

# Universal and Equal: Ensuring Health Equity in Health Reform

Friday, March 9, 2007  
Washington, DC

## Description

The number of uninsured has risen steadily over the past few years to almost 47 million. In the absence of a national solution to this crisis, many states have responded with their own proposals to increase health care coverage. From Maine to California, states are proposing a combination of strategies and solutions for covering the uninsured. Proposals range from comprehensive reforms that attempt to reach near-universal coverage to incremental approaches that seek to first cover all kids and lay the foundation for broader reform. Regardless of the approach, states are becoming practical and political testing grounds for new strategies to cover the uninsured and expand access.

But as momentum builds toward health care reform and universal coverage, are states addressing health equity in tandem? How do we ensure that conversations about reducing racial and ethnic health disparities are included in efforts to expand access? Are the voices of communities of color represented at the decision-making table?

This invitation-only discussion will outline what states are doing to expand coverage, describe disparities-related provisions in state proposals, discuss policies and practices that reduce racial and ethnic health disparities, and set the context for developing a framework to ensure health equity.

## Who Should Attend

We are extending this invitation to a small number of national and state advocates working on racial and ethnic health disparities and interested in expanding health care access. We hope this discussion will be the starting point for developing a framework for the inclusion of health equity in conversations around broader health care reform.

## Please RSVP

We hope that you can join us for this important discussion which will take place on **Friday, March 9<sup>th</sup>** at the Barbara Jordan Conference Center (located at 1330 G Street, NW, Washington, DC). This space is generously being provided by the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. Please RSVP by **Friday, February 23, 2007** by sending the attached registration form by e-mail to [minorityhealth@familiesusa.org](mailto:minorityhealth@familiesusa.org) or by fax to 202.347.2417.

## Sponsored by

The meeting is sponsored by The National Health Policy Training Alliance for Communities of Color, a unique partnership between Families USA, the Joint Center Health Policy Institute, the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Educational Fund, and the National Medical Association. It is generously funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. For more information on the Alliance, please visit us at [www.healthpolicyalliance.org](http://www.healthpolicyalliance.org).

## Agenda

- 10:00 a.m.                    **Registration**
- 10:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.   **Welcome & Plan for the Day**  
Rea Pañares, *Families USA*
- 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.   **State Activities to Cover the Uninsured**  
*This session will provide an overview of current state-level initiatives to expand health insurance coverage, examine specific state proposals, and discuss if and how conversations around health equity and disparities are taking place.*
- Cheryl Fish-Parcham, *Families USA*  
   Camille Watson, *Health Care For All (Massachusetts)*
- 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.    **Lunch**
- 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.     **Policies and Practices that Promote Health Equity**  
*Both research and practice have informed our thinking of which policies promote the elimination of racial and ethnic health disparities. What specific components should be included in proposals to increase access and expand coverage? This session will set the context for a broader discussion on developing a framework for ensuring equity, while expanding coverage.*
- Brian Smedley, *The Opportunity Agenda*
- 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.     **Developing Guiding Principles**  
*As more and more states move forward with broader health reform and develop proposals for universal coverage, how do we ensure that equity and reducing disparities are part of the conversation? What principles should guide policy analysts, advocates, and policymakers? How do we ensure that communities of color are being represented?*
- In this facilitated discussion, participants will share their thoughts on developing a common set of principles that could guide states as they work toward health care reform and universal coverage.*
- Facilitated by: Gail Christopher, *Joint Center Health Policy Institute*
- 3:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.    **Wrap Up and Closing**