

UNDERSTANDING AND REDUCING DISPARITIES IN HEALTH: BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS

October 23-24, 2006
Bethesda, Maryland

HOME

AGENDA

REGISTRATION

LOGISTICS

CONTACT

UPDATE:
PRESENTATION AUDIO AND
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[CLICK HERE!](#)

NIH Conference on Understanding and

Reducing Disparities in Health:

Behavioral and Social Sciences

Research Contributions

October 23-24, 2006

NIH Campus

Natcher Conference Center

Bethesda, Maryland

The conference focuses on three broad areas of action influencing health disparities: **policy**, **prevention**, and **healthcare**. It emphasize both basic research on the behavioral, social, and biomedical pathways giving rise to disparities in health and applied research on the development, testing, and delivery of interventions to reduce disparities in these three action areas. The conference employs a multi-level analytic framework (i.e., ranging from individuals to societies). It includes research relevant to a wide range of population groups (e.g., variation by SES, race, ethnicity, gender) residing in the United States, while not attempting to provide detailed analyses of each and every group. Consideration is given to multiple public health issues and their interactions (e.g., multiple morbidities rather than single illnesses) and to risk factors or causal processes common to various health conditions (e.g., smoking, diet, exercise, access to health care).

For the purposes of this conference, we are defining these action areas as:

POLICY: The means employed by governments and other institutions to influence the function and well-being of individuals, groups, communities, and society as a whole.

PREVENTION: Interventions at the individual, group or community level to provide targeted audiences the knowledge and skills to avert or minimize health risks.

HEALTH CARE: The timely delivery of care and/or medical services by general or specialty providers to persons in need for the purpose of diagnosis, assessment, or treatment in order to improve or protect health status.

The goals of the conference are threefold:

1. To highlight and demonstrate the actual and potential contributions of behavioral and social sciences research to NIH's mission of reducing disparities in health through improving knowledge about the processes underlying the origin and maintenance of health disparities, and through improved interventions based on this knowledge.
2. To identify areas requiring increased conceptual, empirical, and methodological development (i.e., a trans-NIH research agenda in behavioral and social sciences research on health disparities).
3. To recruit additional researchers to investigating health disparities and to developing and implementing behavioral and social interventions to reduce disparities in health.

