Health Care Disparities: A Call to Action

Presentation to the Black Nurses Association

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What are health disparities?

Health disparities are differences in the incidence, prevalence, mortality, and burden of diseases and other adverse health conditions that exist among specific population groups in the United States.

----------National Institutes of Health
Age-adjusted death rates from heart disease, 2002

Per 100,000 resident population

- All Persons: 241
- White, not Hispanic: 239
- Black/AA: 308
- American Indian: 157
- Asian/Pacific Islander: 135
- Hispanic or Latino: 181

Health, United States, 2004
Age-adjusted death rates from HIV, 2002

Per 100,000 resident population

Health, United States, 2004
Age-adjusted death rates from cerebrovascular disease, 1997-2002

Per 100,000 resident population

- Black/AA male
- Hispanic/Latino male
- White male
- Black/AA female
- Hispanic/Latino female
- White female

Health, United States, 2004
Percent with untreated dental caries, by race/ethnicity

Health, United States, 2004
Examples of differential health service use across racial and ethnic groups

- Whites are 78 percent more likely to receive a revascularization procedure (Ayanian, et al 1993)

- For oral cancers, whites are more likely to receive surgery compared to blacks (Tomar et al, 2004)

- African-Americans are less likely than whites to be referred to a kidney transplant center for evaluation (Ayanian et al, 1999)
Reasons for differential use

- Limited availability of providers
- Provider bias/racism
- Patient preferences
- Lack of health insurance
Percent of Floridians under age 65 who are uninsured, 1999 and 2004

- 1999: 17%
- 2004: 19%

2004 Florida Health Insurance Study (FHIS)
Percent of Floridians under age 65 who are uninsured, 1999 and 2004

- Total: 17% (1999), 19% (2004)

2004 Florida Health Insurance Study (FHIS)
Why is health insurance important?

- Less likely to have a usual source of care
- Fewer office visits
- Delay in getting care
- Delay in getting needed prescription drugs
- Links to overall health
Percent under 65 with problems getting medical care, by health insurance status, Florida 2004

2004 Florida Health Insurance Study (FHIS)
Percent of uninsured adults by race/ethnicity and employment status, 2004

2004 Florida Health Insurance Study (FHIS)
Percent uninsured adult workers by race/ethnicity, and employment sector, 2004

- Government/Public Service:
  - Black: 10%
  - Hispanic: 16%
  - Other: 8%
  - White: 4%

- Private Industry:
  - Black: 25%
  - Hispanic: 31%
  - Other: 16%
  - White: 15%

- Self-Employed:
  - Black: 49%
  - Hispanic: 53%
  - Other: 36%
  - White: 26%

2004 Florida Health Insurance Study (FHIS)
Percent uninsured adult workers by race/ethnicity and firm size, 2004

- **Less than 25 Employees**
  - Black: 47%
  - Hispanic: 36%
  - Other: 26%
  - White: 28%

- **25-99 Employees**
  - Black: 38%
  - Hispanic: 20%
  - Other: 15%
  - White: 19%

- **100-499 Employees**
  - Black: 24%
  - Hispanic: 9%
  - Other: 11%
  - White: 9%

- **500 or more Employees**
  - Black: 5%
  - Hispanic: 6%
  - Other: 11%
  - White: 11%

2004 Florida Health Insurance Study (FHIS)
Health insurance matters to people

You either have to go homeless or go hungry to pay a hospital bill or pay for some medicine.

*Uninsured Person from Tampa*
Importance of public coverage

- Current enrollment in Medicaid 2.2 million people
- In 2002 Medicaid financed 44 percent of all births in Florida
- 10 percent of whites, 25 percent of blacks, 17 percent of Hispanics enrolled in Florida Medicaid 2002-2003

Kaiser Family Foundation, State Health Facts on Line
KATRINA!!!!
A framework for understanding the relationship between race and health

- Race
  - Biological factors
    - Cultural factors
    - Socioeconomic factors
    - Racism
    - Political factors
  - Health practices
    - Psychosocial stress
    - Environmental stress
    - Psychosocial resources
    - Medical care

- Adopted from King and Williams
Why do these disparities exist?

- Poverty
- Education
- Occupational Conditions
- Living Conditions
- Individual Health Behaviors
- Differential Use of Health Care Services
ROSA PARKS
Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

- Bars discrimination in health care and other services by entities that receive federal funds
- But some argue, the law doesn’t go far enough
  - Lack of detailed compliance instruction
  - Federal funds does not apply to individual physicians
A Call to Action

- Advocacy
- Inventive and creative solutions
  - Focus on the downstream causes of disparities
- Focus on access issues
  - Health insurance
  - Training of minority health professionals
  - Strengthening safety net institutions
  - Cultural competency
Final thoughts

Before the grace of God, it could be us and believe me child, I am one paycheck away from disaster. And people need to be treated with the respect they deserve regardless of whether they have insurance or a dime in their pocket or more money than God.

Uninsured Person from Panama City