



NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP FOR ACTION

to End Health Disparities



Underserved Communities of Color and the Integration of Health Information Technology

REC and HIE Summit West, October 5, 2010



U.S. Department of Health & Human Services



Topics Highlighted

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Office of Minority Health (OMH)
- Underserved Communities of Color and the Use of Information Technology
- A Changing World – Patient and Workforce Demographics
- National Health Information Technology (NHIT) Collaborative Background and Current Interventions
- OMH Future Direction and Contact Information





HHS / Office of Minority Health

- Established in 1986
- Mission – to improve and protect the health of racial and ethnic minority populations through the development of health policies and programs that will eliminate health disparities
- Advise the DHHS Secretary on public health activities affecting American Indians and Alaska Natives, Asian Americans, Blacks/African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders





Why Focus on the Underserved?

Racial and ethnic minorities have persistent health disparities:

- Lower life expectancy at birth
- Increased chronic disease and disability, higher rates of obesity, preventable re-hospitalization, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and HIV/AIDS
- Higher prevalence of disjointed care and poor quality of care, less exposure to primary and specialty care, preventive care, and disease management
- More likely to be underinsured or uninsured





Economic Burden of Health Inequities

September 2009

Findings for Study Period of 2003-2006	
Combined costs of health inequalities and premature death in the U.S	\$ 1.24 trillion
Eliminating health disparities for minorities would have reduced direct medical care expenditures	\$ 229.4 billion
Direct medical care expenditures for African Americans, Asians, & Hispanics – excess costs due to health inequalities	30.6 %
Eliminating health inequalities for minorities would have reduced indirect costs associated with illness and premature death	\$ 1trillion

*Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies (Researchers and authors: LaVeist, Gaskin, Richard)





Reports on the Health Divide

- 1985 - “Report of the Secretary’s Task Force on Black and Minority Health”
- Institute of Medicine (IOM) – Unequal Treatment
- Healthy People 2010 & 2020 - health goals for the nation – includes goals to eliminate health disparities
- Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) annual National Healthcare Disparities Report





Findings from DHHS Report on the Underserved and Health Information Technology (Assistant Secretary of Planning and Evaluation) - 11/08

1. Health IT is not a magic bullet
 - Technology must be part of a broader initiative to address root causes and structural barriers
2. Digital divide is diminishing but still a factor
 - Income and internet access correlation is less direct, but persistent
3. External barriers for the underserved and their provider persist
 - Slow provider adoption stems from constrained finances





Findings from DHHS Report on the Underserved and Health Information Technology (Assistant Secretary of Planning and Evaluation) - 11/08, cont.

4. Training and human support are integral
 - Need to increase culturally- appropriate support electronically
5. Mobile applications are widely used (PDAs, text messaging)
 - An effective approach internationally
6. Collaboration is necessary among all involved providers to address complex barriers
7. The underserved are not monolithic
 - Especially important for patient-facing technologies

*****Full report available at:***

<http://aspe.hhs.gov/sp/reports/2009/underserved/index.shtml>





IT Use Among Minority Groups: “Wireless Internet Use” (Pew Internet Study 7/09)

- “The notion of a digital divide for African Americans has some resonance when thinking about the wireline Internet. But when you introduce the mobile Internet, the picture changes and African Americans are the pace setters.” - John B. Horrigan (Pew Internet Project)
- Since 2007, growth in mobile handheld online use by African Americans (AA) was twice the national average – 141% for AA versus 73%.





IT Use Among Minority Groups: African Americans – Closing the Digital Divide

- BusinessWeek* reported “in the past two years, African Americans have been devouring broadband technology – and the digital divide has shrunk significantly... Some of the closing of the racial divide can be traced to falling prices and rising availability of new technology.”
- The share of black households with a cable modem, DSL, or satellite Internet connection climbed to 40% this year. That’s almost twice as fast as the growth of broadband penetration for the general population, which grew to 47%.”

Source: BusinessWeek - “Equal Opportunity Speedway” May 21, 2007





IT Use Among Minority Groups: Latinos Online, 2006-2008: Narrowing the Gap (12/09)

- From 2006 to 2008, Internet use among Latino adults rose from 54% to 64%. Whereas, the rate for Whites rose four percentage points, and the rate for blacks rose only two percentage points.
- Though Latinos continue to lag behind Whites, the gap in Internet use has shrunk considerably.
- Whereas Latinos gained markedly in overall internet use, the pattern of home internet access changed very little.





The Need for Culturally Appropriate HIT: A Changing World – Patient & Workforce Diversity

- Between now and the year 2050, almost 90% of U.S. population growth will come from Asian Americans, African Americans, and Hispanic Americans
- Currently, people of color are already a majority in 48 of the nation's 100 largest cities
- Five states have “minority majorities:” CA, HI, NM, TX, and FL
- MD, MS, GA, NY, and AZ's non-white population at approximately 40%

Source: “The Emerging Minority Marketplace: Minority Population Growth 1995 – 2050.”
U.S. Census Bureau, 9/21/1999





The Need for Culturally Appropriate HIT: Diversity in Medical Workforce

- Hispanics comprise 12% of the U.S. population, but 2% of the RN population, 3.4% of psychologists, and 3.5% of physicians (IOM, 2/4/2004)
- One in 8 Americans is African American, yet less than 1 in 20 dentists or physicians is African American (IOM, 2/4/2004)
- The American Medical Association, in the 2008 report entitled “Physician Characteristics and Distribution in the U.S.,” reveals that approximately 1 in 5 physicians are part of a racial or ethnic minority group





National Health IT (NHIT) Collaborative for the Underserved

- **Vision**

- An interconnected public and private health system where all consumers have access to high quality, affordable care and to the information and technology resources required to maximize their access and effective use of health care services.

- **Purpose**

- Reduce and ultimately eliminate health disparities experienced by medically underserved areas and populations through the use of advances in health IT.
- Incorporate experience from both the public and private sectors to improve the health of communities and populations that have historically had the worst health outcomes and the least access to care.

More Information available at <http://www.shireinc.org/nhit/>





NHIT Collaborative for the Underserved Purpose (Purpose,cont.)

- Empower underserved consumers to use HIT for health self-management
- Promote HIT adoption by providers in underserved communities
- Foster creation of a HIT workforce
- Facilitate funding for HIT implementation
- Educate and inform regarding HIT federal/state policies and their impacts
- Propagate HIT best practices and solutions





Current NHIT Interventions: “HI-Touch” Education and Outreach Strategy

- Grass-roots coalition building with REC personnel in Southern California, Georgia, and Southern Florida
- HIT “Teach-ins” offered in urban centers (Atlanta and Los Angeles)
- Policy leadership in the areas of workforce, education, and HIT proliferation





Future Initiatives

- Close alignment with ONC, HRSA, and CMS policies and programs
- Exploring the efficacy of telehealth, as well as cellular technologies within underserved communities of color as they may pertain to chronic illness and prenatal care
- Considering helping to develop mHealth (mobile) Standards, within the context of current CLAS Standards





In Summary....

- A lack of resources and outreach, not interest or need, is contributing to an increase in the digital divide among racial and ethnic minority providers and underserved communities of color
- It's a new world we're living in. Government (both federal and state), as well as the private sector needs to include all healthcare providers and communities – regardless of race and ethnicity - in implementing and harnessing the effectiveness and efficiency of coordinated health information technologies, and making certain they're available in a myriad of languages
- Recruiting providers as well as local trusted leaders within communities of color may enable organizations (i.e., RECs) to reach and surpass organizational performance goals





Contact Information:

Garth Graham, MD, MPH
Deputy Assistant Secretary
DHHS/Office of Minority Health
Garth.Graham@hhs.gov

www.minorityhealth.hhs.gov

