



H.R. 4884, the Mental Health for Latinos Act

Sponsored by: Rep. Grace F. Napolitano (D-CA)

Summary: H.R. 4884 requires the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to develop and implement an outreach and education strategy to promote behavioral and mental health among Latino and Hispanic populations. H.R. 4884 would also require SAMHSA to report annually to Congress on the extent to which the strategy developed and implemented improved behavioral and mental health outcomes among these populations. Bill text is identical to the version introduced in the 117th Congress.

Why do we need H.R. 4884?

Cultural tendencies, like machismo, and disparities within our healthcare system are still preventing members of the Latino and Hispanic community from receiving life-saving mental health services. For example, [according to the National Mental Health Services Survey](#), between 2014 and 2019, there was a total loss of over 1,000 Spanish-speaking health facilities that offered mental health treatment, while over this time, the Hispanic population increased by 5.2 million individuals. Furthermore, [according to 2021 National Survey of Drug use and Health](#), the percentage of Hispanic or Latino adults with a mental illness who received mental health services in the past year was only 36.1 percent. These barriers to care, which existed long before the COVID pandemic, are causing too many to suffer in silence, and this must change.

H.R. 4884 boosts our continued efforts to reduce stigma and promote mental wellness, while meeting the diverse needs of Latino and Hispanic populations across the country. As our nation confronts an unfolding mental health crisis exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, this critical legislation reinforces the timeless message that there is zero shame in asking for help and that seeking support is a sign of strength.

What is the current state of mental health disparities in Latino and Hispanic populations?

- Overall, the Latino community does not talk about mental health issues, and there is little information about this topic. This lack of information also increases the stigma associated with mental health issues. Many Latinos do not seek treatment for fear of being labeled as “locos” (crazy) or as having a mental health condition because this may cause shame. ([National Alliance on Mental Illness](#))
- In 2021, 20.7% of Hispanic adults aged 18 or older reported having a mental illness. ([Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#))
- 36.1% of Hispanic adults aged 18 or older with any mental illness received services in 2021 compared to the U.S. average of 47.2%. ([Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#))
- Only 5.5% of U.S. psychologists say they're able to administer mental health care services in Spanish and 44.9% of psychologists say they are “quite or extremely knowledgeable” about working with Hispanic patients. By 2030, the demand for full-time psychologists within the Hispanic community is expected to rise by 30%. ([American Psychological Association](#))
- Latinx/Hispanic people are more likely to seek help for a mental health disorder from a primary care provider (10 percent) than a mental health specialist (5 percent). ([American Psychiatric Association](#))
- Bilingual patients are evaluated differently when evaluated in English versus Spanish, and Latinx/Hispanic people are more frequently undertreated than whites. ([American Psychiatric Association](#))
- Between 2010 and 2020, the suicide rate among male Hispanic adults (ages 20 to 64) increased by 35.7%, and the female rate increased by 40.6%. ([Journal of Community Health](#))

- In 2019, suicide was the second leading cause of death for Hispanics, ages 15-34. Suicide attempts for Hispanic girls, grades 9-12, were 30 percent higher than for non-Hispanic white girls in the same age group, in 2019. ([U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health](#))
- Rates of depression and suicidal ideation have increased dramatically during the pandemic. Symptoms of current depression were reported 59% more frequently by Hispanic adults (40.3%) than by non-Hispanic White (White) persons (25.3%). Estimates of self-reported suicidal thoughts/ideation among Hispanic persons (22.9%) were four times those among non-Hispanic Black (Black) persons (5.2%). ([Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#))

What would H.R. 4884 specifically do?

The legislation outlines a strategy which must be designed to:

- Provide information on evidence-based practices, interventions, and treatments that are culturally and linguistically appropriate;
- Increase awareness of symptoms of mental illnesses common among such populations, taking into account differences within subgroups, such as gender, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, or ethnicity;
- Ensure full participation of both consumers and community members in the development and implementation of materials;
- Meet the diverse cultural and language needs of the various Latino and Hispanic populations; and,
- Address the impact of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic on the mental and behavioral health of the Latino and Hispanic populations.

118th Congress cosponsors (19): Velázquez, Vargas, Chu, Ruiz, Sánchez, Grijalva, Sylvia Garcia, Soto, Carbajal, Crockett, Salinas, Cárdenas, Gallego, Costa, Watson Coleman, Fletcher, Gonzalez, Robert Garcia, Caraveo

118th Congress supporting organizations (10): National Latino Behavioral Health Association, Pacific Clinics, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, International OCD Foundation, Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance, American Counseling Association, American Psychiatric Association, Children's Hospital Association, County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors

117th Congress cosponsors (20): Carbajal, Cárdenas, Velazquez, Soto, Grijalva, Vela, Sylvia Garcia, Vargas, Gallego, Correa, Chuy Garcia, Sánchez, Roybal-Allard, Chu, Ruiz, Leger Fernandez, Aguilar, Sires, Escobar, Fletcher

117th Congress supporting organizations (4): American Association of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, American Psychological Association, National Latino Behavioral Health Association, Pacific Clinics

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