

# KS Center for Health Disparities

## ***Introduction:***

The 2003 U.S. Census estimates the total population for Kansas at 2,723,508 persons. According to the 2003 U.S. Census, the racial and ethnic composition of the state was estimated to be 82.8 percent White (non-Hispanic), 7.8 percent Hispanic, 6.2 percent Black (non-Hispanic), 2.2 percent Asian, and 1 percent American Indian. The total racial/ethnic population of Kansas today is 17.2 percent.

This represents a dramatic increase since 1900 when racial/ethnic populations represented 3.7 percent of the state's total population. The overall number of racial/ethnic Kansans doubled from 223,637 in 1980 to 454,421 in 2000. Available data regarding racial/ethnic and tribal population health disparities is very limited statewide. These include data shortfalls with disease specific health disparities for racial/ethnic and tribal populations for cancer, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, immunizations, cardiovascular disease, maternal and child health, and mental health.

## ***Building the infrastructure of the Kansas Office of Minority Health:***

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment under the direction of Secretary Roderick L. Bremby established an advisory committee in September 2005 and convened the first meeting whose focus would be to help establish a strategic framework and direction for the Office of Minority Health. Specifically, he asked the group to help institute a framework aimed at addressing and eliminating health disparities among racial, ethnic and tribal populations in Kansas. A framework that will allow the office to build capacity and resources in a targeted and outcome focused manner.

The advisory committee is comprised of representatives from identified health areas: public, private, community and academic. The committee will serve as an advocacy group to address unique health issues impacting racial/ethnic and tribal populations including access to health care, disease specific health disparities, and culturally appropriate and linguistically competent health care programs. The ongoing role of the committee will focus on assisting in the determination of key priorities and initiatives for the office, and affirming a policy framework that guides the activity of the office.

**Mission:** "To promote and improve the health status of racial, ethnic and tribal populations in Kansas by advocating for and coordinating access to primary and preventive services that are effective, efficient and culturally and linguistically competent."

**Vision:** "To eliminate health disparities among racial, ethnic and tribal populations and in doing so foster the well being of all Kansans"

## ***Guiding Principles:***

*This office is guided by and has the commitment to:*

- Public health advocacy for health equity.
- Capacity building to provide cultural and linguistically appropriate services in all areas of public health.
- Promotion of health awareness, prevention initiatives and access to quality healthcare.
- Creating linkages and establishing networks through collaboration among Local, State, Federal and National entities.
- Providing technical assistance to existing agencies/organizations that provide services to racial/ethnic and tribal consumers in the utilization of data to develop targeted, culturally specific programs and/or services.
- Resource identification and development.
- Monitoring of health status of racial, ethnic and tribal populations through data collection, analysis and dissemination.
- Social Marketing through media and awareness campaigns to improve public awareness about health disparities.
- Policy Leadership to advocate for changes in policy, practices and programs.
- Advocate for the utilization of CLAS (Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services) in all areas of service delivery.

## Strategic Areas:

*Our efforts to eliminate health disparities for racial, ethnic and tribal populations will be focused on:*

- Health Planning and Policy Development
- Health Promotion and Disease Prevention
- Education, Training and Technical Assistance
- Building Cultural Competency

## Accomplishments to Date:

Many partnerships and collaborations are being developed with the Office of Minority Health which are community based, faith based, state and federal. All activities have been supported through donations and grants.

## Highlighted activities of the office to date have been:

- ❖ Collaboration with the Urban League of the Mid Plains to host a MLK community wide breakfast with the notable Dr. David Williams, University of Michigan as keynote speaker.
- ❖ Legislative awareness session on the impact of health disparities among racial/ethnic and tribal populations with Dr. Williams as the guest presenter.
- ❖ Annual Health Disparities Conference, "Healthy Cultures, Healthy Kansas"
- ❖ Approval of Infrastructure Development funding from National OMH.
- ❖ Health Literacy Initiative: contractual agreement with Channing Bete Company to purchase culturally specific health materials and other related health information.

## Upcoming Activities:

- ❖ KDHE Organizational Needs Assessment of Cultural Competency within current programs and service delivery.
- ❖ State of Diabetes Summit in Kansas Among Racial/Ethnic and Tribal populations.
- ❖ Phase II of Strategic Planning process.
- ❖ Focus Groups and Roundtables as a data collection method to assess health care information and resource preferences of racial/ethnic communities.
- ❖ Official name change to KS Center for Health Disparities (January 2007)
- ❖ Cultural Competency Training August 2007: Dr. Jose Reyes, Denver Colorado.  
*(This is not an inclusive list, other activities are in the planning stages.)*

For more information on the Kansas Center for Health Disparities, contact Sharon Goolsby RN, Program Manager, 785-296-5577, [sgoolsby@kdhe.state.ks.us](mailto:sgoolsby@kdhe.state.ks.us) or [www.minorityhealthks.org](http://www.minorityhealthks.org).