As naturally communal people, we depend on each other to survive. COVID-19 has challenged us all to ask the question, “how do we count on each other without risking our safety and the safety of our loved ones?”. We love our families, but we want us all to live. We NEED to live. The only way to ensure this happens is by stopping the spread of COVID-19. As members of the Hispanic or Latinx community, we have seen how the past epidemics have affected our communities at higher rates. As a community, we are dealing with racism, economic inequality, barriers to adequate health care, and barriers to educational resources. We know COVID-19 did not create the health disparities that currently exist, but the spread of COVID-19 has made and will continue to make challenges worse. As we near the year mark of COVID-19, we reflect and honor the community members we lost while recognizing the COVID-19 misconceptions we must fight against to keep us healthy and well.

**DEBUNKING MYTHS**
**COVID-19 & HISPANIC LATINX COMMUNITIES**

As naturally communal people, we depend on each other to survive. COVID-19 has challenged us all to ask the question, “how do we count on each other without risking our safety and the safety of our loved ones?”. We love our families, but we want us all to live. The only way to ensure this happens is by stopping the spread of COVID-19. As members of the Hispanic or Latinx community, we have seen how the past epidemics have affected our communities at higher rates. As a community, we are dealing with racism, economic inequality, barriers to adequate health care, and barriers to educational resources. We know COVID-19 did not create the health disparities that currently exist, but the spread of COVID-19 has made and will continue to make challenges worse. As we near the year mark of COVID-19, we reflect and honor the community members we lost while recognizing the COVID-19 misconceptions we must fight against to keep us healthy and well.

**MYTH:** Social security and immigration status are needed for COVID-19 testing.

**FACT:** Going to get tested has nothing to do with immigration; they will not ask any of those questions. Undocumented immigrants can get tested, and health officials will not ask about their immigration status. ¹

Denver Public Health offers free COVID-19 testing at various community locations in Denver. Testing is provided to anyone regardless of insurance or immigration status, and no appointment or pre-registration required.

**MYTH:** If I get tested at a hospital or clinic, I may get COVID-19 there.

**FACT:** At the start of the pandemic, you might have worried that going to see your doctor meant you’d be at risk of getting infected. Hospitals are safer than your average grocery store or restaurant. There are strong safety actions taken in the hospitals and clinics. Healthcare workers practice the highest safety measures; you could actually be safer there. ²

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ADVICE FROM JUAN!

“\[\text{The one thing I would say is to monitor your symptoms. If you feel any of the symptoms, go and get tested and/or call a healthcare provider. I would also say that just because you’ve tested negative doesn’t mean that you should go out and assume you’re negative and not asymptomatic. Take all the same you would if you tested positive, especially if you have siblings or loved ones or anybody with pre-existing conditions. It’s important to navigate this space carefully. Take advantage of the resources that are available in your area.}^{3}\]

Visit: https://www.denverpublichealth.org/clinics-services/infectious-disease-clinic/coronavirus-disease-2019/covid19-testing or call 303-389-1687 or 1-877-462-2911 for more information and to find a testing location near you!

\[\text{MYTH: I live in a multi-generational home, there’s no need to take safety measures.}\]

\[\text{FACT: Multi-generational households have special needs for COVID-19. We have to take extra precautions to make sure our family members stay alive.}\]

\[\text{GENERAL GUIDELINES}^{3}\]

- Stay at least 6 feet away from other people living in the house who are at higher risk of getting infected than others if they get COVID-19. Older adults and people who have other health problems are at higher risk.

- Have supplies ready in case someone gets sick, such as a thermometer, masks, sanitizing wipes, tissues, soap, hand sanitizer, medications, and emergency contact information for children.

If you need to share a bedroom with someone who is infected:

The infected person should clean and disinfect the commonly touched surfaces after use. If that is not possible, then the person cleaning should:

- Open the outside door and windows and turn on the bathroom vent fan if you have one.
- Ensure safe storage of disinfectants, including storing cleaning products securely away from children.

\[\text{3} \text{Staying Safe in Multigenerational Households. End Stage Renal Disease National Coordinating Center, 2020, esrdncc.org/globalassets/covid-19/stayingsafemultigen508.pdf.}\]
Maggie Gómez is the Deputy Director of the Center for Health Progress, a non-profit that leads statewide organizing campaigns and public policy strategy to fight for health justice. Maggie has spent the last 15 years dedicating her energies to civic engagement and grassroots community organizing with women and communities of color to build deep power for collective liberation and action.

STATE YOUR DEMANDS
HOW TO ADVOCATE FOR YOURSELF IN THIS TIME!

QUESTION & ANSWER!

QUESTION: How can we find empowerment during this time?

ANSWER: Relevant and accurate information via channels people are already on (and feel good about/ confident in/ trust) and are already using in order to make the best decisions for themselves and their families. Tools and supplies to protect themselves including but not limited to PPE, direct financial support, paid time away from work to care for yourself if you or a family member is sick, feeling safe and protected at work, and connections to other people and organizations who they (can) trust.

QUESTION: What are the key questions we can ask if we feel like we're not being heard by doctors?

ANSWER:

- What can I do if I get a bill from the doctor for COVID-19 testing and or treatment?
- I don't have insurance because I am undocumented, what can I do and where can I go to see a doctor?
- Will getting a COVID-19 test or medical treatment impact my ability or my family's ability to get a green card or to stay together?

QUESTION: What advice do you have for us in regard to navigating COVID-19?

ANSWER: Don't delay seeking medical care for yourself or your family if you think you might be sick. There are programs and people who are here to help you and keep you healthy. Navigating the healthcare system is hard for everyone, please ask questions and get the support you and your family deserve. It's ok to advocate for yourself to your doctor, your employer, and ask for what you need to stay safe, you have rights too! You are not a burden, your life is important and you deserve to be healthy and safe. You might be feeling extra stress right now, and you're not 'crazy'. It's OK to seek mental health support for yourself so you can be healthy and take care of yourself and others who may depend on you. Seeking help for your mental health does not make you 'weak', 'crazy', 'lazy', or 'dramatic'. These are really hard times and we're all feeling the added pressure.

QUESTION: What are some trusted COVID-19 community resources we should keep on our radar?

ANSWER:

- Your local federally qualified health clinic
- Your local public health department
- Your doctor or health care provider (if you have one)
- The Left Behind Workers Fund
- The DOLA
- Rental Assistance Fund
- 211 (folks who also speak English may have a better experience)
Even with a negative test result, we still have a duty to protect ourselves and those we love. Wear a mask. Social distance at least 6 feet from anyone you don't live with, wash your hands often, and clean and disinfect touched surfaces daily. Avoid large gatherings, unnecessary travel, and use extreme caution even in small gatherings.

Small gatherings are not “safe,” either— you can get the virus during a small gathering as you can at a large one. It’s best to use face masks and social distancing with anyone you don’t live with.  

What if someone in the house gets infected with COVID-19?

Just like for any emergency, it is crucial to have a plan in place if someone in your home gets COVID-19.

**BASICS TO GET STARTED:**

- Have the infected person wear a face mask at all times
- When possible, the infected person should use a separate bathroom.
- Avoid visitors.

**If you need to share a bedroom with someone who is infected:**

- Open a window, if possible.
- Maintain at least 6 feet between beds, if possible. If this is not possible, sleep head-to-toe.
- Put up a curtain around or place a quilt or large bedspread to separate the sick person’s bed.