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Farmworkers and Disability: Preliminary Findings of a National Survey

Presented at:

Sixth Annual Midwest Farmworker Stream Forum

El Paso, Texas
November 15-17, 1996

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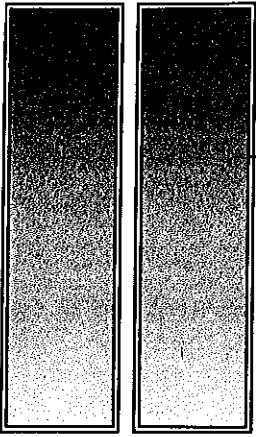
In this session, we present some preliminary findings from a national survey of farmworkers with disabilities conducted in six states as part of a larger study entitled *Rehabilitation of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers with Disabilities*, funded by the National Institute for Disability and Rehabilitation Research, U.S. Department of Education, Grant #H133A40039. For further information about this study, please contact Marlene F. Strong, Project Director, at the address below, or e-mail her at: marlene@bpacal.com.

ACC No: 5457 VF HEDIS.B
Farmworkers and Disability: Preliminary Findings of a
National Survey
Berkeley Planning Associates



Overview of Study

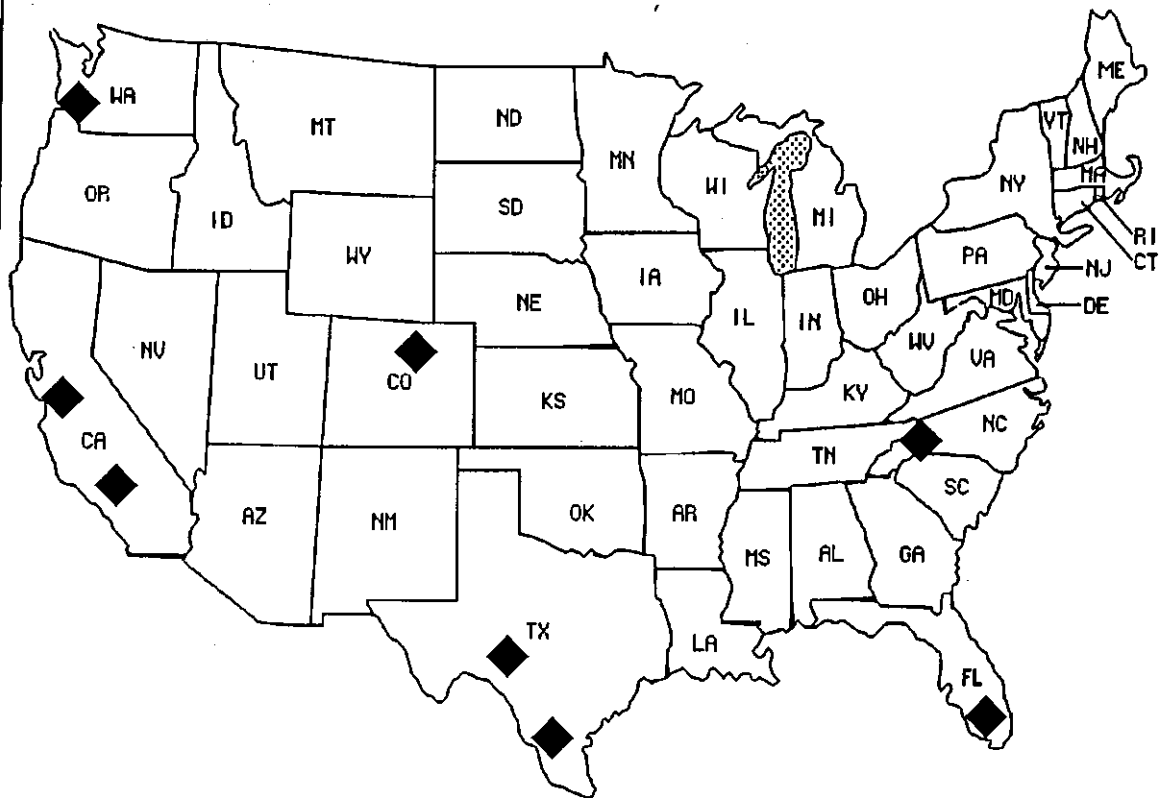
- WHAT:** A study of disabilities among farmworkers and farmworker children
- WHEN:** October 1994 - September 1997
- WHO:** Berkeley Planning Associates
National Center for Farmworker Health
various Migrant Health Centers and interviewers
- FUNDING:** National Institute for Disability and Rehabilitation Research, U.S.
Department of Education
- WHY:** Because so little information exists about disability among farmworkers
- GOAL:** To improve services for disabled farmworkers, so they can find new work or return to farmwork



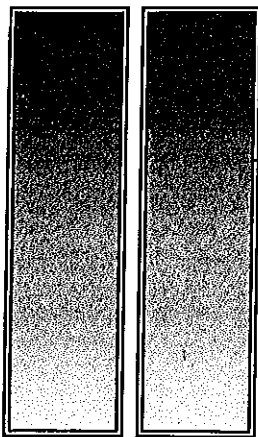
What is Disability?

- ❖ Functional, not categorical definition.
- ❖ Disability is ***being unable to perform regular activities.***
 - For adults, a change in the type or amount of farmwork.
 - For children, unable to do things other children can do, such as play, walk, talk, or go to a regular school.
- ❖ Disability may be caused by a chronic health condition (especially one that gets progressively worse) or an unchanging condition.
- ❖ This was ***not*** a survey of disabilities caused by farmwork. We were interested in congenital disabilities and disabilities caused by chronic health conditions or accidents/injuries not related to farmwork.
- ❖ Something that disables a farmworker (someone who usually does heavy physical labor) might not disable a clerical worker.

Survey Process



	TOTAL	ADULTS	CHILDREN
TOTAL	271	204 (75%)	67 (25%)
UPSTREAM	81 (30%)	56 (28%)	25 (37%)
HOMEBASE	190 (70%)	148 (73%)	42 (63%)
WESTERN	78 (29%)	60 (30%)	18 (27%)
MIDWESTERN	93 (34%)	76 (37%)	17 (25%)
EASTERN	100 (37%)	68 (33%)	32 (48%)



Survey Process

CONTINUED

- ❖ Three instruments developed:

Screening Survey

- Is disabled (changed work, or can't do home/school activities)
- Has done farmwork within 5 years (or is a child in a farmworker family)

Adult Survey

- Age 18-55

Child Survey

- Age 0-17

- ❖ Interviewer training was conducted January 16-17, 1996, in Denver.
- ❖ Interviewers conducted the survey during February - September 1996.
- ❖ Survey took about 45 minutes to complete; respondents were given a \$10 money order for their time.
- ❖ Not a random sample. Snowball sample starting with health center clients and persons known to other service providers.



Characteristics of Respondents

	ADULTS (n = 204)	CHILDREN (n = 67)
Latino	100%	100%
Female	38%	46%
Male	62%	54%
Average age	39 years	8 years
Currently doing farmwork	60%	NA
Average age began doing farmwork	18 years	NA
Born in US	23%	73%
Born in Mexico	74%	25%
Born elsewhere	4%	2%
Highest grade completed	6th	NA
Primary language is Spanish	91%	86%
Speaks English poorly or not at all	58%	57%
Household income under \$15,000/year	85%	91%
Non-U.S. Citizen	66%	26%
Had work authorization	78%	NA



Health and Disability

	Adults (n=204)	Children (n=67)
Self-rated physical health		
Poor	47%	27%
Fair	45%	46%
Good	8%	25%
Very Good	0%	2%
Self-rated mental health		
Poor	25%	27%
Fair	39%	46%
Good	31%	27%
Very Good	5%	0%
Self-rated overall health		
Poor	28%	27%
Fair	59%	60%
Good	11%	13%
Very Good	2%	0%
Age of onset of primary disability	32 years	2.3 years
Expects disability to continue for one year	87%	78%
Believes the disability is a result of farmwork	66%	NA
Disability caused reduction in amount of farmwork	90%	NA
Disability caused change in type of farmwork	71%	NA



Disability Conditions: Adults

	Primary Disability (Adult Farmworkers in BPA Survey)	Main Cause of Work Limitation* (US Adults, Aged 18-69)
Back condition	22.5%	16.4%
Other musculoskeletal	12.7	8.6
Other physical	9.3	NA
Diabetes	8.3	3.3
Visual impairment	8.3	2.5
Neurological disorder	7.4	5.4
Psychological disorder	5.9	4.9
Arthritis	4.9	8.3
Respiratory disorder	4.9	5.6
Kidney disorder	3.4	1.4
Hypertension	3.4	2.3
Chronic pain	3.4	0.6
Heart disease	2.9	12.1
Hearing impairment	1.5	1.1
Endocrine disorder	0.5	0.8
Mental retardation	0.5	2.4

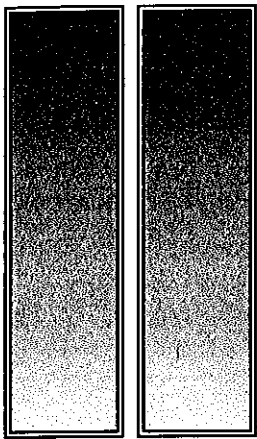
*Source: LaPlante, M. and Carlson, D. (1996). *Disability in the United States: Prevalence and Causes, 1992. Disability Statistics Report (7)*. Washington, DC: US Department of Education, National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research.



Disability Conditions: Children

	Primary Disability (Children in BPA Survey)	Main Cause of Activity Limitation* (US Children, Under Age 18)
Other physical	19.4%	NA
Developmental delays	17.9	17.5
Neurological disorder	10.4	3.6
Respiratory disorder	10.4	25.7
Musculoskeletal	7.5	NA
Hearing impairment	7.5	3.1
Cognitive disorder	4.5	NA
Endocrine disorder	4.5	1.5
Heart disorder	4.5	1.2
Visual impairment	3.0	1.1
Psychological disorder	3.0	9.5
Speech/language	3.0	6.4
Kidney disorder	1.5	0.7
Arthritis	1.5	0.2
Chronic health problem	1.5	NA

**Source: LaPlante, M. and Carlson, D. (1996). Disability in the United States: Prevalence and Causes, 1992. Disability Statistics Report (7). Washington, DC: US Department of Education, National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research.*



Functional Limitations: Amount of Assistance Needed in the Following Areas

	Adults		Children Over Age 5	
Bathing, grooming, and other self-care	27% 4%	A Little A Lot	30% 35%	A Little A Lot
Communicating with and understanding others	21% 8%	A Little A Lot	16% 42%	A Little A Lot
Acquiring new skills, learning new things	34% 13%	A Little A Lot	29% 38%	A Little A Lot
Moving from room to room	19% 3%	A Little A Lot	36% 17%	A Little A Lot
Managing one's life, making decisions	21% 5%	A Little A Lot	21% 55%	A Little A Lot
Living on one's own*	28% 14%	A Little A Lot	21% 62%	A Little A Lot
Maintaining a source of income*	35% 40%	A Little A Lot	23% 60%	A Little A Lot

**On the child survey, parents were asked to project how much assistance their children would need in the future with these items.*



Service Utilization: Most Recognized Services (in order of recognition)

	Adults	Children's Families
Migrant/Community Health Center	90%	99%
Food Stamps	87%	94%
Medicaid	85%	96%
WIC	79%	96%
Unemployment Insurance	78%	68%
SSI/SSDI	71%	76%
Alcohol/Drug Treatment	71%	70%
AFDC	69%	70%
Special Education	NA	71%



Service Utilization: Least Recognized Services

	Adults	Children's Families
Vocational Rehabilitation	32%	28%
JTPA	36%	39%
Developmental Disabilities Services	49%	38%
Veteran's Benefits	51%	37%
Mental Health Services	56%	42%
GED	57%	52%
Workers' Compensation	59%	40%
Food Bank	62%	65%



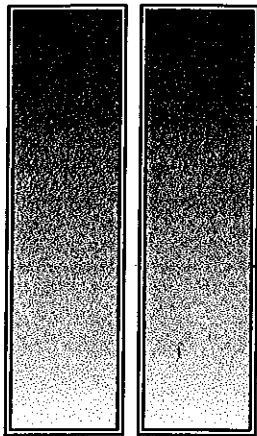
Service Utilization: Most Received Services

	Adults	Children's Families
Migrant/Community Health Center	69%	82%
Food Stamps	54%	66%
Medicaid	49%	78%
WIC	33%	72%
Unemployment Compensation	28%	9%
AFDC	21%	25%
Food Bank	21%	18%
SSI/SSDI	17%	48%
Special Education	NA	43%



Service Utilization: Least Received Services

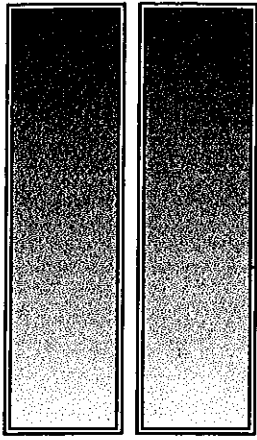
	Adults	Children's Families
Vocational Rehabilitation	1%	2%
Developmental Disabilities Services	2%	18%
Veteran's Benefits	2%	0%
JTPA	4%	9%
Alcohol/Drug Treatment	4%	2%
Mental Health Services	7%	6%
Workers' Compensation	9%	0%
GED	9%	13%



Vocational Rehabilitation

❖ What Is It?

- ▶ An agency that provides employment-related services for adults and youth (aged 14 and older in special education) with disabilities.
- ▶ The agency may have a different name in your state, like the Rehabilitation Commission or the Department of Rehabilitation. Sometimes it is a division within the social services or human services department. In some states, there is a separate agency that serves people with visual impairments. In other states, one agency serves people with all kinds of disabilities.
- ▶ Within states, the VR system generally has district offices. The size of a district can vary tremendously from state to state. Districts may have several offices where services are delivered.
- ▶ You should be able to find the vocational rehabilitation agency in the government pages of the phone book. If you can't find it, you can call the National Rehabilitation Information Center (1-800-346-2742) and ask for information about your state.

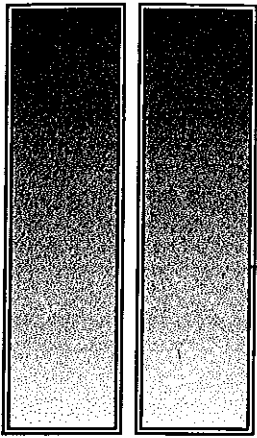


Vocational Rehabilitation

❖ Who Is Eligible?

There are two basic requirements for this service:

- (1) you must have a disability that creates a substantial impediment to employment; and
 - (2) you must require the service to prepare for, enter, engage in, or retain employment that meets your ability level.
- ▶ A counselor determines your eligibility.
 - ▶ In many states, there is more demand for the service than funds available, and states must serve those with the most severe disabilities before those with less severe disabilities.
 - ▶ Farmworkers who have substantial work experience and a moderate disability may be denied services, on the assumption that they could be served by other systems (such as the Employment Service or JTPA).

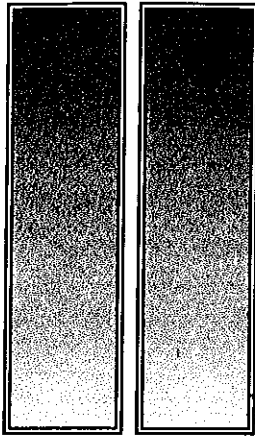


Vocational Rehabilitation

❖ What Services Are Available?

You work with a VR counselor to develop an individualized plan to achieve employment. The kinds of services that may be included in the plan are:

- ▶ assessment for new kinds of work;
- ▶ medical disability assessment;
- ▶ medical or surgical services;
- ▶ equipment or adaptive devices;
- ▶ training services;
- ▶ help with returning to farmwork or finding new work.



Special VR Projects for Migrants in Eight States

California

Montana

Colorado

New Mexico

Florida

Texas

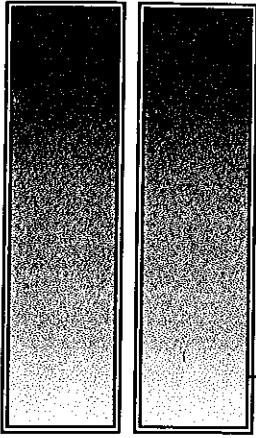
Minnesota

Utah



Making Friends With Your Local VR Program

- ❖ Let them know you see persons who have disabilities and chronic health conditions who need help finding new work.
- ❖ Ask about bilingual staff.
- ❖ Ask about waiting lists or special requirements for entry.
- ❖ If you have a high-volume clinic in an isolated area, ask about the possibility of outstationing a counselor in your clinic once a month or so to do intake interviews.



Next Steps - Develop Dissemination Materials

- ❖ **Journal articles for researchers**

- ❖ **Materials for vocational rehabilitation counselors about working with farmworkers**

- ❖ **Materials for service providers who work with farmworkers (e.g., Migrant Health Center staff) about services for farmworkers with disabilities**