Notes on the COVID-19 Prevalence in the Rhode Island Latino Population

Governor Gina Raimondo and Director of the Department of Health Dr. Nicole Alexander-Scott have both expressed concern about the very high proportion of Rhode Island's COVID-19 cases that are of persons of Hispanic Origin (Latino/a/x). Crucial in addressing this issue will be a better understanding of the geographic distribution of those cases (see accompanying map), and the social characteristics that may be related to this. It will be important to sort out the relative impact of housing conditions (density), workplace and occupation, and social conditions, all of which may exert an influence on exposure to the virus and then access to testing and care.

Below are some key descriptive relationships for Rhode Island's Hispanic Population (taken from the 2018 American Community Survey for Rhode Island). The tabulations show that Rhode Island's Hispanic population (vs. Non-Hispanics) is substantially more likely to be uninsured or live in multifamily housing units, while also less likely to have facility with English. Several leading Occupations among Rhode Island Hispanics may be among those more likely to expose workers, although this simple tabulation would need to be more carefully examined with respect to job tasks, industry of employment, and geographic location.

	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic
Foreign Born	36.4%	9.5%
English Language Difficulty	20.6%	1.6%
Below Poverty Line	29.7%	13.9%
Uninsured	12.2%	3.7%
Dense Housing Units	46.7%	19.7%

Leading Occupations reported by Rhode Island Hispanics

  Janitors and building cleaners
  Customer service representatives
  Retail salespersons
  Driver/sales workers and truck drivers
  Cashiers
  Cooks
  Miscellaneous production workers
  Nursing assistants
  Maids and housekeeping cleaners
  Landscaping and groundskeeping workers

Listed in order of percent of workers, of those reporting occupations in 2018 5Yr American Community Survey, weighted for sampling. These 10 Occupations account for approximately 29% of reported occupations in Census Categories.

Notes on tabulations:

Data Source: US ACS 2018 5 Year data, Obtained from IPUMS at the University of Minnesota., weighted Categories reported, tabulated for persons.

Hispanic Self-Identified in Census Category and may be of any race.

Foreign Born = Naturalized + Not a Citizen

English Language Difficulty = sum of "Does not speak English" + "Yes, but not well" among those (age 5+) for whom tabulation is made.

Below Poverty Line == Persons tabulated below 100% of Poverty Line

Uninsured = No Health Insurance Coverage.

Dense Housing Units = Three or more housing units are present in the structure (tabulation excludes mobile homes)

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