



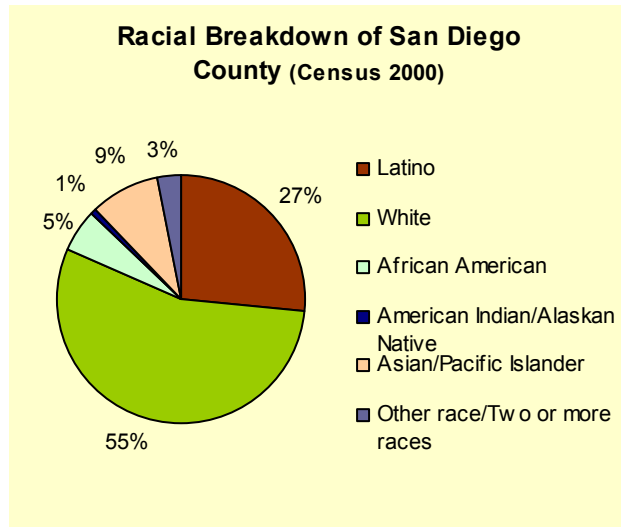
# Health Disparities in San Diego County: Immigration and Citizenship

A series of fact sheets & profiles from the National Latino Research Center at Cal State San Marcos  
Winter/Spring 2005

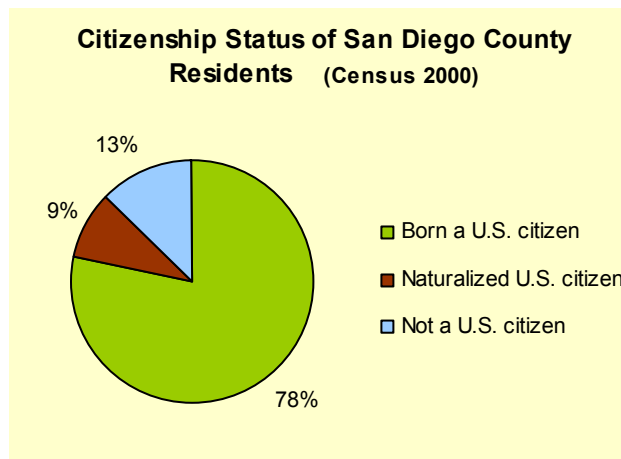
In the U.S., immigration and citizenship status are important predictors of health variables. Immigrants, regardless of citizenship status, often experience difficulty gaining access to quality preventive and therapeutic medical care. Immigration and citizenship status affect access to health care in a number of ways, including language and income barriers and lack of health insurance. In San Diego County, where nearly one-quarter of residents are foreign-born, these issues are especially important.

## Demographics of the San Diego Region<sup>1</sup>

San Diego County has an ethnically diverse population, with the largest groups being Whites and Latinos.

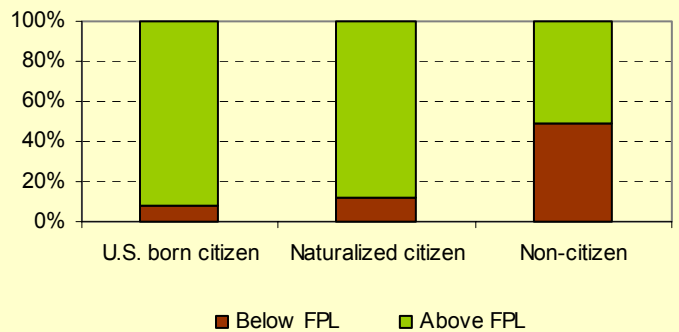


Nearly one-quarter of San Diego County's residents are foreign-born, and 13% of County residents are not U.S. citizens.



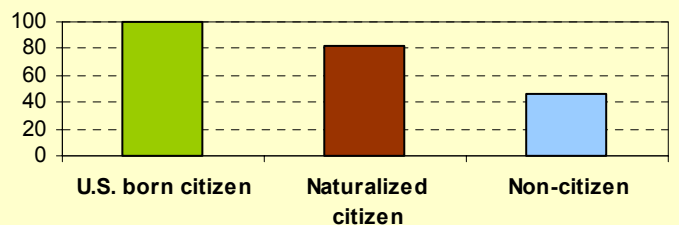
## Socioeconomic Variables Influencing Access to Health Care<sup>2</sup>

### Poverty Status of San Diego Residents by Citizenship Status (CHIS 2003)



In San Diego County, non-citizens are nearly six times more likely than U.S.-born citizens to live below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). Naturalized citizens are only slightly more likely to live below FPL than U.S.-born citizens.

### Percent of San Diego County Residents who Report Speaking English "Well", "Very Well", or Exclusively (CHIS 2003)

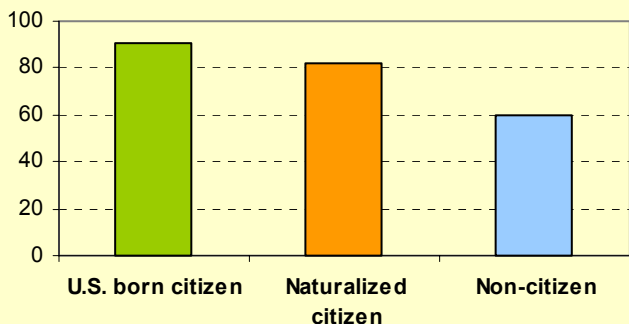


Fewer than half of the non-U.S. citizens living in San Diego County speak English "well" or "very well." Among naturalized citizens, 18% do not speak English "well" or "very well."

## Disparities in Health Care Access<sup>2,3</sup>

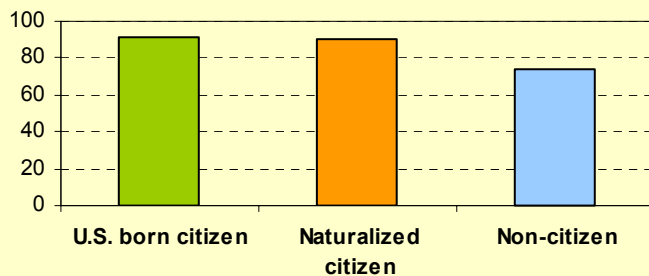
Health insurance coverage and having a usual source of care are both key predictors of access to health care. Research has consistently shown that immigrants, especially non-citizens, are much less likely to have health insurance than U.S.-born citizens.<sup>3</sup>

**Percent of San Diego Residents with Current Health Insurance by U.S. Citizenship Status (CHIS 2001 only)**



In San Diego County, non-citizens are far more likely than citizens to lack health insurance. U.S.-born citizens have a slightly higher rate of insurance than naturalized citizens do.

**Percent of San Diego County Population who Report a Usual Source of Medical Care by U.S. Citizenship Status (CHIS 2001, 2003)**

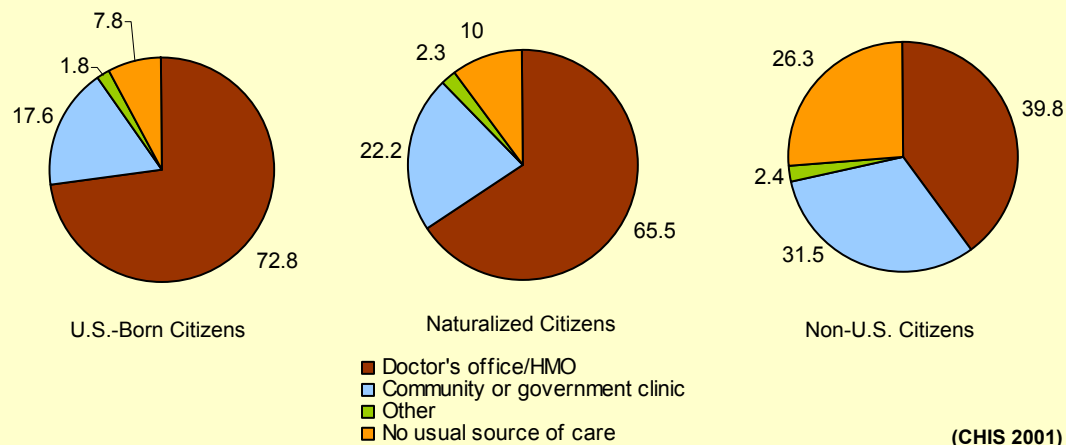


San Diego County's non-citizens are nearly three times as likely as citizens (either U.S.-born or naturalized) to lack a usual source of medical care.

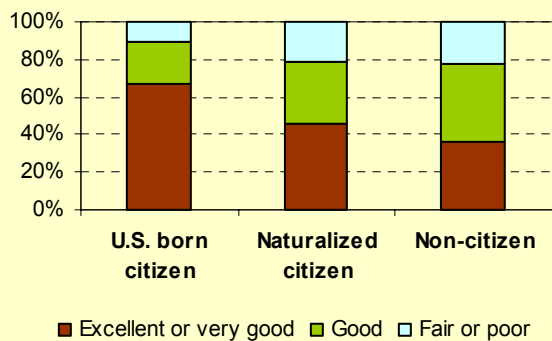
## Disparities in Health Care Utilization<sup>2</sup>

In San Diego County, a much greater proportion of citizens versus non-citizens report that their usual source of care is a doctor's office or HMO. Non-citizens are more likely to list community or government clinics as their usual source of care.

**Type of Usual Source of Care Reported by San Diego County Residents by Citizenship Status**



**Health Status of San Diego County Residents by U.S. Citizenship Status (CHIS 2001, 2003)**



## Disparities in Health Status<sup>2</sup>

In San Diego County, immigrants are twice as likely as U.S.-born citizens to report their health as "fair" or "poor" and less likely to report their health as "excellent" or "very good".

## References

1. U.S. Bureau of the Census (2000). (<http://www.census.gov>)
2. California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) 2001 & 2003. UCLA Center for Health Policy Research. (<http://chis.ucla.edu>)
3. Prentice, J. C., Pebley, A. R., & Sastry, N. (2005). Immigration Status and Health Insurance Coverage: Who Gains? Who Loses? *American Journal of Public Health*, 95, 109-116.