

Border Health and Environment Threats Initiative: Health and Immigration

Isidore Flores, Ann V. Millard, and K.C. Donnelly

Research Report No. 36

Decemeber 2007

ABSTRACT

This report looks at the health and environmental threats to colonia residents living along the U.S. Mexico border in the Rio Grande Valley. Colonias are highly impoverished and usually isolated and unincorporated settlements. Thus, inhabitants of colonias are usually disconnected to the U.S. medical system and only receive medical treatment once their condition becomes severe. Ranking as the second poorest county in the country, Hidalgo county is home to a large medically isolated population. This study is limited to the area north of the U.S.-Mexico Border and south of Highway 83 (main highway in the Valley). The project served 33 colonias comprised of 593 adults and 516 children where each was loaned a First Aid kit. This project served basic health needs, however, it also exposed more severe health needs in isolated colonias such as diabetes, dialysis, heart and circulatory system related conditions, wounds that will not heal, and environmental factors.