

Reducing Racial and Ethnic Disparities:
Success Depends on How You Frame the Issue

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Addressing the Problem in the States: *Policy Challenges and Opportunities*

- **WHAT WE KNOW**

- REDs has not / will not be a priority for most state policymakers
 - Affirmative action/quotas are *persona non grata* (CA Prop 209)
- Wide variation among states in adequacy of strategies to address major cross-cutting issues
 - Data collection/analysis; Cultural competence; Access to care; Health professions development

- **PRINCIPLES OF SUCCESS**

- Available federal / private foundation funding are able to drive *state appropriation-deficient* state agency agendas
- Very strong and passionate political leadership exists
- Framing the issue as an economic one

Framing the Issue as Economic

STATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND HEALTH CARE *EXAMPLE: RURAL HEALTH*

- **Linking Rural Development & Health Care Improvement**
 - Telecommunications Infrastructure Development
 - Comprehensive State Rural Development Organizations
- **Using Economic Development to Strengthen the Rural (Health) Workforce**
 - State and Local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs)
- **Finding Models to Improving Financial Access to Rural Health Care**
 - Rural Medicaid and TANF outreach
 - Rural Low Income Population Tax Credits and Rebates

Using Economic Development to Strengthen the Health Care Workforce

- **3 PRINCIPLES OF SUCCESS ARE PRESENT**
- **STATE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS (WIBs)**
 - All states have WIBs; many have strong local/regional boards
 - Federal DOL-funded since the late 90s
 - Larger mission: Use as a economic development tool -- having an adequate workforce is key in most industries
 - Focus typically is on the entry or lower level occupations
- **HEALTH WORKFORCE BECOMING MORE INTEGRAL IN WIBs**
 - Over *20 states* using state/local WIBs to support nursing and allied health worker career promotion/development, skills training and retention, and education capacity enhancement.
 - US DOL's New Health Industry *High-Growth Job Training Initiative*
 - *To date: \$24 million in grants; upcoming formal solicitation*

Using Economic Development to Strengthen the Health Care Workforce

- Entry/lower level occupations often filled by low-income URMs with no professional or college education.
- Many dislocated and incumbent workers attracted to the relative stability / high earning potential of health care jobs.
- Yet, the health care sector provides many career opportunities not being fully exploited by men and racial/ethnic minorities.
- Other than filling gaps, the health care labor force best served by:
 - Attracting URMs that serve the overall as well as URM populations
 - Provide URMs with economic benefits of employment in the health care sector

Using Economic Development to Strengthen the Health Care Workforce

STATE / LOCAL WIBs ADDRESSING HEALTH WORKFORCE DEMAND

- **Promotion of Health Care Careers**

Projects to introduce students to health care jobs and to promote health care careers to low-income adults and those seeking a second career.

- Georgia, Mississippi, New Jersey, South Carolina, Texas, Wisconsin

- **Health Career Ladder Advancement**

Programs to encourage workers in entry-level positions to gain the training for higher-level health care positions, particularly in nursing and allied health fields.

- California, Georgia, Massachusetts, Texas, Washington

- **Building High-Demand Health Workforce Educational Capacity**

Projects to expand the training capacity of educational programs that do not produce enough health care workers to meet current demand.

- Arizona, Colorado, Oregon, Wisconsin

- **Increasing Health Care Workforce Retention**

Programs to retain health workers through enhanced skills training.

- Michigan, Wisconsin

Using Economic Development to Strengthen the Health Care Workforce

STATE/LOCAL WIBs: Program Examples

- **MS:** Introduces low-income high school students to the health workforce, with encouragement to complete CNA or LPN training at an area technical college (*statewide*).
- **SC:** Trains high school juniors and seniors interested in health care technician occupations by providing a modular tech-based training program allowing for group participation (*Newberry*).
- **WI:** Supports career exploration/health career workshops targeted to youth of area Indian reservation and other underrepresented minorities (*Western WI*).
- **WI:** Emphasizes recruitment of non-English speaking and minority populations into CNA & Associate Degree RN programs. Funds help to expand global English/bilingual CNA classes and the Associate Degree RN program by 20 students, and to purchase equipment needed for new teaching lab (*Southeast WI*).
- **CA:** Supports career ladder training for incumbent LVNs in 6-area hospitals to become RNs at local community college (*Madera county*).