Meeting the Maternal and Newborn Health Needs of Displaced Persons in Urban Settings

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La Clinica del Pueblo

• Community Health Center serving primarily low-income Latinos in the Washington, DC metropolitan area since 1983.
• Our mission is to build a healthy Latino community through culturally appropriate health services, focusing on those most in need.
• We believe that healthcare is a human right.
Refugees Without Recognition

• 14% of DC Metro Area is Latino
• Fastest growing population in the area
• Over 34% El Salvadoran
• Over 50% from Central America
• Lack of Refugee status excludes Central American immigrants from benefits such as:
  – Medicaid / S-CHIP
  – Food Stamps
  – TANF
  – Other re-settlement support
    • Refugee cash assistance
    • Case Management
Central American Immigration and Exposure to Violence

• First wave of migration occurs as a result of displacement from war (80s)
• Second wave of migration occurs as a result of destruction from war (90s)
• Third wave of migration occurs as a result of destruction and displacement from natural disasters (2000) –Mitch, Earthquakes
• Current migration wave characterized by younger children and families seeking refuge from gang violence
Unaccompanied Minors

Q. Where are the migrant children coming from?

Major towns where children caught from Jan. 1 to May 14 came from:
- Tegucigalpa, Honduras's capital, sent more than 900, the second highest number.
- More than 800 children were from Juticalpa, a rural town.

San Pedro Sula, which has the world's highest homicide rate, sent more than 2,000 children.

Circles are sized to the number of children:
- 2,000
- 1,000
- 500
- 100

This rural town is among the poorest in a nation.
Guatemala's capital is plagued with gang violence.
Rival gangs are responsible for most of the murders in El Salvador's capital.

LA CLINICA DEL PUEBLO
Immigration and Family Structure

• Central American migration separated families
  – Income of patients diverted to needs in country of origin as well as locally
  – Reunification of children and parents difficult, frequent conflict and social problems
  – Inadequate or complicated family support structures

• Central American families have more members in the workforce compared to other Latino groups

• Current border crisis a crisis of numbers, but 30 year phenomenon
Transnational Families and Communities

• “Community” not always based on geography
• Navigation of safety net sometimes guided by social networks in home country
• Rejection / fear of formal institutions leads to lay leadership, informal networks
Snapshot of Female Patients

63% of female patients were in reproductive age (13 to 49)

7% of total female patients were between ages 15 to 19

7.5% of female patients within reproductive age received prenatal care

11% of prenatal care patients were between ages 15 to 19
Maternal / Child Health
Complicating Factors

• Access to health care
• Adolescence
  – Family separation
  – High percentage of adolescent pregnancies in home countries
  – Lack of access to family planning in home countries
  – Cultural constructs around gender, sexuality
  – Gang threat for teen girls
• Trafficking
  – Extreme vulnerability for youth, esp. young women
• Sexual / Gender-based Violence
  – Fleeing violence in home countries
  – Rape, sexual assault during migration journey
  – Immigration status as “weapon” in gender-based violence / control
• Family Reunification challenges
Programmatic Responses

- **Mi Refugio**
  - Culturally sensitive youth development model that addresses school, family, social integration and mental health for recently-arrived youth
  - Significant focus on trauma and resiliency-building, with social service supports
  - Ex: diapers, navigation to family planning, harm-reduction support, family reunification counseling, homelessness support, dropout prevention
Programmatic Responses

- Entre Amigas
  - Gender and health programming, focus on survivors of gender-based violence
  - Medical-Legal partnership
  - Promotoras / peer support to navigate immigration system and justice system

- Deep understanding of complexities of culture, families and relationships in an immigration context
Community-Based Models

• By, of, and for the community we serve
  – Board of Directors
  – Staff
  – Patient Committee
  – Promotores

• Consumer input
  – Ability to meet emerging needs

• Program Development
  – Ex. Entre Amigas, Mi Refugio

• Feedback loops

• Training other providers