Antibiotic Resistance

Super Madres Promoting Human Health

Latinos Living Healthy
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INTRODUCTION

LULAC’s *Latinos Living Healthy* initiative is working to ensure that all children and adults have access to quality affordable health care, nutritional information, healthy and affordable foods, and safe spaces to engage in physical activities. Now, in partnership with the Pew Charitable Trusts, LULAC has launched the *Super Madres* campaign which will raise awareness and promote advocacy around the injudicious use of antibiotics in animal food production and the risk to human health posed by antibiotic resistant organisms. Since the 1940’s antibiotics have been used to treat infectious diseases caused by bacteria, microbes, and other small organisms. In 1951 the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the addition of antibiotics to animal feed to promote weight gain. Data from the FDA indicate that in 2011 nearly 30 million pounds of antibiotics were sold for use on farms where food animals are raised — that’s almost four times the amount sold for human use. Some of the most common antibiotics used in animal feed are also used to treat human and animal bacterial infections. These drugs make animals grow faster and may compensate for overcrowded and unsanitary conditions, improving meat production. When humans and animals are exposed to antibiotics over long periods of time at low dosages bacteria targeted by these antibiotics becomes resistant to the drug’s effects. This resistance makes us more vulnerable to infectious disease caused by these bacteria.
TALKING POINTS

The following talking points are provided as a resource to advocate among your family, within the Latino community and with elected officials against the misuse of antibiotics. While these points are by no means exhaustive, they may help your audience understand how antibiotic resistance occurs and why it is a concern. Evidence from the scientific community is also provided that supports LULAC’s efforts to address the antibiotic resistance crisis. In addition, these talking points break down the policy objectives of many advocates calling for the safe use of antibiotics. The pieces of national legislation currently being discussed by federal decision-makers that address this ever-growing health concern are also explained.

THE BASICS OF ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE

Antibiotic resistance is the natural process by which bacteria develop resistance over time to the medicines used to treat the illnesses they cause in humans and animals. As resistance develops, these medicines become progressively less effective and eventually stop working entirely. Antibiotic resistance is a consequence of the use of antibiotics, and misuse accelerates the emergence of resistance. Many antibiotics used on industrial farms are the same ones used to treat people who have been exposed to E. coli, Salmonella, Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) and other infections.
“There is clear evidence of adverse human health consequences due to resistant organism result from non-human usage of antimicrobials, the foodborne route is the major transmission pathway for resistant bacteria and resistance genes from food animals to humans, but other routes of transmission exist; and the consequences of antimicrobial resistance are particularly severe when pathogens are resistant to antimicrobials critically important in humans.” —The United Nations & World Health Organization

**Antibiotics in Food Animal Production**

Many industrial farms routinely feed antibiotics to their poultry or livestock because in low dosages these medicines promote growth. The medicines are also used to prevent illnesses that are likely to occur in crowded living conditions on large meat producing farms. In 2009 the U.S. Food and Drug Administration reported that about 90% of antibiotics sold in the U.S. were sold for use in food animals’ feed and water and up to 70% are given to food animals that are not sick. Unfortunately, these practices can breed dangerous strains of bacteria that are antibiotic resistant, and some of these bacteria can then spread to humans. Based on decades of scientific data, U.S. and international governmental organizations have concluded that the overuse of antibiotics in food animal production contributes to human antibiotic resistance.
LATINOS AT RISK

In the United States, 90 million people have inadequate levels of health literacy—the ability to understand and use information pertaining to health and medical care—and racial and ethnic minorities are far more likely to be at or below basic levels in their health literacy skills. Almost half (41%) of Latinos lack basic health literacy, compared to 24% if Blacks and 9% of Whites. These high rates may be due to many factors including English Language Proficiency, education, and immigration status but poor health literacy has been described as a stronger predictor of a person’s health than age, income, employment status, education level, and race.

Latinos are at an increased risk for illness resulting from antibiotic resistant bacteria because Latinos are more to work on farms where they are exposed to these bacteria and other organisms. According to the Pew Hispanic Center, Hispanics are more likely to be farm workers than any other ethnic group. Spanish is reported to be the dominate language spoken on 80% of farms around the U.S. It is also reported by Pew that 1/3 of Hispanics lack affordable health insurance, which means that they lack essential health care services that are vital for the prevention or treatment of potentially life threatening illnesses. The lack of health insurance by Latinos is also a

major factor leading to the common misuse of antibiotics at home. Regular screenings, preventative care, and comprehensive treatment plans are essential to the maintenance of public health.

Many Latinos in the United States self-prescribe antibiotics because of financial and sociocultural barriers and inaccurately believe that antibiotics help treat viral infections. Language barriers also frequently contribute to poor adherence to medication regimes and negatively impact perceptions of provider care. In addition, studies have shown Black and Latino children are ‘more likely to receive antibiotics for inappropriate indications (i.e., nonbacterial illnesses). Latino adults may have high rates of antibiotic resistance to particular bacterial infections, receive less knowledge about the appropriate use of antibiotics, and have higher expectations for an antibiotic prescription.

**Human and Healthcare Costs**

Every year an average of 2 million Americans develop hospital-acquired infections. 63,000 of these infections are from antibiotic resistant and, on average, over 150 patients die every single day from antibiotic related infections. For instance, patients infected by antibiotic resistant Salmonella were much more likely to suffer from severe complications such as bloodstream infections. MRSA—a bacteria resistant to common antibiotics—kills more Americans each year than HIV/AIDS.

The cost of antibiotic resistance to the U.S. healthcare system is extensive. Various institutions, such as the World Health organization, estimate the average annual cost of antibiotic resistance to the United States is at least $25 million. In addition, antibiotic resistance costs U.S. hospitals an average of 8 million extra days spent in the hospital by patients. When the causes of illness become resistant to medicine commonly used as treatment the medical community must research and develop new medicine as an alternative for treatment.

**Legislative Efforts**

As of the 113th Congress, three different pieces of legislation have been introduced, are pending reauthorization, or have the potential to greatly influence the challenges the country faces in regards to antibiotic resistance and their misuse in food animal production and human exposure. The following pieces of legislation increase regulations for the use and labeling of antibiotics as a food additive.
• **Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act (PAMTA):** Amends the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to deny an application for a new animal drug that is a critical antimicrobial animal drug unless the applicant demonstrates there is a reasonably certainty of no harm to human health due to antimicrobial resistance. This legislation also phases out non-therapeutic feed and water use of antibiotics and does not prevent the use of antibiotics to treat sick animals.

• **Animal Drug User Fee Act (ADUFA):** Passed in 2003 and up for reauthorization in 2013, collect fees from animal drug companies in order to fund safety reviews of animal drug applications. Thanks to ADUFA, companies report annual sales of antibiotics destined for use in food animal production. This legislation also requires antibiotic use to be clearly labeled by multifaceted components (i.e. size, strength, dosage form, etc.) but presently lack the ability to have the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) be more detailed in their public summaries.

• **Delivering Antimicrobial Transparency in Animals Act of 2013 (DATA):** Amends the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to enhance the reporting requirements pertaining to the use of antimicrobial drugs in food animals. This legislation also provides the FDA with better information on the use of antimicrobial drugs in animal used for food to enable public health officials and scientists to better understand and interpret trends and variations in rates of microbial resistance to such antimicrobial drugs, and identifies interventions to prevent and such antimicrobial drug resistance.

Visit [www.thomas.loc.gov](http://www.thomas.loc.gov) for more information on present or future legislation in Congress.
ADVOCACY

Public events are great ways to involve other members of your community in the pursuit for policy changes. By planning a community education workshop or town hall meeting you will help raise awareness and offer an opportunity for dialogue on specific issue areas. It will also allow you to mobilize the community to take action (sign the Super Madres petition, make phone calls to elected officials, do in-district visits, etc.).

A successful event has the support of community partners, local community organizations, business, etc. Building coalitions with a diverse group of stakeholders helps bring attention to your issues, but also help galvanize the community. Once you identify your community partners, invite them to provide speakers for the event or have another specific role such as helping promote the event, provide volunteers, and invite their stakeholders to attend the event. These actions will help increase attendance and make for a more robust program.

When targeting elected representatives or other officials, face-to-face meetings are the most effective way to convey your message. Meetings often are the beginning of a long-term relationship with your elected officials and their staff. Keep in mind that successful advocacy requires a sustained effort, not simply one letter, phone call, or meeting. Depending on the distances involved, you may never have had the opportunity to meet your elected representatives in your state capital or in Washington, DC. However, your elected officials also have local offices, sometimes staffed by part-time employees. Your local school board members also have offices where they meet with constituents. You can find the office locations and phone numbers online through local, state, and Congressional websites or in a separate government section of your phonebook. No matter which official you’re trying to see, there are several steps to take and you should plan as far in advance as possible.
ORGANIZE A COMMUNITY BRIEFING OR TOWN HALL

BEFORE EVENT

- Form a planning committee for the Town Hall.
- Select site/location and time/date (have at least two tentative options).
- Actively recruit speakers and/or presenters that are knowledgeable on a given topic.
- Invite Speakers and designate role for each speaker (what subject are they going to cover?).
- Find sponsors and/or other means of fundraising for an event or conference.
- Secure volunteers: Greeters, individuals in charge of the petitions, technology and Media point of contact.
- Make sure that you have petitions, clipboards and pens ready to go

DAY OF EVENT

- LULAC Branding. Make sure to put up a LULAC sign and have a sign in sheet.
- Check AV/technology needs and make sure everything works
- Have remarks ready, greet guests, and be professional.
- Allow for time at the beginning/end of the event for media if open to press.
- Take plenty of pictures to share with the LULAC National Programs team.

AFTER EVENT

- As soon as possible, send thank you letters to your sponsors and guest speaker(s) for their time and help.
- Send copies of sign in sheets, pictures, and other reporting materials to the LULAC National Office.

PUBLICITY

Some effective ways to publicize an event are to use online sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and e-mails.

Posting flyers is a must. Choose locations where the community visits (schools, grocery stores, local community centers, and health clinics).
You can also send information to other organizations and ask them to circulate it with their own networks. Lastly, consider sending out personal invitations to special guests.
ORGANIZE LEGISLATIVE MEETINGS

BEFORE THE MEETING

- Find out who your federal elected representatives are. This is based on where you live. Each person has 2 Federal Senators (2 Senators per state) and 1 Congressional Representative who represents your Congressional District.
- Once you know who represents you, do some research to know more about them and to understand their stance on your issue(s).
- When calling to schedule a meeting, ask that you speak with the scheduler, or write an email or letter to request a meeting. Be prepared to provide information about yourself (or your group), the topic you’d like to discuss, and a range of days (or times) that you would like to meet. Be prepared to send the office a request in writing, particularly if it is with a Member of Congress.

PREPARE FOR THE MEETING

- Determine who should be in the meeting. There may be LULAC Council members and other LULAC Councils who are based in the same district or state who could join. In addition, there may be other members in the community and other organizations who would like to join in this meeting. This is your meeting and you know best who the players are in your community area who would be interested in supporting this issue.
- Prepare your materials. Have your information ready in a concise form, just as you would when writing a letter or making a telephone call. Prepare the strongest two or three reasons why your legislator should support your views and practice your conversation with a friend. Know the opposing argument so that you can respond to questions. Develop a packet of information to leave behind so that the legislator or staff person can begin a file on your issue.

DURING THE MEETING

- Don’t be surprised if your legislator is running late. Making visits to Congress requires flexibility and patience.
- Once the meeting begins state the reason for your visit in one sentence.
• In 5 minutes or less, explain what groups are represented, their membership, and other important information to know about the group attending. Give the representative or staff member your leave behind packet.

• Give examples and make local analogies so that you are building a case as a constituent. This is a chance to have a dialogue and build your relationship with your representatives and their staff. Give the representative the opportunity to ask questions. At the end of the meeting be sure to thank the person(s) who took the time to meet with you.

AFTER THE MEETING

• Send a thank you email or note to the scheduler and the representative as well as to any staffer(s) who helped with the meeting.
PETITION

As part of the LULAC Super Madres campaign, we have started an online petition in support of measures that improve regulations and labeling of antibiotics in order to reduce the rate of use to promote growth in farm animals. The goal of the campaign and petition is to raise awareness and advocacy around the use of antibiotics in food animal production. The petition calls for support for the DATA, ADUFA and PAMTA legislation, and sends the following message to your congressman:

Dear Member of Congress,

Please help protect the health of my family by supporting legislation that increases regulations for the use and labeling of antibiotics as a food additive on industrial farms. Various studies from the Food and Drug Administration, the National Academy of Sciences, the Government Accountability Office, World Health Organization and United Nations, among many other organizations, have attested to the relationship between the increasing use of antibiotics in industrial farming and subsequent negative health impacts on humans. Antibiotic resistance kills an average of 63,000 people every year, or 173 patients every day. For these and many other reasons, this issue is important to me and I look forward to hearing from you on your positions on antibiotic regulations.

Sign the petition online by visiting the health tab section of the LULAC website, www.lulac.org.
LATINO COMMUNITY

For Latinos, in addition to high poverty rates and unemployment, there are additional cultural barriers related to linguistic competency of the health care work force as well as fear and mistrust of many government run assistance programs. People without access to health care are more likely to develop antibiotic resistant infections. They are also more likely to delay treatment because they have to choose between living expenses and the cost of care.

For farmworkers exposed to “sub-therapeutic” levels of antibiotics over long periods of time there is a higher risk of becoming sick from an antibiotic resistant bacteria, spreading an illness to their families, and requiring long-term medical care. Early detection of contagious infections can prevent the spread of life threatening bacterial illnesses. For Latino farm workers community health centers and migrant health centers are valuable resources for high quality comprehensive primary and preventative health care where services are offered regardless of health insurance coverage of immigration status.

To find a community health centers near you, visit http://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov/

To locate a community or migrant health center in your area, visit the health center search page at one of the following websites:

U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)
Migrant Clinicians Network (MCN)
National Center for Farmworker Health (NCFH)
**Patients and Doctors**

Regular screenings, preventative care, and access to comprehensive treatment plans are essential to personal health. For Latinos and the entire population of uninsured Americans there are significant barriers to accessing these cornerstones of medicine.

Patients should take antibiotics exactly as the doctor prescribes. Generally this means one should only take antibiotics prescribed for you, not share leftovers, do not save antibiotics for the next illness, not ask for antibiotics when your doctor thinks you do not need them, and prevent infections by practicing good hand hygiene and getting recommended vaccines.

Doctors should not treat viral infections with antibiotics, even when patients ask for them, prescribe antibiotics only when they are absolutely necessary, avoid unnecessary overlaps in antibiotics, become familiar with resistance trends in your region, an talk to your patients about appropriate use of antibiotics.

**Food Safety**

Adopt four simple steps to help keep your food safe:

1. **Clean** – To prevent bacteria from spreading wash your hands, surfaces and utensils. Rinse vegetables and fruits, but never meat, poultry or eggs.
2. **Separate** – Use separate cutting boards or plates for meat poultry and eggs. Keep meat poultry and eggs separate from produce in your refrigerator and in the cart while shopping.
3. **Cook** – Bacteria that cause food illness multiply the quickest between 40° and 140° F. Use a food thermometer to make sure foods are cooked to a safe temperature.
4. **Chill** - Refrigerate foods within 2 hours. Never thaw or marinate foods on the counter; always thaw foods in the refrigerator, cold water, or microwave.

Visit [www.foodsafety.gov](http://www.foodsafety.gov) for more information how to keep food safe and healthy at home.
THANKS

LULAC would like to thank the Pew Charitable Trusts for supporting the Latinos Living Healthy Initiative and the Health Education Ambassadors program to raise awareness and promote advocacy around the injudicious use of antibiotics in animal food production and the risk to human health posed by antibiotic resistant organisms.

CONTACTS

Alana Sutherland
Health Program Coordinator
LULAC
ASutherland@lulac.org
202-833-6130

Elizabeth Garcia
National Director of Programs
LULAC
EGarcia@lulac.org
916-551-1330

Liliana Rañón
Director of Policy and Legislation
LULAC
LRañón@lulac.org
202-833-6130