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For Immediate Release

Thursday, January 28, 2021 6:00 a.m. (PT)

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**COVID-19 Punishes Latinos for
Hard Work and Larger Families**

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Los Angeles, California—Report No.12 of UCLA's Center for the Study of Latino Health and Culture (CESLAC).

Latinos in the U.S. have created the world's eighth-largest economy. How did they do it? Essentially, through hard work and larger families. Yet these very elements that enabled them to build the world's eighth-largest economy also make Latinos a special target of COVID-19.

Latinos' strong work ethic means that Latino households have more wage earners per household than non-Hispanic white households. Nationally, Latinos have an average of 1.6 wage earners per household, compared to 1.2 for non-Hispanic white households. This means that Latino households have more adults leaving the house every day, who are then often exposed to coronavirus-positive clients and co-workers during work hours.

"Office-based wage earners have been able to minimize their exposure to coronavirus infection by sheltering at home and working online," said David E. Hayes-Bautista, professor at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. "But Latinos are over-represented in occupations that require wage earners to leave their homes and interact with co-workers and clients, such as farm workers and grocery store clerks."

These Latino wage earners then go home to households that have more children in them. On average, there are 1.0 children per Latino household, but only 0.5 children in non-Hispanic white ones.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has noted that up to half of COVID-infected children may be asymptomatic; that is, they have the virus, but do not show symptoms that would put them under surveillance.

"Children with COVID-19 may have mild, non-specific symptoms, or no symptoms at all," explained Paul Hsu, an epidemiologist with the Fielding School of Public Health at UCLA. "But they can still transmit the virus from one adult to others."

Therefore COVID-19 has two increased opportunities to infect Latino households: more wage earners who can be exposed to the virus at work and bring the infection home with them, and more children who can spread infection to family members while remaining asymptomatic themselves.

Because they typically have more wage earners and more children, Latino households contain nearly one more person per unit than non-Hispanic white households.

So, in effect, COVID-19 punishes Latino households for working hard—which exposes more wage earners to infection—and for having more people, especially children, per household.

Since March of 2020, Latinos have held many of the essential jobs that have kept California well-fed and functioning. Unfortunately, their reward has been the highest rate of infections and deaths in the state.

About CESLAC. Since 1992, the Center for the Study of Latino Health and Culture (CESLAC) of the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA has provided cutting-edge, fact-based research, education, and public information about Latinos, their health, their history, and their roles in California's society and economy.

For more information, or to arrange a telephone interview with the Center's Director, David E. Hayes-Bautista, Ph.D., Distinguished Professor of Medicine, please contact Adriana Valdez, at (310) 794-0663 or cesla@ucla.edu.