

ACT TO ELIMINATE RACIAL AND ETHNIC HEALTH DISPARITIES IN THE COMMONWEALTH (H.2234)

Background

Blacks, Latinos, and Asians in Massachusetts face disproportionately higher rates of chronic illness and mortality than residents of the state as a whole. These populations have worse health outcomes than the majority population on a variety of key health indicators.

The Disparities Action Network (DAN) is a statewide coalition of advocates, researchers, providers and many others who are committed to eliminating these health disparities in Massachusetts.

The DAN has developed comprehensive legislation that addresses key health disparities issues. Representative Byron Rushing filed this legislation in the House of Representatives and it has been heard by the Joint Committee on Public Health.

Fast Facts:

The infant mortality rate among Blacks is twice as high as that of Whites

Blacks are twice as likely to die from diabetes as Whites

Asthma mortality rates are four times higher among Latinos than Whites

Proposal

An **Act to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities in the Commonwealth** proposes the creation of a new state Office of Health Equity to coordinate efforts of public agencies to eliminate disparities. Key initiatives of the office would include:

Data, Evaluation, and Research

- Coordination of data collection practices across public and private agencies
- Support for data collection training and technical assistance
- Evaluation of state progress on disparities elimination

Health Care Access

- Reimbursement of health care providers for language interpreter services
- Establishment of a disparities reduction program for community health centers and other key safety net providers
- Support for Community Health Workers

Programs

- Designation of health literacy standards
- Promotion of chronic illness self management programs
- Development of a community health index

DAN Partner Organizations

Action for Boston Community Development
AIDS Action Committee
American Cancer Society
American Diabetes Association
American Heart/American Stroke Association
American Red Cross of Massachusetts Bay
Association of Haitian Women
Association of Haitian Pastors
Berkshire Area Health Education Center
Boston Center for Community & Justice
Boston Public Health Commission
Boston University Center for Excellence in Women's Health
Boston Urban Asthma Coalition
Cambridge Health Alliance
Caring Health Center
Center for Community Health Education Research and Service
Community Catalyst
Community Change Inc.
Conference on Boston Teach Hospitals
Critical MASS
Greater Lawrence Family Health Center
Haitian Multi-Service Center
Haitian Nurses Association
Health Care For All
International Medical Interpreters Association
Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action
La Alianza Hispana
Latin American Health Institute
The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law of the Boston Bar Association
Lowell Community Health Center
Lynn Health Task Force
Massachusetts Asian and Pacific Islanders for Health
Massachusetts Association of Community Health Workers
Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition
Massachusetts General Hospital, Disparities Solutions Center
Massachusetts Hospital Association
Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers
Massachusetts Medical Society
Massachusetts Public Health Association
Multicultural AIDS Coalition
Mass CONECT, Harvard School of Public Health
NAACP Boston Branch
NARAL Pro-Choice Massachusetts
Physicians for Human Rights
Project RIGHT
SEIU 1199
Vietnamese American Civic Association (VACA)
Whittier Street Health Center
Youth and Family Enrichment Services

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