



## NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HISPANIC COUNTY OFFICIALS

# NAHCO Statement on Issues Impacting Children

### President:

Hon. Sarah E. Benatar  
County Treasurer  
Coconino County, Arizona

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### Vice President:

Hon. Adrian Garcia  
Commissioner, Precinct 2  
Harris County, Texas

In America, many stories and issues that impact children sadly go unheard and unnoticed. This is not a new phenomenon in our nation. For decades, the cries of the youth have gone unheard or have been dismissed. Particularly for children of color, their pain and issues have been ignored far more prominently. A study from the Academic Emergency Medicine journal found that children of color or children who preferred to speak in another language other than English were less likely than white children to receive the same care in a healthcare setting even when they describe their pain similar to that of white children.

### Treasurer:

Hon. Alma E. Anaya  
Commissioner, 7<sup>th</sup> District  
Cook County, Illinois

According to the National Institute for Health Care Management Foundation, the biggest issues of children in America today are gun violence, mental health, obesity, and access to care and treatment. Several studies over the last decade have found that all these issues have increased in recent years among youth throughout America.

### Secretary:

Hon. Jennifer Taylor  
County Treasurer  
Sandoval County, New Mexico

Youth gun deaths in the US surged 50% from 2019 to 2025. Today gun violence is a leading cause of death for young Latino men ages 15-19, and they are more likely to be killed by gun violence than their white counterparts. The rise in gun violence can be attributed to the increase in mental health issues.

Depressive symptoms amongst American high schoolers have nearly doubled since 2011 and a recent review by Salud America! found that around 22% of Latino youth are dealing with mental health issues, including depressive symptoms. Teenage Latinas are more likely to attempt suicide than their white peers by over 5%. These rates of mental health symptoms are higher than any other minority group besides Native American youth.

In addition to mental health issues, Latinos are facing physical health issues. Today, roughly 14.7 million children in America are obese, according to the CDC. Obesity is highest amongst Hispanic children at 26.2%.

When facing the adversities of mental and physical health, about 3,640,000 children in the US went without health insurance in 2023. Not having access



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to healthcare disproportionately effects Latinos with nearly 20% of Latinos lacking health insurance, compared to 5% of non-Hispanic whites.

All of these issues for Hispanic and Latino youth can be largely attributed to a lack of care and access to treatment. Expanding access to affordable healthcare would allow those in the Hispanic and Latino communities to receive mental health services and crisis services, lessen their medical debt, and learn about healthier habits.

NAHCO will consistently highlight the issues and concerns of the healthcare crisis in the US for the Hispanic and Latino community including both young and older individuals. NAHCO will always advocate to expand access to affordable healthcare.