

National Center for Minority Health and Health Disparities

America values its diversity and has an ever increasing minority and ethnic population. But it is also the platform for an increasing disparity in the health status. The National Center for Minority Health and Health Disparities is a branch of the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland. This office strives to 'envision an America in which all populations will have an equal opportunity to live long, health and productive lives'. (http://www.ncmhd.nih.gov/about_ncmhd/mission.asp) The website for this organization is located at <http://www.ncmhd.nih.gov>. The mission of this organization is stated on the mission page as 'to promote minority health and to lead, coordinate, support and assess the NIH effort to reduce and ultimately eliminate health disparities. In this effort NCMHD will conduct and support basic, clinical, social, and behavioural research, promote research infrastructure and training, foster emerging programs, disseminate information, and reach out to minority and other health disparity communities'.

The home page is divided into several sections. The first box on the left of the page houses information from the director of the centre as well as a mission and visions page, a history page and a section that describes its advisory council and its role. Minutes for meetings, a strategic plan and congressional testimonies are just a few items included in this section.

The second box on the left of the home page houses the programmes that are sponsored by the NCMHD. Despite improvements in research and healthcare advancements, minority populations still show a large increase in health disparities. One of the roles of the NIH is to 'uncover new knowledge that will lead to better health for everyone'. The programmes supported by the NCMHD help to address that effort. The programmes listed on the home page include: (i) Centers of Excellence – which conducts research on health disparities in several areas such as cancer, cardiovascular disease, stroke, diabetes, nutrition, obesity and maternal and child health; (ii) Research Endowment Program – helps to promote awards to institutions which promote the education of under-represented minorities and socio-economically disadvantaged individuals; (iii) Loan Repayment Program – helps to promote

research careers of young scientists in underserved populations; (iv) Community based Participatory Research – awards scientists and communities in health disparity research; (v) Minority Health and Health Disparities International Research Training – supports young scientists conducting research abroad; (vi) Research Infrastructure in Minority Institutions – helps to support research in eligible institutions and (7) Small Business Innovation Research/Small Business Technology Transfer – provides grants to small businesses and to partnership between small businesses and non-profit research institutions in order to foster technology which aids in the ability for the community to achieve health equity through health education and disease prevention.

The third box on the left of the home page includes news and events for the NCMHD. It provides clickable links to conference information, congressional testimonies and press releases. The centre of the home page contains information on the NIH Summit on Health Disparities. It includes highlights of the summit and registration information. The home page also highlights one programme to describe in detail and provides useful health disparity facts that can be clicked on in order to investigate further.

This website provides valuable information about health disparities facing the United States. It helps to draw attention to the needs of the nation and show how we can address some of the disparities through governmental effort mostly through the institutional level. This information can be invaluable for any organization or institution seeking to help in the promotion of minority health and bridging the gap in health disparities.

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