



# **A Blueprint for Change: How Federal Policy is Affecting the Health of Individuals and Communities**

**Garth N. Graham, MD, MPH**  
**Deputy Assistant Secretary for Minority  
Health**





# Outline for this Presentation

- **Office of Minority Health (OMH)**
- **National Partnership for Action to End Health Disparity (NPA)**
- **The HHS Action Plan to Reduce Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities**
- **Cultural and Linguistic Competency**
- **Behavioral Health**





# Office of Minority Health

## *Mission*

**Improve the health of racial and ethnic minority populations through the development of health policies and programs that will help eliminate health disparities**





# Office of Minority Health

- **Federal focal point for addressing health status and quality of life for racial/ethnic minorities**
- **Advises HHS Secretary and Assistant Secretary for Health on policies and programs**
- **Works with Federal, state, tribal, and local governments; community and faith-based organizations; academia; private sector; etc.**
- **Funds demonstration programs**
- **Reauthorized by the Affordable Care Act**





# Health disparities carry a steep cost



**\$1.24  
TRILLION**

**Estimated combined costs of  
health inequalities and  
premature death in the U.S.  
between 2003-2006**

Source: LaViest, T.A, Gaskin, D.J., and Richard, P. *The Economic Burden of Health Inequalities in the United States*. Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, September 2009.



# Health Disparity Definition

**A health disparity** is a particular type of health difference that is closely linked with social, economic, and/or environmental disadvantage. Health disparities adversely affect groups of people who have systematically experienced greater obstacles to health based on their racial or ethnic group; religion; socioeconomic status; gender; age; mental health; cognitive, sensory, or physical disability; sexual orientation or gender identity; geographic location; or other characteristics historically linked to discrimination or exclusion.

Source: Healthy People 2020





# National Health Equity Definition

**Health equity** is attainment of the highest level of health for all people. Achieving health equity requires valuing everyone equally with focused and ongoing societal efforts to address avoidable inequalities, historical and contemporary injustices, and the elimination of health and healthcare disparities

Source: Healthy People 2020





# NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP FOR ACTION

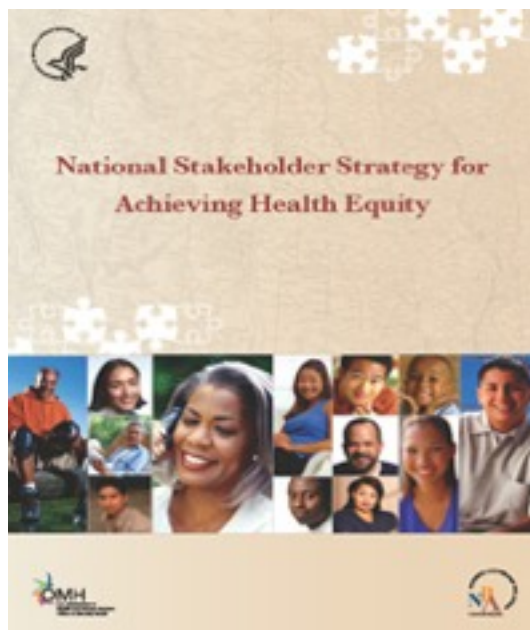
to End Health Disparities

*Together we can. Together we will.*

- **Purpose: Mobilize public-private sector action to end health disparities**
- **Components: National Stakeholder Strategy, Regional and Issue Focused Blueprints, Health Equity Councils, Initiatives/Campaigns**



# National Launch of NPA - 4/8/11



**Community Driven By  
5,000 People**



**U.S. Department of  
Health and Human  
Services Response**



## NPA Goals

- **Increase awareness of the significance of disparities and actions needed to end health disparities**
- **Strengthen and broaden leadership**
- **Improve health system and life experience**
- **Improve cultural and linguistic competency and diversity of the health workforce**
- **Improve data availability, coordination, use, and diffusion of research and evaluation**





# NPA Strategies

- Stimulates a comprehensive, community-driven approach to achieving health equity through collaborations
- Provides 5 goals and 20 strategies to be used in partnerships, coalitions, and targeted initiatives
- Incorporates ideas and comments from individuals and organizations through focused stakeholder meetings and public comment period
- Stakeholders can identify which goals are most important for their communities, and incorporate their practice to develop effective strategies and actions





# Federal Interagency Health Equity Team

- **Agriculture**
- **Commerce**
- **Consumer Product Safety Commission**
- **Defense**
- **Education**
- **Environmental Protection Agency**
- **Health and Human Services**
- **Housing and Urban Development**
- **Justice**
- **Labor**
- **Transportation**
- **Veterans Affairs**





# HHS Action Plan to Reduce Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities

- Builds on the Affordable Care Act
- First ever HHS Action Plan to reduce health disparities that is operational across HHS immediately
- Complements to the National Stakeholder Strategy
- Embodies the core of the NPA – working together to more effectively targeting ending health disparities
- Leverages and aligns resources and actions in support of HHS Strategic Plan for 2010-2015
- Action monitored and strategies reevaluated on a biannual basis; progress reported annually





# HHS Action Plan to Reduce Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities

- **Transform health care**
- **Strengthen the nation's HHS infrastructure and workforce**
- **Advance the health, safety, and well-being of the American people**
- **Advance scientific knowledge and innovation**
- **Increase the efficiency, transparency, and accountability of HHS programs**





## **Example:**

# **The OMH Center for Linguistic and Cultural Competence in Health Care**

**Mandated by Congress to address language barriers of Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals**

**Develop and evaluate projects to increase language access for racially and ethnically diverse populations**





# Health Care Reform Act and Cultural Competency Components

- **Provide culturally and linguistically appropriate information through Exchanges**
- **Develop and evaluate cultural competency training**
- **Disseminate cultural competency curricula through online clearinghouse**
- **Support primary care training in cultural competence and health literacy**





Think Cultural Health offers a suite of continuing education programs and resource clearinghouse promoting culturally and linguistically appropriate services:

[www.thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov](http://www.thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov)

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Think Cultural Health website. At the top, it features the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services logo and the Office of Minority Health branding. The main header includes the site's mission: "Think Cultural Health: Bridging the Health Care Gap through Cultural Competency Continuing Education Programs". A navigation bar contains links for Home, Who can earn CE credits?, Contact Us, and Small Group Instruction. The left sidebar lists various resources such as CLCCHC Login, About Our Programs (including a physician's guide, nursing care guide, disaster curriculum, and language services guide), and Resources and Materials (including What's New, Cultural Competency Information, CLAS Standards, Legislation and Policy Information, and Accreditation Information). The main content area features a "Welcome to Think Cultural Health" message, a "Join the CLCCHC" call to action with a "Click here to learn more" link, and a survey prompt: "Have you requested a Nursing Facilitator's Kit? Tell us what you think!". Below this, a paragraph discusses the importance of cultural competence in addressing racial and ethnic disparities in health care. A "Providers can take the first step" section highlights the benefits of cultural awareness for improving health care services. At the bottom, it notes that the site is sponsored by OMH Resources and offers free access to various tools and resources. The right sidebar contains several promotional boxes for "Join the CLCCHC", "Physicians & Physician Assistants", "Nurses", "Disaster Preparedness and Crisis Response", and "Language Services Guide", each with a "Click here" link.





# Example:

## Goals for Behavioral Health

- **Develop and promote policies, programs, and practices to eliminate BH health disparities and achieve overall health equity**
- **Promote and strengthen development of a multidisciplinary BH workforce and leadership**
- **Infuse cultural and linguistic competency**
- **Establish and strengthen networks, coalitions and partnerships to identify and eliminate BH disparities**
- **Fund innovation, initiatives and demonstrations projects that can inform policies and practices for improving behavioral and overall health**





**Together we can.  
Together we will.**  
*End Health Disparities!*

**[www.minorityhealth.hhs.gov](http://www.minorityhealth.hhs.gov)**

**1 855 JOIN NPA**

