Serving the Underserved: Finding Solutions to Eliminate Health Disparities

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Demographics of California

- By 2050, racial/ethnic minorities will account for nearly 50% of the total U.S. population.
- Today, almost 40% of Californians speak a language other than English at home.
- Major changes are underway in California’s population demographics.
- Disparities impacting minorities and people of color are significant and cannot be overlooked.
Strategies to Address Disparities

• There is an infinite array of cultures, races, and ethnicities represented throughout California.

• Six principal strategies are employed by various organizations to address disparities:
  - Institutional Leverage
  - Policy Advocacy
  - Research and Programs
  - Partnership/Coalition-Building
  - Information Dissemination
  - Community Engagement/Empowerment
Activities Targeting Culturally Diverse Groups

• Culturally competent information needs to be provided.

• Culturally and linguistically competent staff should be employed.

• Outreach activities can focus on reaching racial and ethnic minorities.

• Partnerships can be developed to reduce system fragmentation and increase program sustainability.
Health Care and Minorities

- Despite our tremendous diversity as a state and as a nation, financial and non-financial barriers continue to exist for low-income communities.

- Racial and ethnic health disparities are a persistent and growing problem and threaten our state’s health and prosperity.

- CCHC’s are working to erase the disparities that exist.
CPCA Background

• CPCA was founded in 1994 to create a unified, statewide voice for community clinics and health centers.

• CCHCs serve approximately 3.6 million low-income, ethnically diverse patients with over 50% of patients statewide being Latino, 21% White (not including Hispanics), 6% Black, 7% Asian/Pacific Islander, 2% Native American/Alaskan Native, and 10% Other/Unknown.
Community Clinic and Health Center (CCHC) Growth Statistics

- In 2006, CCHCs served nearly 4 million patients.

- From 1995 to 2005, the total number of clinics grew from 471 to 794 (almost 70%).

- During this same 10 year period, CCHCs delivered more than 11 million encounters to 3.6 million patients.
Addressing Challenges

- Despite spiraling costs, CCHCs continue to offer a cost-effective model for delivering primary and preventive care.
- CCHCs employ culturally competent practices often lacking in other health care settings.
- CCHCs excel in the treatment of chronic disease.
Finding Solutions to Eliminate Health Disparities

• Finding effective solutions to eliminating health disparities that exist today will require a multicultural approach and collaborative efforts.

• Health care organizations must change the way they deliver care if they are to eliminate health disparities and improve functional and clinical outcomes.
Overcoming Barriers (Strategies)

1) Institutional Leverage: Organizational commitment to address the health disparity issue, i.e. clinic mission statements
   - La Clinica de La Raza
   - AltaMed Health Services

2) Policy Advocacy: Research & analysis to provide recommendations
   - Clinic affiliation with the statewide association (CPCA)

3) Research & Programs: Efforts to address racial/ethnic disparities
   - Health Disparities Collaborative, e.g. La Clinica de La Raza
4) **Partnership/Coalition-Building**: Development of collaborative activities to help address the disparity issue  
   - CA Women’s Healthcare Partnership  
   - Oral Health Access Council  
   - Latino Health Alliance  

5) **Information Dissemination**: Reports, workshops, etc.  
   - AltaMed Health Council’s *Tomar Control* program  

6) **Community Engagement/Empowerment**: Interaction with community leadership, etc.  
   - Family HealthCare Network (Project Dulce)
The Future – What Does It Hold? Solutions?

• Overcome gaps in care through potential collaborative opportunities.

• Build referral networks to augment referrals.

• Involve communities and other organizations to target racial and ethnic health disparities.

• Adopt a prevention-oriented approach.
Conclusion

• In order to make a difference and begin overcoming racial and health disparities, we must better utilize our primary care providers and address the diversity of those served.

• The need is greater now than ever before as California continues to evolve as one of the most diverse places in the world.
CPCA’s mission is to strengthen its member community clinics and health centers and networks through advocacy, education, and services in order to improve the health status of their communities.