



The Health Condition of Migrant Farmworkers

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ABSTRACT

This study examined many alternate avenues for gathering information about the health conditions of migrant farmworkers. The author argues that the task of collecting information was arduous because many of the health delivery agencies do not report to the Michigan Department of Public Health. The federal government funds the migrant clinics, and this releases them from any state reporting and accountability. The study presents a synopsis of the health condition of migrant farmworkers in general, including poverty relationship to health problems. Among their health issues, the study cites HIV infection, and other urgent areas of concern (e.g., substance abuse, sexuality, mental health, physical health, and occupational health and safety, tuberculosis, health services, immunization records, child abuse and domestic violence, cigarette smoking, environmental pollution, usage of recreational drugs, nutrition, infectious diseases and vaccinations, dental needs, children with disabilities, lack of translators, and medical insurances and HMOs). The information collected should not only help predict migrant farmworker health needs for the future, but also provide some ideas for immediate program implementation. The study also questions the efficiency of the migrant health delivery model, especially when the clients are mostly transient and without local representation, leaving them vulnerable to mistreatments or abuse without any place to complain or request accountability.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Leon was, at the time of this paper's submission, the Director for the Lincoln Intermediate Unit #12, Migrant Child Development Program in Gettysburg, Penn. He was a state consultant of Migrant and ESL Programs here in Michigan. He is currently a Michigan State University College of Education adjunct professor and Assistant Director of Extension and Community Education at Lansing Community College.