

HEi Health Equity Initiative



HEI News

Quick Links



September/October, 2012

Our Mission

Health Equity Initiative (HEI) is a non-profit organization dedicated to building community, capacity and communication resources for health equity. Health Equity Initiative works to encourage community action and partnerships in support of health equity while building capacity of other organizations and establishing a research-based roadmap toward progress.

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Using Communication and Capacity Building Strategically to Roll Out the Health Equity Approach as Part of Community Development!

We live in a society that is very demanding on our professional time. Regardless of where we work (nonprofit, government, private or grantmaking sectors, multilateral organizations, academia, etc.) we are often too busy with our important work to look at obvious synergies and how the work we do could benefit of and/or benefit other causes.

For example, in talking about health equity the debate is too often centered only on access to and/or quality of healthcare services. Yet, "health equity" can be defined as providing every person with the same opportunity to stay healthy and/or effectively cope with disease or health-related emergencies - regardless of their race, gender, age, economic conditions, social status, environment, and other socially determined factors (social determinants of health). Based on this definition, it's clear that - although very important - the quality and availability of healthcare services alone won't be providing better chances for better health to disadvantaged groups.

Health disparities are linked to diverse factors that are likely to be community-specific, including socio-economic conditions, race, ethnicity and culture, as well as having access to health care services, a built environment that supports physical activity, neighborhoods with accessible and affordable nutritious food, well-designed housing that is sited to minimize community exposure to environmental and other

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health hazards, efficient transportation that enable vulnerable groups to connect with services and support systems, culturally appropriate health information that accurately reflects literacy levels, and caring and friendly clinical settings. Yet, too often these synergies go unexplored with great health and socio-economic impact on disadvantaged communities in the U.S and globally.

As for many other social issues and causes, we need to set the bar high and talk more about "health equity" within our families and communities in order to get people involved and mobilized around finding their own community-specific solutions to health disparities. Specific goals and objectives related to achieving health equity are likely to shift over time as key milestones are reached and hopefully relevant progress continues to be made within communities across the U.S. and globally. Think for example of the civil rights or climate change mitigation/environmental movements. While some progress has been made on both fronts, the asks and objectives of these two movements keep evolving as new issues and needs emerge. Yet, in the case of health equity there is not even sufficient awareness of health disparities (including among the groups that are most affected by them). Just as an example...over the past decade, awareness of health disparities has only modestly increased from 54.5 % to 59% while disparities have increased or stayed the same among most disadvantaged groups. This is not very different at the global and international levels, and may prevent people from getting involved and mobilizing across sectors to find, contribute, and implement community-specific solutions.

Our approach

Health Equity Initiative's programs and activities are inspired by our focus on the social determinants of health, and integrate the use of communication, new media, capacity building, research, and community engagement strategies to affect progress and outcome indicators. While our current programs and online resources may differ in their regional focus (U.S. versus global), overall we aim to:

- Raise awareness of health disparities as an essential step toward community participation and action
- Encourage and build capacity for intersectoral partnerships on health equity issues as an essential component of community development
- Raise the influence of community voices on health equity to help them identify and prioritize key steps and actions to be achieved toward health equity
- Encourage community action and establish progress indicators (both behavioral and social) that are developed by community members and/or recognized at community level
- Build the capacity of other organizations to increase their effectiveness in serving disadvantaged groups and developing sustainable interventions in a variety of settings
- Assess relevant social and political factors, organizational capacities and training needs, and models for community participation in patient care and/or policy development and implementation (in general, or a particular issue, in a particular place)

We invite you to explore our upcoming events and activities and get involved with our organization. Also, please do not forget to review and download some of our free resources including our fact sheet on [Why Health Equity Matters](#). If you are interested in sharpening your skills on conducting **Health Equity Audits (HEA)**; or assessing your organization and/or programs' outcomes also among disadvantaged groups, or the overall impact of your organization on health equity indicators via our **Health Equity Related Assessment (HERA)** tools

for organizational and program assessment, do not miss the last two online workshops in our Fall 2012 series on Nov. 29 and Dec. 4 to get jump started on these topics! Additional information within our *Upcoming Events* section below. In the meantime, enjoy the following sections of this issue of our e-newsletter.

- [Mobilizing for Health Equity: Building Task Forces for Infant Mortality Prevention, and Health Equity Exchange featured at the 2012 Science of Eliminating Health Disparities Summit](#)
- [Recent Events: HEI at conference on Prioritizing Health Disparities in Medical Education](#)
- [Upcoming Events: Brown Bag Talk, Fall Online Workshops, HEI at APHA, and HEI at 2012 Science of Eliminating Health Disparities Summit](#)
- [2012 Sponsorship and Other Grant-Making Opportunities!](#)
- [Welcome Fall Interns!](#)
- [Feature Media: Sports for Health Equity Video](#)
- [Feature Article: IOM Health Disparities Workshop Summary](#)
- [Feature Book: The Status Syndrome](#)
- [Sponsor's Corner: Thank you to Chamberlain PR](#)

On behalf of our board of directors, staff, volunteers, and interns, thanks again for following us! Your support and ideas mean a lot to HEI!

Renata

Renata Schiavo, PhD, MA
Founding President and CEO

Mobilizing for Health Equity

Building City-Specific Task Forces for Infant Mortality Prevention



Despite progress, infant mortality rates (IMR) continue to be a significant public health problem in the United States. The U.S. ranks 41st among 191 countries in infant mortality rates (WHO, 2011). IMR among non-Hispanic black infants is 2.4 times that for non-Hispanic white infants (US DHHS, 2011), with high rates also among other at-risk groups in different U.S. communities. In partnership with/with funds from the Office of Minority Health Resource Center (OMHRC), DHHS Office of Minority Health, Health Equity Initiative conceived and implemented a community-campus partnership development and capacity building pilot program in 4 U.S. Cities - Los Angeles, Nashville, Jacksonville, and Charlotte, where infant mortality rates are

still high among African Americans and other at-risk groups.

The project aims to integrate within local communities and broaden the efforts of the [OMHRC Preconception Peer Educator \(PPE\) Program](#), and to continue to involve local leaders and organizations from multiple sectors (nonprofit, public, private, community development, healthcare, etc.) in infant mortality



prevention programming. The program resulted in city-specific measures of collaboration for multi-sector partnerships for infant mortality prevention, and the development of tailored fundraising and evaluation tool kits as a result of participant feedback.

For more information on this effort, join us for the upcoming presentations at the [2012 American Public Health Association \(APHA\) annual meeting](#) and [2012 Summit on the Science to Eliminate Health Disparities](#).

Health Equity Exchange featured at the 2012 Science of Eliminating Health Disparities Summit

HEI's [Health Equity Exchange](#) will be featured via a poster presentation at the [2012 Science of Eliminating Health Disparities Summit](#) organized by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, under the leadership of the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The summit will be held October 31 - November 2, 2012 at National Harbor, Maryland.

The **Health Equity Exchange** provides a space where people throughout the US can speak specifically to two main issues: What health equity means to them, their families, peers and community, and what they believe should be the top priorities in their community to make progress towards health equity. Using an integrated multimedia communication and community engagement approach including an online forum, campus to community outreach, celebrity-sponsored messaging, and media-centered initiatives, the Exchange gives voice to those who are usually overlooked, it engages individuals to be part of the discourse on health equity, and strengthens their capacity to be agents of change. Using an innovative approach to stimulating the discussion on health equity, the Exchange's online forum uses its blog format to collect and document community voices in contrast to the more traditional path of using a blog to disseminate information and opinion. This program facilitates an open-ended, honest, national dialogue that remains unfettered/unmediated by HEI.

Be part of the conversation at the [Health Equity Exchange](#)! Log in today to see what others have to say and share your ideas!

Recent Events

HEI at 'Prioritizing Health Disparities in Medical Education to Improve Care' - a conference of the New York Academy of Sciences

On Oct 2, 2012, HEI attended a conference on [Prioritizing Health Disparities in Medical Education to Improve Care](#) at the New York Academy of Sciences. This conference brought together representatives from medical schools, state and local department of health, nonprofit organizations and other key players from across the United States, to discuss the inclusion of health disparities topics in medical education, specifically focusing on three themes:

- Innovative teaching models to include health disparities themes into the curriculum
- Attracting medical trainees to health disparities research
- Improving the recruitment of underrepresented minority medical students

The speakers and the panel discussion that followed touched on several topics, including the importance of mentorship to drive medical research on disparities, alignment of federal research priorities with local health priorities, and cross-cultural health communication as a significant factor in the quality and efficiency of patient care. HEI looks forward to upcoming meetings!

Join Us for These Upcoming Events!

HEI's November 19 Health Equity Brown Bag Talk

We are excited to announce our next Brown Bag Talk, part of HEI's ongoing Brown Bag Talks series. Join us for a conversation with representatives of organizations that also work towards health equity to discuss their key programs, as well as opportunities and challenges for community involvement. This is a free event.

[Multi-sectoral Perspectives on Advancing Health Equity in Urban Settings](#)

Monday, November 19, 2012
12:30 pm-2:00 pm
305 Seventh Avenue
11th Floor Training Room
New York, NY

Presenters:

Karen K. Lee, MD, MHSc, FRCPC

Director, Built Environment and Healthy Housing,
NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Skye Duncan, MSAUD

Associate Urban Designer at the Office of the Chief Urban Designer
New York City Department of City Planning

Moderator:

Renata Schiavo, PhD, MA

Founding President and CEO
Health Equity Initiative

Space is limited! RSVP at info@healthequityinitiative.org.

Fall 2012 Online Workshops in our *New Directions in Public Health and Community Development Series!*

[Tools for Health Equity Audit \(HEA\): The Experience of Lambeth, London](#)

Thursday, November 29, 2012
12:00 pm-2:00 pm

[Assessing Organizational Capacity via Health Equity-Related Assessment \(HERA\): An Introductory Workshop](#)

Tuesday, December 4, 2012
12:00 pm-2:00 pm

All participants who attend at least four [online workshops](#) in our New Directions in Public Health and Community Development series within a 6 month period (Summer and Fall 2012 or Fall 2012 and Spring 2013) will receive a *Certificate in Promoting Health Equity: Emerging Strategies and Tools*. In addition, eligible professionals can apply for Certified in Public Health (CPH) Continuing Education (CE) credits. HEI is a pre-approved provider of CPH CE credits by the [National Board of Public Health Examiners](#) (NBPHE). For more information, please email training@healthequityinitiative.org or call 646 480 7690 ext. 2.

Health Equity Initiative at APHA Annual Meeting 2012!

Please join us at the American Public Health Association (APHA) 140th Annual Meeting and Expo in San Francisco, CA for the following sessions:

[Building public health capacity to address health disparity](#)

Monday, October 29, 2012
10:30 am - 12:00 am

[Building community-campus partnerships to prevent infant mortality: Lessons learned from building capacity in four U.S. cities](#)

Monday, October 29, 2012
5:15 pm - 5:30 pm

[Sports for Health Equity Video Screening](#)

Tuesday, October 30, 2012
10:30 am - 12:00 pm
APHA Film Festival, Session 4
MCC West: 2014

[Social media exposure and health behaviors](#)

Tuesday, October 30, 2012
2:30 pm - 3:30 pm

Spotlight on HCWG Events at APHA!

As HEI's Founding President and CEO, Dr. Renata Schiavo, is a member of the Steering Committee of the APHA PHEHP Health Communication Working Group (HCWG), we would like to highlight HCWG events, such the [HCWG social](#) and the [schedule of scientific sessions and APHA Film Festival organized by the HCWG](#). These are great opportunities to network with colleagues from different sectors and also catch up with many of us from HEI!

Health Equity Initiative at the 2012 Summit on the Science of Eliminating Health Disparities!

The [2012 Summit on the Science of Eliminating Health Disparities](#), organized by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, under the leadership of the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), will be held October 31 - November 2, 2012 at National Harbor, Maryland. Do join us at the following events:



[Building Community-Campus Partnerships to Prevent Infant Mortality: Lessons Learned from Building Capacity in Four U.S. Cities](#)

Schiavo, R.* , Estrada-Portales, I,** Hoepfner, E*., and Ormaza, D.**

Poster Presentation

Poster Number: T09-006

Poster Session 1

Thursday, November 1, 2012

12:30 pm - 1:30 pm

[Preconception health and peer-to-peer communication: Assessing results of a national program for infant mortality prevention](#)

Schiavo, R.* , Estrada-Portales, E.** and Hoepfner, E.*

Oral presentation

Session C Theme: Healthcare Disparities and Quality

Session Title: Is there effective, equitable care to reduce disparities in women and infant health and mortality?

Thursday, November 1, 2012

5:00 pm

[Raising the influence of community voices on health equity via an integrated communication and community engagement approach](#)

Schiavo, R.* , Boahemaa, O.* , Watts, B.* , and Hoepfner, E.*

Poster Presentation

Poster Number: F15-014

Poster Session 2

Friday, November 2, 2012

12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

* [Health Equity Initiative](#)

** [Office of Minority Health Resource Center, HHS Office of Minority Health](#)

NB Brandy Watts was a communication and social media intern at HEI during Spring 2012. Since then she has completed her MPH at [Long Island University](#).

2012 Sponsorship and Other Grant-making Opportunities!

Sponsoring Health Equity Initiative's events and monthly e-newsletter provides an excellent opportunity for your organization to expand its reach to the public health, health communication, global health, nonprofit, healthcare and academic sectors both in the U.S. and internationally. Our event publicity efforts and e-newsletter distribution reach approximately 10,000 professionals via our e-mailing list and social media promotion. HEI welcomes contributions for its events and activities from a variety of organizations (e.g. foundations, universities, etc.) and corporate sponsors (e.g., publishers, agencies, etc.) with an interest in the fields of health equity, public health, health communication, global health, and sustainable community

development.

With its entrepreneurial approach, communication savvy, and commitment to outcome evaluation, HEI knows how to make things happen. We are committed to making sponsorship benefits work for you. Depending on funding levels and priorities, we can customize a package that includes a mix of the benefits [listed here](#).

To support our scholarship fund or learn about other grant-making opportunities, please click [here](#).

Welcome Fall Interns

HEI would like to extend a warm welcome to our Fall 2012 interns. Joining us this fall are **Asha Mattai**, our Development and Communications Intern, and **Latif Thornton**, who is our Social Media and Communications Intern.

Asha recently earned her B. A. in Labor and Employment Relations from Rutgers University, New Jersey. She brings to the table research and outreach experience.

Latif, has an MPH from Brooklyn College and is passionate about public health issues, specially Safe Water initiatives and the implementation of sustainable sanitation systems.

Welcome to the team, Asha and Latif, and we are excited to work with you!

Feature Media: Sports for Health Equity Video



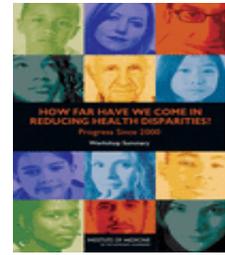
Essence Carson, WNBA All-Star, New York Liberty Player, recording artist, writer, and producer, and our very own celebrity ambassador, described by Euroleague Woman as "*one of the most musically gifted basketball players in the world*", joined hands with us to promote [Sports for Health Equity](#), a national program aiming to raise awareness of health disparities, and encourage community action and partnerships for health equity.

The campaign's centerpiece is this video featuring Essence sharing her personal story of how she became interested in health equity, and her priority action areas.

If you haven't already done so, watch the [video](#), share it on social media, and learn how you can help make progress towards health equity!

Feature Article: IOM Health Disparities Workshop Summary

On April 8, 2010, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) held a workshop that discussed progress to address health disparities in the past decade, and focused on the success of various federal initiatives to reduce health disparities. The workshop summary, [*How Far Have We Come in Reducing Health Disparities?: Progress Since 2000*](#), was released this September.

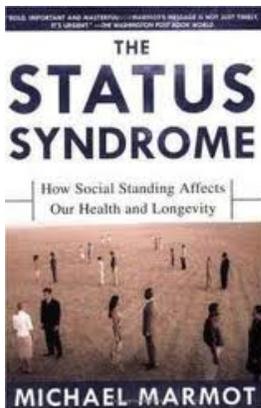


Speakers and participants highlighted recurring themes, including the persistence of health disparities and structural inequalities, as well as institutional racism and racial discrimination at significant levels, the influence of living and working conditions and other community environmental factors on health outcomes, the negative impact the current economic downturn has had on the nation's health, the need to raise awareness of health disparities, and the critical role of the community in creating a health disparities agenda.

Read the entire report [here](#).

Feature Book: "The Status Syndrome: How Social Standing Affects our Health and Longevity"

"The circumstances in which we live - that foster autonomy and control over life, love, happiness, social connectedness, riches that are not measured by money - affect illness. It is precisely because these benefits are doled out unequally in society that we have inequalities in health and death."



Why does the health of the United States, an undoubtedly powerful nation, and other equally rich nations around the world, lag behind that of other countries? Renowned British epidemiologist, Sir Michael Marmot has come up with a theory to account for ill-health in countries where poverty and absolute deprivation are not longer as commonly widespread as in developing nations: health follows a social gradient, and this phenomenon is called the *Status Syndrome*. In his book, ***The Status Syndrome: How Social Standing Affects Our Health and Longevity (2005)***, Sir Marmot insists that in rich countries, health, well-being and longevity are linked to two factors - "autonomy - how much control you have over your life - and the opportunities you have for full social engagement and participation". People that stand lower in the social hierarchy tend to have the least control over their lives, and the least opportunities for meaningful social engagement. Material conditions, position, education and power also worsen as one descends the social ladder. Sir Marmot's theory has implications for everyone: wherever you are on the social hierarchy, your health will be worse than those above you.

People are programmed by evolution to compete for status and there will always be social differences that lead to health gradients. But Sir Marmot is optimistic - a gradient is not a fixed property. It can increase, as it often has, but more importantly it can decrease. He concludes his discussion by offering recommendations to be implemented at the individual, workplace and community level to diminish the hazard of

the status syndrome.

Have you read *The Status Syndrome*? What other U.S. or international books on health inequalities have caught your attention? Please contact us at info@healthequityinitiative.org if you would like to submit a review on a relevant book you are reading for publication on our next issue of *HEI News*!

Sponsor's Corner



Thank you to [Chamberlain Healthcare Public Relations](#) for in-kind media outreach support for our *Sports for Health Equity* campaign!

The content of this section (Sponsor's Corner) of HEI News is provided by the featured sponsor. HEI reserves the right to review and edit all submissions. HEI does not publish information or news about commercial products and/or services with the exception of peer-reviewed journals and books from like-minded publishers. Information to be considered for inclusion in this section includes news and publications on the sponsor's programs, research efforts, events, and activities.

Sincerely,

HEI Health Equity Initiative

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