Wage Theft and Health Care Access among Warehouse Workers in Southern California

Currently, more than 40% of consumer goods arriving at the Long Beach Harbor-Port of Los Angeles – which accounts for approximately 25% of the United States’ maritime trade– flow through 800 million square feet of warehouses and distribution centers in the region. About half the 114,000 logistics workers (many of whom are warehouse workers) in the region are immigrants, while 80% are Latino/a, and about 40% are women.

Investigators collaborated with Warehouse Workers Resource Center, (WWRC) researchers at UCR, UCI, and UCLA on this research project, a central component of which is a survey of Southern California warehouse workers intended to assess their socioeconomic situation, with an emphasis on their health care access and needs. The survey was designed to find out how well predominantly blue-collar warehouse jobs provide a living wage and middle class benefits, include health care insurance. The project's research findings highlight the need to improve the quality of warehouse jobs in order to improve access to medical services for this primarily immigrant work force.

During Winter 2014, findings from the health care survey and focus group were also released through a Center for Sustainable Suburban Development working paper titled “Health Care Needs and Access Among Warehouse Workers in Southern California”, available at http://www.cssd.ucr.edu/Papers/PDFs/Health_Care_Needs_Working_Paper.pdf

In fall 2013 and spring 2014, student interns from UCI’s Law School held legal clinics for the WWRC, helping warehouse workers to prepare administrative and legal claims regarding wage theft and other labor law violations.

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