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## Health Equity Week

“The Health Equity Week of Action (HEWA) is an annual week-long event that focuses on raising awareness about the health disparities that exist across racial, ethnic, cultural, and social groups. HEWA utilizes a variety of interactive and innovative events to inform and inspire the actions needed to eradicate such health inequities”.<sup>6</sup>



## References

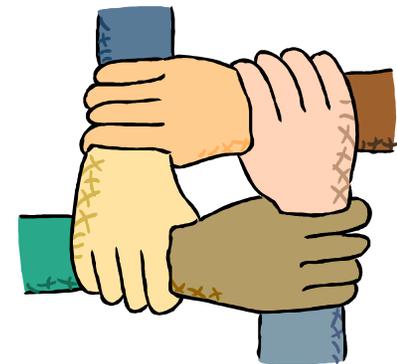
1. Stith AY, Nelson AR. Institute of Medicine. Committee on Understanding and Eliminating Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care, Board on Health Policy, Institute of Medicine. Washington, DC: National Academy Press; 2002. Unequal Treatment: Confronting Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care.
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## HEALTH EQUITY WEEK OF ACTION (HEWA)

*An American Medical Student Association Observance*

## Health Disparities....What is it?



## 2013 HEALTH EQUITY WEEK OF ACTION

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HEWA Steering Committee

# Health Disparities

## Introduction

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) defines health disparities as “differences in the quality of care that are not due to access-related factors or clinical needs, preferences or appropriateness of the intervention.”<sup>1</sup> The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has gone further to identify populations that are often affected by health disparities: racial and ethnic minorities; residents of rural areas; women, children, and the elderly; and person with disabilities.<sup>2</sup>



Efforts have been made to explore why certain groups were experiencing differences in health outcomes and make strides toward eliminating disparities. Health disparities have been noted in chronic diseases (ex. cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer), HIV/AIDS, infant mortality, access to care, and also access to resources that are often associated with healthier lifestyles (i.e. the topic of this year’s health equity week: food disparities).

## WHAT HAS BEEN DONE TO ADDRESS HEALTH DISPARITIES

Many entities have recognized the effects of health disparities. Healthy People 2010 had two overarching goals in 28 focus areas. One of the

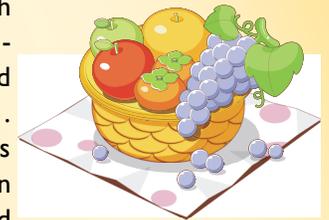


goals was to “eliminate health disparities.”<sup>3</sup> Because of the continued efforts to eliminate health disparities, a similar overarching goal was carried over to Health People 2020 that strives to “achieve health equity, eliminate disparities, and improve the health of all groups.”<sup>4</sup> The National Institutes of Health through the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities have created strategic plans, grants/loan repayment, and other opportunities to make sure that scientific efforts are being made to eliminate health disparities. Educa-

tional institutions, governmental entities, and other non-governmental entities are making strides to eliminate health disparities.<sup>5</sup>

### 2013 Health Equity Week of Action

This year, AMSA focuses on an aspect of health disparities that spans all areas of health disparities...food equity. Disparities in food can be tackled



by the health policy arena (ex food info. Is published on all food), environment (ex. healthy soil and land are available to grow fresh food), epidemiology (ex. continued scientific support that having availability of healthy foods correlates to better quality of life), and health promotion (ex. encouraging people to eat healthier by programs like 5 fruit and vegetables a day). Let’s all join in the fight to end hunger, address food-related illiteracy, and impact health policy!!! - Kenetra Hix, Medical Student at Univ. of Tennessee Health Science Center