



# Improving Health Equity for the Latinx Community of Metro Detroit Through a Student-Run Clinic Initiative

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## Background and Objective

A review of the current literature demonstrates an inequity in healthcare amongst the Latinx population of Metro Detroit. While 8.7% of non-Hispanic Detroit residents lack health insurance, within the Latinx community, this figure rises to 22%. Further known barriers to achieving health equity include: language, transportation, difficulty finding services, and the high cost of medical copays<sup>1,2</sup>.

In July of 2023 the Amigos Medicos student-run free clinic of Wayne State University School of Medicine (WSUSOM) hosted a health fair in Southwest Detroit. A survey was administered at this time to identify shortcomings in services provided to the Latinx community of Detroit as well as identify patient understanding of demographics, barriers to care, and general health characteristics of the population.

Our research highlights gaps in health equity among the Latinx population and identifies potential measures that a student-run clinic can undertake to improve the quality of healthcare provided to these residents. Specifically, we examine the utilization of a DMC Foundation grant in ensuring the healthcare gaps indicated in the survey are appropriately addressed and initiatives discussed remain sustainable.

## Methods

We reached out to relevant WSUSOM student organizations and community partners to participate in an annual health fair hosted by Amigos Medicos at the Ford Resource and Engagement Center (FREC) in Southwest Detroit. Services provided during this health fair included basic lab work, flu vaccinations, vision and hearing exams, and patient education information.

We provided attendees an opportunity to fill out a 25 question survey regarding demographics, barriers to care, and general health characteristics. Specifically, it consisted of 5 questions regarding attendee demographics, 5 questions regarding attendee healthcare and medical history, 14 questions regarding barriers to care and general interests, and 1 open-ended question addressing further comments or suggestions.

Of these questions, 10 questions were formatted with Yes/No responses, 14 questions were multiple choice questions (MCQ), and 1 question was open-ended. We received 23 survey submissions which were collected using an iPad. Results are presented as descriptive statistics.

## Results

When you are ill, where do you go for help?

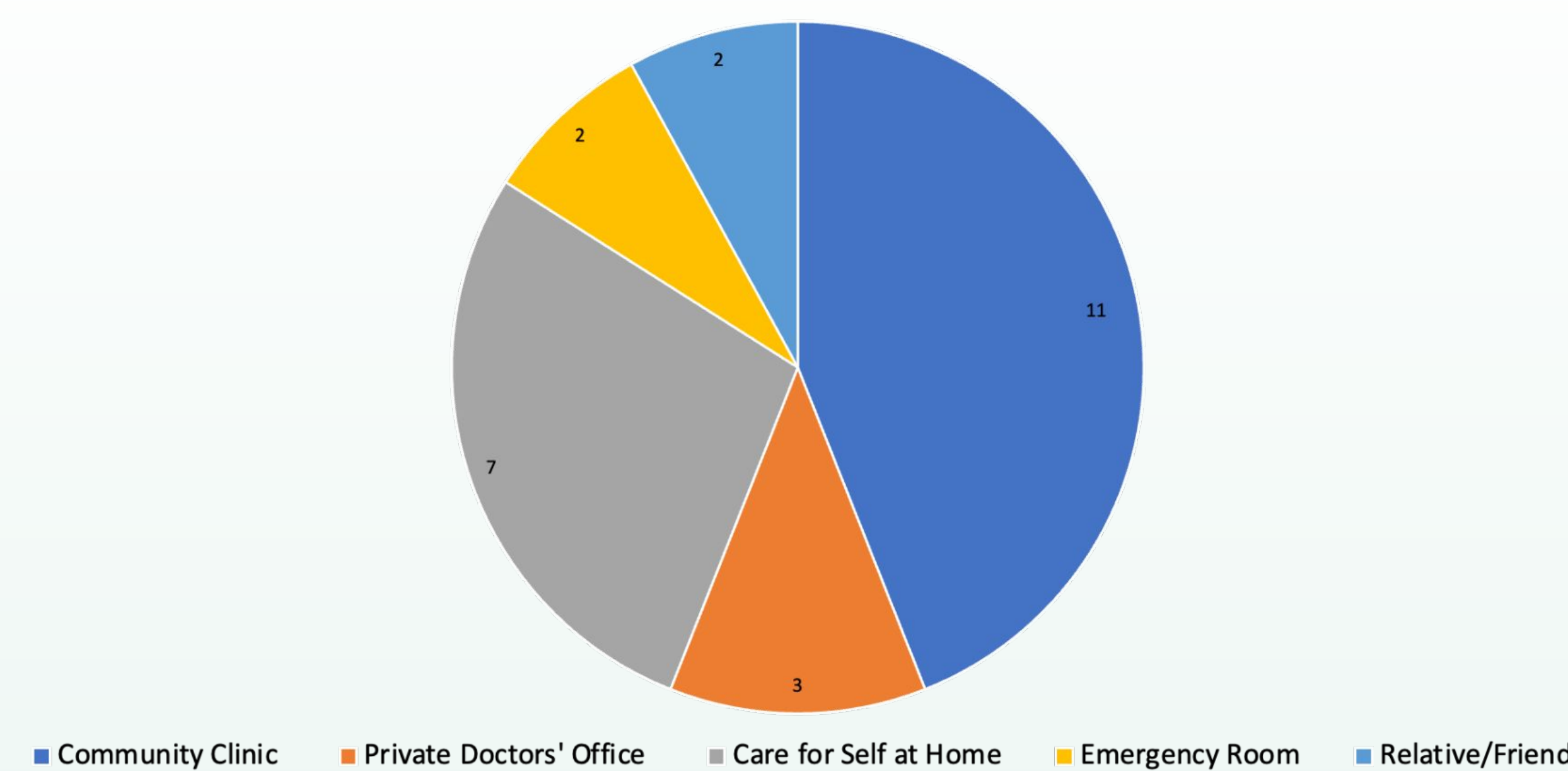


Figure 2. Patient preferences regarding sources of care

How important is it for you that your health care provider speak your preferred language?

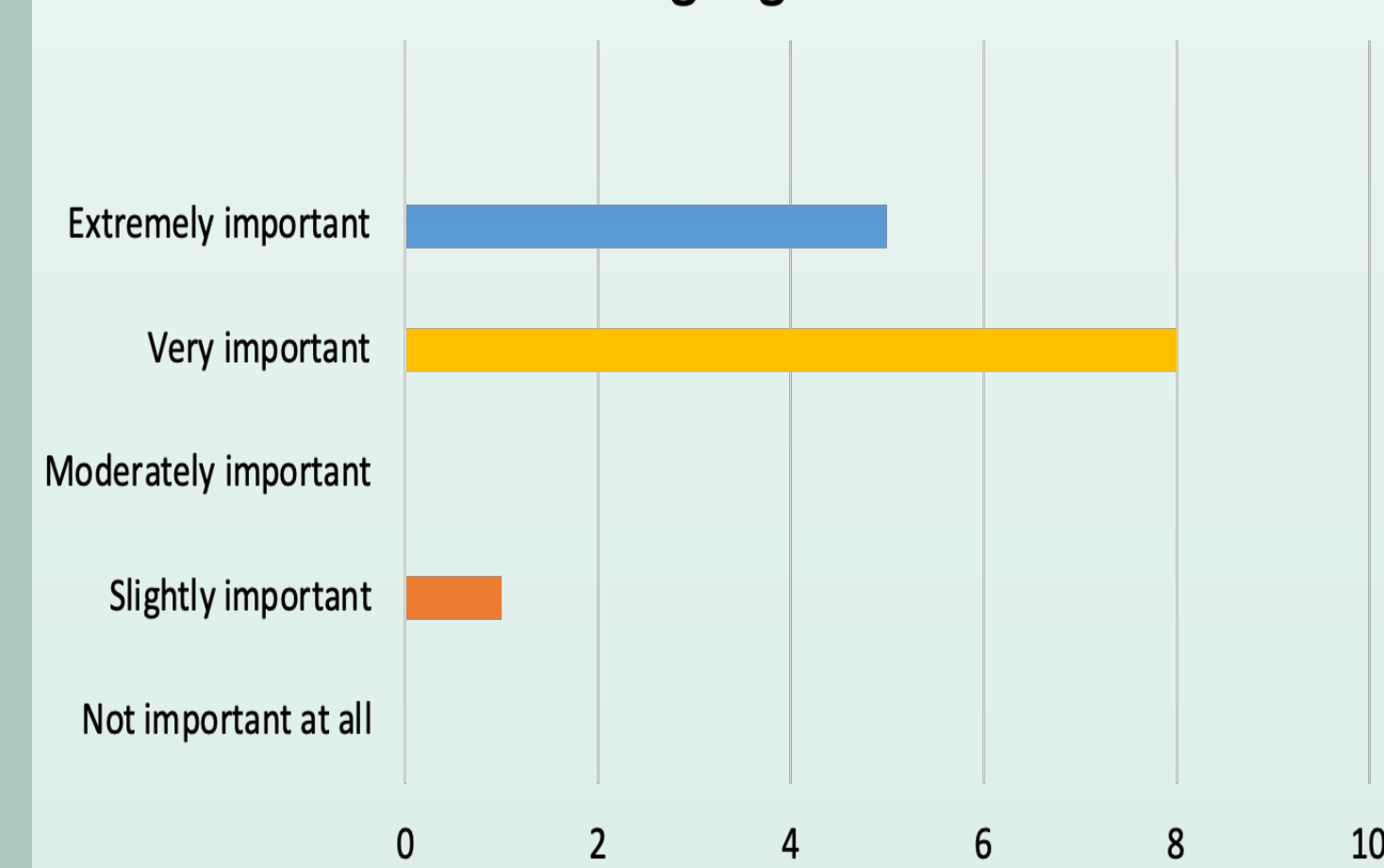


Figure 3. Patient preferences regarding physician language concordance

Do you have any of the following conditions?

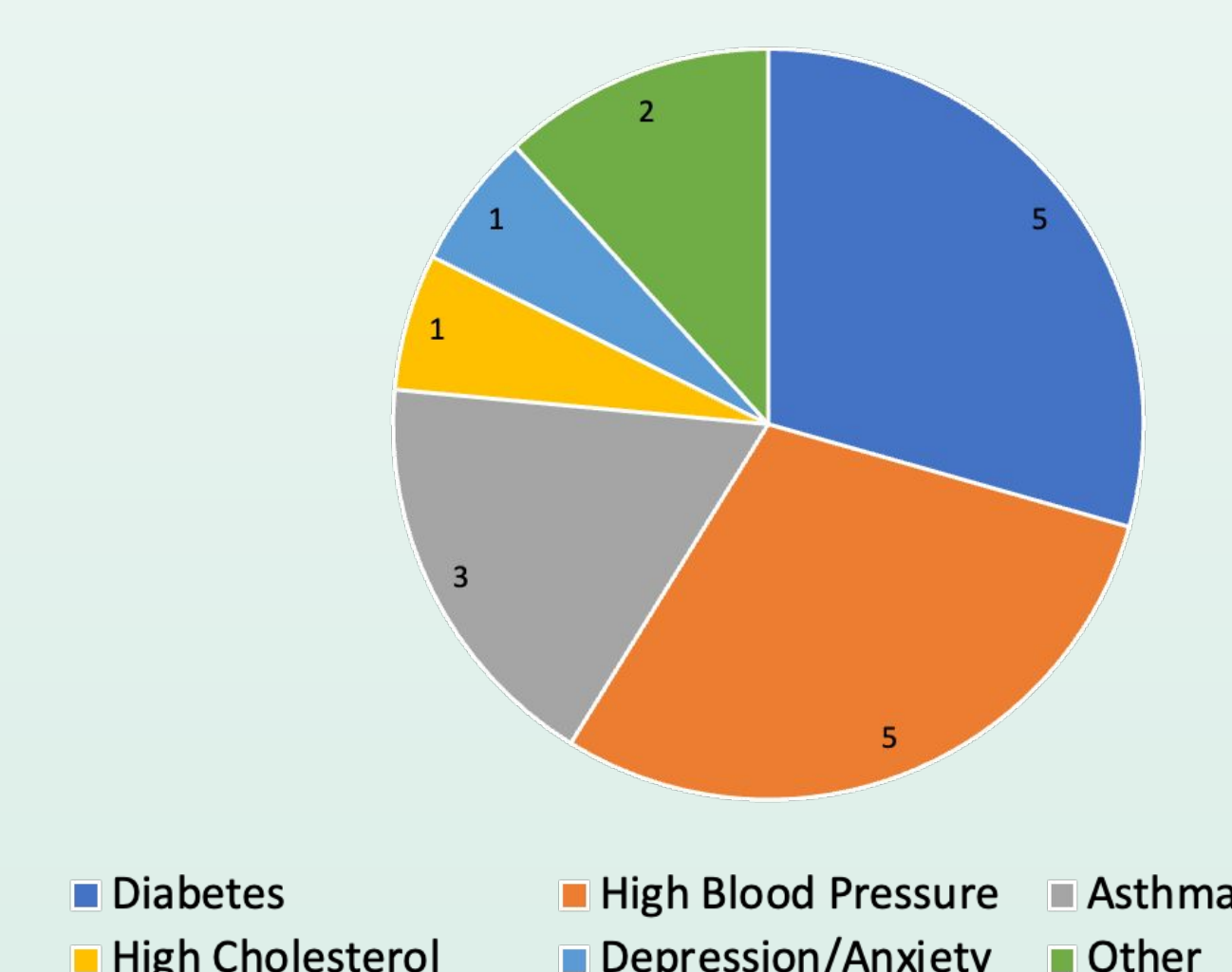


Figure 4. Patient self-reported medical conditions

Table 1

All 19 respondents (100%) claimed residence in Southwest Detroit.
16 (84%) identified as Hispanic/Latinx, and 15 (79%) selected Spanish as their preferred language.
18 (72%) reported lack of medical insurance, while 13 (67%) lacked a primary care physician.
7 (50%) expressed a prior inability to afford medication, while 7 (50%) did not express a prior inability to afford medication.
10 (67%) expressed difficulty buying food during the past 12 months, while 5 (33%) were food stable.
6 (40%) respondents stated they had heard of the Amigos Medicos Clinic.
Flyers and friends/family (word of mouth) were the most common ways (4 respondents each) of hearing about the health fair.

## Conclusion

This initial survey supports our hypotheses regarding Latinx health characteristics and access to healthcare in Metro Detroit. The responses provided illuminate specific barriers to care that the Amigos Medicos Clinic can work to address with the use of a DMC Foundation grant received by the Clinic.

The Latinx community is among the fastest-growing ethnic groups in the nation<sup>3,4</sup>. Spanish-speaking student volunteers offer a considerable impact on the Latinx population of Southwest Detroit by improving patient communication crucial for obtaining accurate medical history, enhancing trust between patients and health professionals, and addressing health disparities.

The Amigos Medicos Clinic provides an opportunity for medical students to engage with the Latinx community, develop their fluency in medical Spanish, and lay groundwork to care for Latinx patients in their future practices. Through the 2023 Health Fair and other outreach initiatives, we estimate that we have already doubled the number of patients seen at our Clinic as compared to all of 2022. For continued growth, the Clinic must ensure sustainability through funding and continued feedback from patients.

## Intervention and Plan

Survey responses have helped define the current goals of our Clinic. Through the use of a DMCF grant, we plan to address the specific needs identified by our patients. This plan includes:

- 1.) Implementation of a medication subsidization program aimed at alleviating the financial burden of widely used diabetic and hypertension medications among our patient population.
- 2.) Purchase of exam room equipment (exam table, otoscope, etc.) to further patient care.
- 3.) Acquire phlebotomy equipment necessary to treat the most reported medical conditions by our patients.
- 4.) Purchasing of chromebooks to streamline use of preferred language resources.

To follow-up on the success of our implementation process we plan to:

- Re-administer the survey in subsequent years to identify improvements made to the Amigos Medicos Clinic and continued work to be done.
- Track purchases for clinic, ensuring appropriate use of the DMC Foundation grant
- Continue to shape the Amigos Medicos Clinic goals around addressing the top reported medical conditions by our patients and patient preferences.

## References and Disclosures

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\*The authors of this work have no conflicts of interest to report. For more information email: [Imawsusom@gmail.com](mailto:Imawsusom@gmail.com)