

Fact Sheet on Health Disparities and the Urban Health Workforce

Health Disparities

- Although they represent only one-third of the total U.S. population, racial and ethnic minorities comprise more than half of the uninsured. ^[1]
- Half of Hispanics and more than a quarter of African Americans do not have a regular doctor. ^[2]
- Infants born to African American women are more than twice as likely to die in their first year than infants born to white women. ^[3]
- Diabetes is still more prevalent among African Americans (9.3 percent) and Hispanics (9.2 percent) than among whites (5.9 percent). ^[4]
- Racial and ethnic health disparities cost the United States \$82.2 billion in 2009. This figure includes \$60 billion in health care spending and \$22.2 billion in lost productivity. Over 90 percent of the medical care and lost productivity costs were incurred in urban areas. ^[5]

Urban Health Workforce Needs

- There are currently 5,902 designated primary care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) in the United States. An area is eligible to be designated as a primary care HPSA when there are more than 3,500 people per primary care physician. ^[6]
- Fifty-four percent of primary care HPSAs are located in metropolitan areas. ^[6]
- Only 7 percent of medical students are planning a career in primary care, down from 40 percent in 1997. ^[7]
- In order to meet projected demand for health care services, the United States will require more than 91,000 additional physicians, 260,000 additional registered nurses, and 250,000 additional public health workers by 2020. ^[8]

Changing Demographics

- By the year 2050, the working age population in the United States will be 55 percent minority. The nation's population of children is expected to be 62 percent minority by 2050. ^[9]
- In 2010, 12.9 percent of the US population was foreign born; by 2050, it is expected to rise to 19 percent. ^[10, 11]
- The nation's elderly population (individuals aged 65 and over) is expected to double in size by 2050. ^[11]

Characteristics of the Urban Health Workforce

- African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans comprise more than one-third of the U.S. population. Yet, they account for only 9 percent of physicians, 7 percent of dentists, 10 percent of pharmacists, and 6 percent of registered nurses. ^[12]
- In 2010, only 12 percent of medical degrees were conferred to underrepresented minorities. ^[8]
- More than 50 percent of medical students in 2010 came from families in top income quintile. Fewer than 5 percent came from families with incomes in the bottom quintile. ^[13]

For more information and statistics, please visit our website at urbanuniversitiesforhealth.org.

Endnotes

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