



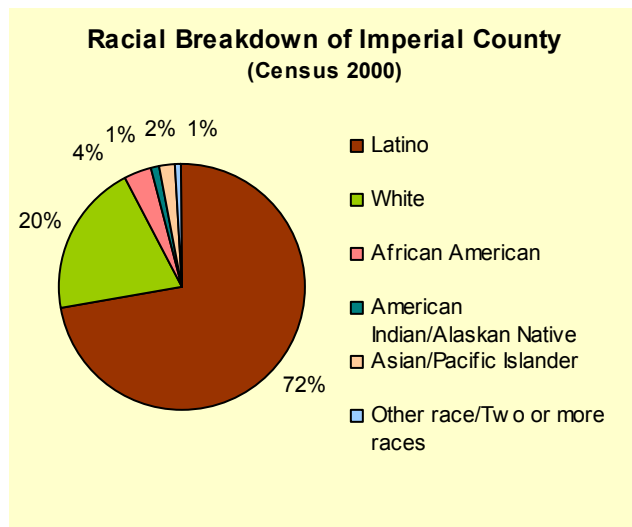
# Health Disparities in Imperial County: Immigration and Citizenship

A series of fact sheets & profiles from the National Latino Research Center at Cal State San Marcos  
Winter/Spring 2005

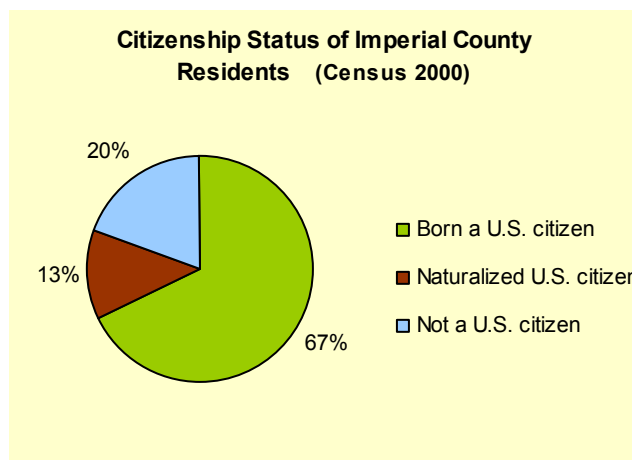
In the U.S., immigration and citizenship status are important predictors of health variables. Immigrants, regardless of citizenship status, often experience difficulty gaining access to quality preventive and therapeutic medical care. Immigration and citizenship status affect access to health care in a number of ways, including language and income barriers and lack of health insurance. In Imperial County, where nearly one-third of residents are foreign-born, these issues are especially acute.

## Demographics of the Imperial Region<sup>1</sup>

Imperial County is largely composed of Latinos, with Whites being the second largest group.

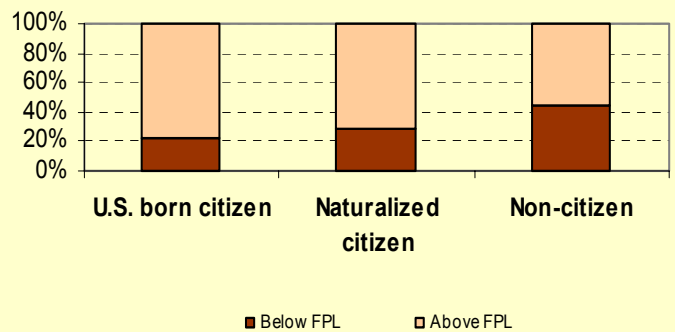


Roughly one-third of Imperial County's residents are foreign-born, and 20% of County residents are not U.S. citizens.



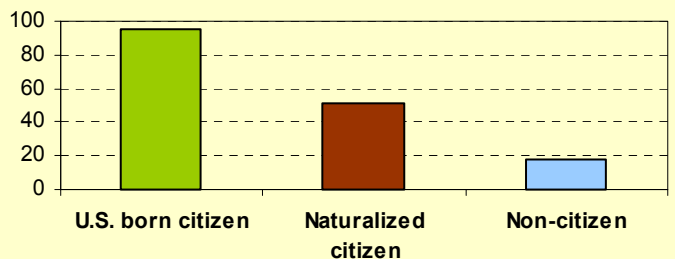
## Socioeconomic Variables Influencing Access to Health Care<sup>2</sup>

**Poverty Status of Imperial County Residents by U.S. Citizenship Status (CHIS 2001, 2003)**



In Imperial County, non-citizens are most likely to live below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). Naturalized citizens are more likely to live below FPL than U.S.-born citizens.

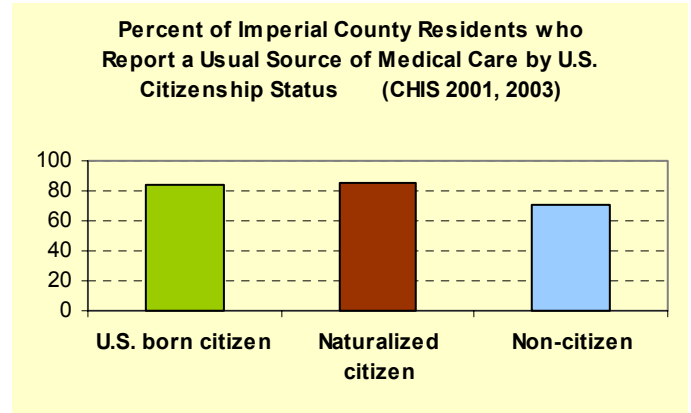
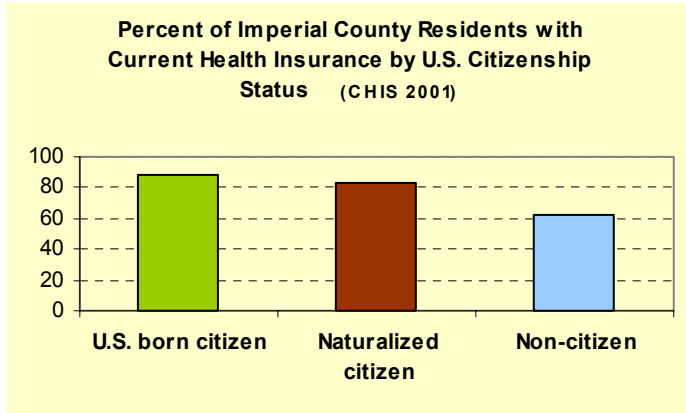
**Percent of Imperial County Residents who Report Speaking English "Well", "Very Well", or Exclusively (CHIS 2003)**



Fewer than one-fifth of the non-U.S. citizens living in Imperial County speak English "well" or "very well". Among naturalized citizens, roughly half speak English "well" or "very well".

## Disparities in Health Care Access<sup>2,3</sup>

Health insurance coverage and having a usual source of care are both key predictors of access to health care. Research has consistently shown that immigrants, especially non-citizens, are much less likely to have health insurance than U.S.-born citizens.<sup>3</sup>



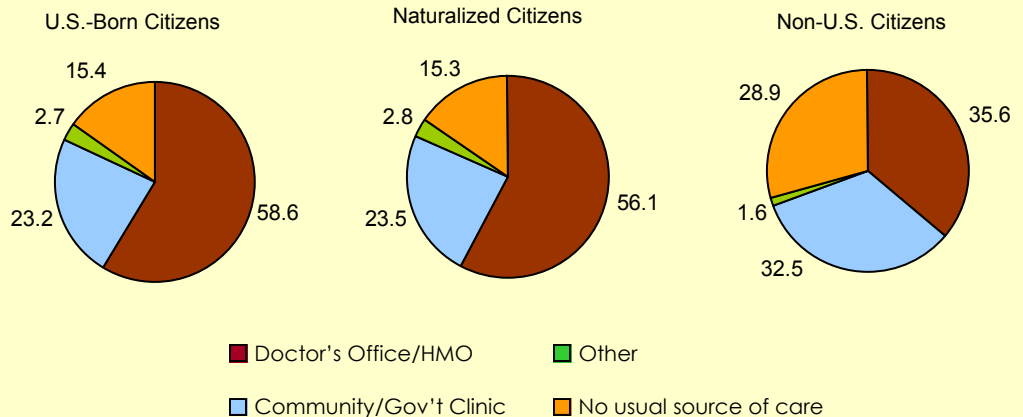
In Imperial County, non-citizens are roughly three times more likely than citizens to lack health insurance. U.S.-born citizens have a slightly higher rate of insurance than naturalized citizens do.

Imperial County's non-citizens are twice as likely as citizens (either U.S.-born or naturalized) to lack a usual source of medical care.

## Disparities in Health Care Utilization<sup>2</sup>

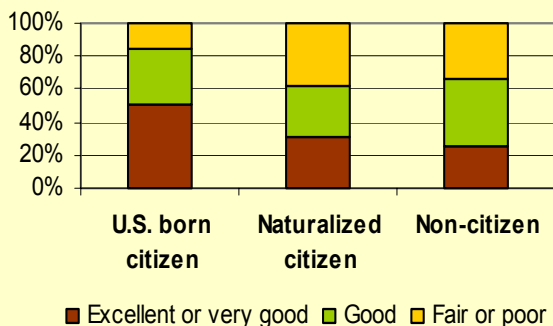
In Imperial County, a much greater proportion of citizens versus non-citizens report that their usual source of care is a doctor's office or HMO. Non-citizens are more likely to list community or government clinics as their usual source of care.

### Type of Usual Source of Care Reported by Imperial County Residents by Citizenship Status



CHIS 2001

### Health Status of Imperial County Residents by U.S. Citizenship Status (CHIS 2001, 2003)



## Disparities in Health Status<sup>2</sup>

In Imperial County, immigrants are more than twice as likely as U.S.-born citizens to report their health as "fair" or "poor" and less likely to report "excellent" or "very good" health.

## References

1. U.S. Bureau of the Census (2000). (<http://www.census.gov>)
2. California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) 2001 & 2003. UCLA Center for Health Policy Research. (<http://chis.ucla.edu>)
3. Prentice, J. C., Pebley, A. R., & Sastry, N. (2005). Immigration Status and Health Insurance Coverage: Who Gains? Who Loses? *American Journal of Public Health*, 95, 109-116.