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Background

- ◆ Disparities in health refer to differences between two or more population groups in health outcomes and in the prevalence, incidence, or burden of disease, disability, injury, or death.
- ◆ Health equity seeks to provide all people with just and fair opportunities to attain their full health potential.
- ◆ Disparities in health and health care can be reduced and eventually eliminated by advancing policies, programs or practices that address health, social, economic, environmental and other factors that impact health.

Why does Health Equity Policy Matter?

- ◆ Racial and ethnic minorities experience poorer health status when compared to the rest of the U.S. population. Only when these disparities are reduced can we improve the health of all of people and our nation.
- ◆ Eliminating health disparities would decrease medical care expenditures in the U.S. and reduce premature death and disability.
- ◆ To address disparities we cannot rely solely on programs and interventions that promote individual healthy behaviors or health care access. Policies to facilitate improvements in social, economic and other conditions also are vital.

Opportunities to Promote Health Equity

Affordable Care Act (ACA)

- ◆ The Office of Minority Health (OMH) provides funding to state offices of minority health, multicultural health, and health equity; community and faith-based organizations, institutions of higher education, tribes and tribal organizations; and other organizations dedicated to improving health.
- ◆ The ACA authorized establishment of individual offices of minority health within AHRQ, CDC, CMS, FDA, HRSA, and SAMHSA
- ◆ Community Transformation Grants aim to reduce health disparities and improve health and well-being through the implementation of proven community-based programs, communities and states to support where people live, work, play, and go to school so Americans can lead healthier, more productive lives.
- ◆ The National Prevention Council comprises 17 federal departments, agencies, and offices. The Council envisions a prevention-oriented society where all sectors recognize the value of health for individuals, families, and society and work together to achieve better health for all Americans.

School Health

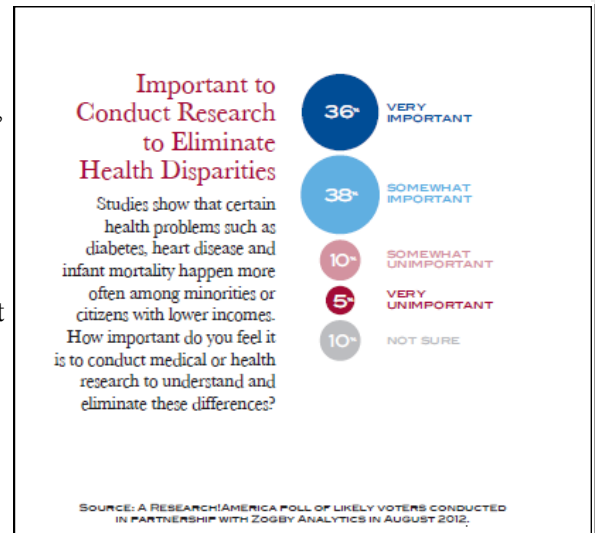
- ◆ Legislation such as the PHYSICAL Act (S.392) and HeLP America Act (S.39) promote equity through provisions that expand prevention efforts in schools in the areas of health education, physical education, and nutrition.

Healthy People 2020

The overarching goals of Healthy People 2020 are to:

- ◆ Attain high-quality, longer lives free of preventable disease, disability, injury, and premature death;
- ◆ Achieve health equity, eliminate disparities, and improve the health of all groups;
- ◆ Create social and physical environments that promote good health for all;
- ◆ Promote quality of life, healthy development, and healthy behaviors across all life stages.

Healthy People 2010 included the overarching goal of “eliminating health disparities.” **Healthy People 2020 explicitly adds “achieve health equity” as the part of the intent of the overarching goals.**



Source: Research!America