are not getting tested often enough. In June 2018, we partnered with the Baltimore City Health Department to launch the public health campaign Solo Se Vive Una Vez, in order to reach high risk populations. The campaign seeks to address HIV stigma in the Latinx community through educational and destigmatizing messages, as well as increase the number of Latinxs in Baltimore getting HIV screening, focusing on high risk populations.

Milestones reached
We conducted cross sectional surveys of Latinx adults obtaining HIV testing at the BCHD clinic in order to evaluate the reach of the campaign. There were 15,735 website users, with 254 requesting testing through the website. 32% of people surveyed reported that the campaign drove them to get tested.

Discussion
Reaching MSM remains a challenge, and it is important to increase community trust, awareness, and the inclusion of the LGBT community in outreach efforts. Social media, community events, and outreach services were key in reaching Latinxs.
HEALTHCARE ACCESS

TAP

The Access Partnership (TAP) Program aims to facilitate access to medical care for underinsured patients. TAP is an initiative from Johns Hopkins Medicine and has been working in partnership with Centro SOL to provide medical care to a community in need.

The Office of Johns Hopkins Physicians announced in mid December that Dr. Kathleen Page was selected as the Medical Director for The Access Partnership. Dr. Page is champion for equitable access to care for our patients.

Esperanza Center

Is the main entry point for primary care for underinsured patients. Centro SOL currently has multiple collaborations with this organization, including mental health initiatives, diabetes prevention programs, and other projects that aim to make healthcare more accessible to the Latinx population in Baltimore.

Infectious Diseases

Centro SOL collaborates with the program Solo se vive una vez (You only live once) to prevent HIV/AIDS in the Latinx community in Baltimore. The program, led by Centro SOL co-director, Dr. Kathleen Page, provides HIV screenings and collaborates with the Baltimore City Health Department and the Moore HIV Clinic to encourage people to get tested frequently and confront the stigma around this illness.

Health Care Access

Latino children from Limited English Proficiency (LEP), mixed immigration status families face significant barriers to accessing equitable healthcare opportunities in the United States. LEP parents, are often unfamiliar with the US healthcare system, struggle to enroll and maintain enrollment for their eligible children in Medicaid. 75% of the Bayview Children’s Medical Practice (CMP) patient population are the children of Latino immigrants. Despite their best efforts, many families at the CMP fail to maintain enrollment in Medicaid. Beginning in December of 2015, Centro SOL, partnered with Baltimore Corps to provide an onsite, bilingual Community Outreach Specialist (COS) to help families at the CMP navigate Maryland Medicaid enrollment through Healthcare Access Maryland (HCAM). The goal is to improve and facilitate access to equitable healthcare services for the children of LEP Latino Immigrants. Referred patients work with the COS who collects all necessary information to enroll the patient in Medicaid or renew the patient’s insurance. Depending on the patient’s enrollment status, the COS partners with an Eligibility worker from HCAM to efficiently enroll the patient. In 2019, a total of 1100 families whose children receive medical care at the CMP received assistance from the COS and 450 pregnant women. This year we also had a navigator from HCAM on site from March to October. The navigator was able to assist 450 families.
“There is no power greater than a community discovering what it cares about”
—Margaret J. Wheatley

OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Local Partnerships

Events

Patient and Family Advisory Boards
PARTNERSHIPS

From event planning, research to grant applications to support programs in clinical innovations, education, research and community outreach, our Center relies on a strong and growing network of partners.

Baltimore City Health Department
Baltimore City Public Schools
Baltimore Medical Systems
Bloomberg American Health Initiative
Bloomberg Philanthropies
CASA
Census Bureau
Center for Adolescent Health
Center for Humanitarian Health
Comite Latino de Baltimore
Creative Alliance
District 46 Legislative Offices
Enoch Pratt Free Library
France-Merrick Foundation
Friends of Patterson Park
Gallery Church
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
Johns Hopkins Institute for Translational Research
Johns Hopkins Institutional Review Board
Johns Hopkins Medicine and Infectious Diseases
Johns Hopkins Psychiatry and Pediatrics
Lanea Featherstone Foundation
Latino Providers Network
Latino Public Health Network
Leonard & Helen R. Stulman Charitable Foundation
Living Classrooms Foundation
Maryland Latino Caucus
Massachusetts General Hospital
Mayor's Office of Immigrant and Multicultural Affairs
Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute
Planned Parenthood
Sacred Heart Church of Baltimore
Somos Baltimore Latino
Southeast CDC
The Aaron and Lillie Straus Foundation
The Judy Centers
The Stoop Storytelling
Urban Health Institute
Youthworks
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND EVENTS PLANNING

- Back to School Drive
- Education
- Community Health
- Mueveton Health Fair
- Holiday Drive
- Community outreach

- 52 events attended
- 30 partner organizations
- 1222 people served
PATIENT AND FAMILY ADVISORY BOARDS

Latino Family Advisory Board (LFAB)

Program description
The Latino Family Advisory Board, or Consejo de Familias Latinas is composed of Spanish-speaking families from the community who are dedicated to helping promote and create better health services to meet Latino families' needs. The meetings are an opportunity for Hopkins physicians, researchers, and staff to meet with the families that receive care at the Children’s Medical Practice (CMP) and talk about the challenges Latinos face when accessing health care systems and potential solutions.

Milestones achieved
This year, 16 families have been active members of the board. Families come from 5 different countries in North, Central, and South America. We had 11 meetings this year, where the board provided feedback on clinical informational materials, were consulted about various research projects taking place at the clinic and discussed the proposed public charge. Furthermore, the board became a part of Centro SOL’s community-based participatory research project on childhood obesity, where certain members created a photovoice project to highlight advantages and challenges in the community to address this issue.
Youth Advisory Board (YAB)

Children's Medical Practice Youth Advisory Board was established in 2017 by Dr. Polk and Isabel Fernandez as an extension of the Latino Family Advisory Board. The primary purpose of the YAB is to serve as advisors to clinicians at the CMP to improve the CMP and their medical care. They are also available to provide feedback to researchers on studies involving youth. The Board meets quarterly, and currently has 8 active members and a goal membership of 10 members.

Parent/youth councils

Pipeline Youth Advisory Board was established in 2019 by our Pipeline Assistant Coordinator, Maria Ortiz Gonzalez. The purpose of the board is to serve as a working partner in guiding the Centro SOL Pipeline programming by representing the first generation Latinx students in the community. The board meets regularly on Thursdays from 4-5:30 pm at the Southeast Anchor Library.

The Pipeline Parent Advisory Board (PAB) was established in 2019 by the Pipeline team, Dr. Page, Dr. Orozco, Maria Ortiz Gonzalez, and Monica Guerrero Vazquez, with the purpose of serving as a working partner in guiding the Centro SOL Pipeline’s programming by representing the parents/guardians of students in the community. The Pipeline PAB started meeting at the end of January 2019 and currently meets every second and fourth Saturdays of the month during the regular school year. The meetings take place at the Southeast Anchor Library, and last for one hour. Membership is not formal; any parent of Latinx youth who learns about the PAB and is interested is invited. As a formality, each member receives a letter of invitation to attend the meetings.

Ideally, the board agreed to recruit 10 full-time members and 5 ad-hoc members. There have been nine meetings so far, with attendance rates of members being around 50-80%. In total, there have been 14 members recruited, two of which cannot attend future sessions due to their work schedules.
Challenges/successes: Individual engagement can be an issue if some people tend to speak more frequently than others do. There are one or two members in each board that are very quiet and do not share much information unless they are asked. Despite this challenge, all members understand the importance of the work that we are doing. The parents have had a particularly high attendance rate despite the lack of a monetary incentive to attend sessions, because they want their ideas and thoughts to come to fruition and affect the community.
Project-based boards

The Kids FACE FEARS Patient and Family Advisory Board (PFAC) was established in 2018 by the faculty and staff working in the PCORI Kids FACE FEARS project. It is made up of six community members (two bilingual youth, two English-speaking adults, and two Spanish-speaking adults) from each of the four study sites (Boston, Baltimore, Miami, and Seattle). Their role is to provide patient and family perspectives that will inform how the research team will conduct the study at different phases. The PFAC meets via videoconference every three months, and they have given feedback on topics such as recruitment materials, sharing information about the study and anxiety through the KFF social media platforms, as well as ways to increase participant engagement during study recruitment. Up to date, there have been four meetings, and these meetings will continue for the remaining three years of the study. The Baltimore members have a 79% attendance rate (bilingual youth 100%, Spanish-speaking adults: 75%, and English-speaking adults: 62%).

![Board attendance chart]

- **Youth**
- **Spanish-speaking adults**
- **English-speaking adults**
- **Average**
Volunteers

Centro SOL counts with a cohort of volunteers to support all of the community outreach initiatives that we coordinate. Volunteers help with childcare for our various activities directed towards adults in the community, such as the LFAB, Testimonios, and Embajadores de Salud, and they also serve as mentor and tutors for our Pipeline program. Our volunteers are mostly Johns Hopkins affiliates - staff, or students at the Homewood or School of Medicine campuses, but we also partner with local faith organizations and other educational institutions.

We have a standing collaboration with Johns Hopkins Underrepresented in Medical Professions (JUMP) and the Center for Social Concern, as well as with the Americorps VISTA fellowship. This summer, we had an intern sponsored by each of these organizations, and a VISTA fellow will complete her year of service with Centro SOL. Throughout the year, with the help of these organizations we have been able to host multiple events, programs, and initiatives across Baltimore in and in the surrounding areas.

188+ Registered volunteers
5+ Partner organizations
In recent years, Centro SOL has grown from being composed of a steering committee and a program coordinator to a team of passionate and qualified individuals who are committed to serving the Latinx community in all four of our core areas and improve the health and wellbeing of the community.

Through the combination of large awarded grants, and smaller grants, Centro SOL has been able to support a larger staff and a multitude of projects that aim to advance our mission. Since last year, our projects have expanded in scope and the staff has grown to reflect this need for talent. A new senior research coordinator joined the team as well as three community outreach specialists. With this team, and the grants we have received, we are well equipped to enter next year prepared for the work required to support and empower our community.
Organizational Chart

Faculty/Affiliate Faculty

Alicia Arbaje, MD, PhD, Assistant Professor  
Angela Orozco, MD Assistant Professor  
Carmen Alvarez, MD, PhD, Assistant Professor  
Kathleen Page, MD Associate Professor, co-Director  
Rachel Thornton, MD, PhD, Associate Professor  
Rheanna Platt, MD, MPH, Assistant Professor  
Sarah Polk, MD, ScM Assistant Professor, co-Director  
Suzanne Grieb, PhD, Assistant Professor  
Tania Caballero, MD, MHS, Assistant Professor  
Tina Cheng, MD, MPH, Professor of Pediatrics

Staff/Affiliate Staff

Alejandra Flores-Miller, BA Sr. Community Outreach Specialist  
Amelia Brandt, MPH, Sr. Research Program Coordinator  
Ana Cervantes, BA Sr. Administrative Coordinator  
Estefania Miramontes, MD Community Outreach Specialist  
Isabel Fernandez Abaunza, BA Community Outreach Specialist  
Jennifer Acosta, MPH Sr. Research Program Coordinator  
Joanna Kuttothara, MD Sr. Research Program Coordinator  
Lindsay Cooper, MA Research Program Coordinator  
Mariana Rincón Caicedo, BA Research Program Coordinator  
Monica Guerrero Vazquez, MS, MPH Executive Director  
Stephanie Perez, BA Pipeline Assistant Coordinator  
Whitney Visker, BA Community Outreach Specialist
ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Estefania Montes Valdez

120 under 40 award

Monica Guerrero Vazquez

100 mujeres líderes del área Metropolitana de Washington DC

Isabel Fernandez Abaunza

Armstrong Leadership Academy
Kathleen
Page

Appointed as Medical Director of TAP

Rachel Thornton

Named Chair of APA Diversity &

Nakiya Showell

Elected to serve as co-chair of APA Obesity Special Interest Group

Tomas Franco

Mayor’s office award for service
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