

“Community Outreach: A Key to Increasing Awareness and Participation in the New Jersey Behavioral Risk Factor Survey (NJBFRFS)”



Background

The New Jersey Behavioral Risk Factor Survey (NJBFRFS) is an anonymous telephone/cell phone survey which the Department of Health has been conducting since 1991. The purpose of the project is to collect annually information on health status, chronic health conditions, preventive health behavior and health risks among New Jersey residents. The collected data is used to monitor trends in population health, and is a resource for policy development, program planning and evaluation.

Although, the survey has existed for decades, many New Jersey residents, community-based organizations, local health departments, and hospitals are not familiar with the survey. To help address this lack of awareness and to ensure that survey participants are truly representative of the New Jersey population, the NJBFRFS program recently launched an outreach initiative.

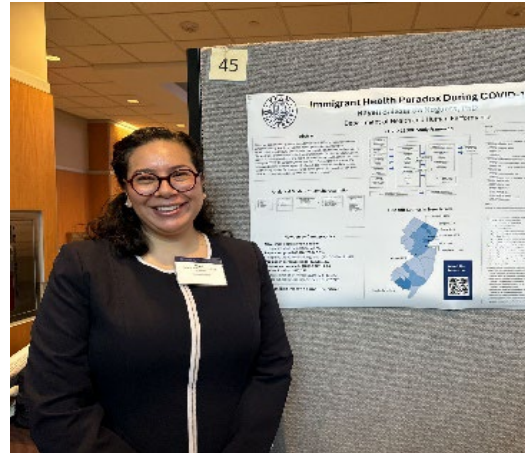
Outreach Among Underrepresented Populations

In the summer of 2024, the New Jersey Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics and Informatics reved up its efforts to spread awareness of the NJBFRFS amongst community agencies and underserved populations in New Jersey. To accomplish this task, we utilized several key steps:

- ❖ Updated existing program brochures, flyers and post cards which are suitable for sharing either electronically or in hard copy. As part of the update, all materials will be available in English and Spanish.
- ❖ Hired a consultant, Dr. Nayeli Salazar De Norguera, a Presidential Postdoctoral Equity in Action Fellow at Kean University, who has broad experience in community needs assessment and strategic outreach.
- ❖ Dr. Salazar De Norguera developed a comprehensive list of community based health and social service agenices as well as churches, libraries, parks, food pantries, etc. that serve or are in close proximity to our target populations. She contacted the agencies introducing the NJBFRFS and paving the road for future follow-up by the NJBFRFS Team. Dr. Salazar De Norguera conducted in-person meetings in Cumberland, Burlington and Essex counties and provided nearly 3,000 copies of the outreach materials. She also successfully engaged with the Community Core, a state-base outreach group comprised of two (2) dozen field workers who directly meet with the public in their home

communities. The group which originally formed during the COVID-19 Pandemic is ongoing and remains a critical means of sharing health-related information with the public.

As her work with the NJBRFS project concluded, Dr. Salazar De Norguera noted, ***“During my time with the Center for Health Statistics and Informatics, we were able to build and mobilize an extensive network of community organizations and leaders. Our work will yield more equitable NJBRFS data collection and representation. This is critical, as a Public Health Professor, I use the NJBRFS in the classroom and in my research so the outreach efforts we ensure that the survey is being inclusive”.***



The NJBRFS Team will continue its community outreach efforts and will monitor the impact of those efforts in terms of survey responsiveness among populations previously underrepresented in the survey.