Public Health Leaders Roundtable reconvenes

During the Arkansas Minority Health Summit in 2010, agency directors, legislators, doctors, and policy leaders joined former Surgeons General (Dr. Richard Carmona, Dr. Antonia Novello, and Dr. Jocelyn Elders) to talk about strategies to improve the health of minorities in Arkansas.

This year, the public health leadership roundtable reconvened on April 14 to review their work since the first meeting, to discuss opportunities to strengthen collaborations and to develop action plans towards addressing minority health disparities throughout the state. The roundtable brought together public health leaders from health care organizations, state agencies and academic institutions. The event was facilitated by Ami Rossi, Vice President, Innovation and Strategic Development of the Arkansas Foundation for Medical Care.

AMHC Chair, Vivian Flowers, opened the discussion with a welcome and reviewed the history of the Arkansas Minority Health Commission. Flowers discussed the organization's role as a convener and collaborator. AMHC Executive Director, Dr. Idonia Trotter, summarized the first Public Health Leaders Roundtable that occurred in 2010. Trotter highlighted Dr. Antonia Novello’s challenge to pull health advocates together to focus on one significant issue at a time to promote coordinated change.

In light of Former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Novello’s challenge, each participant gave their input on what issue in minority health they believed should be discussed. The overarching topic chosen for this year’s roundtable was centered on workforce diversity and health/education leadership collaboration.

Several suggestions were given by the group to improve diversity in health care such as increase collaborative efforts among public health care leaders roundtable at UAMS Jack Stephens Spine Institute

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health leadership and education leadership, encourage children’s interest in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) studies from middle school through college, introduce families to health professions and create inclusive cultures in professional schools.

“For many kids, a career decision gets made in middle school. We need to have higher education create a continuum from elementary on. There should be more engagement from local community colleges and universities into the school system,” said one participant.

Before adjourning, the participants made individual commitments such as

- Ramp up education efforts in the community
- Increase recruitment efforts among minority students and work to retain them
- Strengthen community relationships
- Bring more community members to the table
- Work with UAMS College of Public Health programs that reach youth and minority college students
- Focus on messaging and social marketing
- Look for incentives that can bring stakeholders together, develop measurements, evaluation framework and applied policies to these efforts

The group will meet bi-annually in October and April each year to follow up on their action plan commitments.

Organizations represented included:

- Arkansas Minority Health Commission
- Arkansas Prostate Cancer Foundation
- University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences
- Arkansas Office of Health Information Technology
- Mental Health Council of Arkansas
- Tobacco Settlement Commission
- UAMS College of Public Health
- Arkansas Children’s Hospital
- Arkansas State Dental Association
- Arkansas Foundation for Medical Care
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Arkansas Department of Health
- Representative Reginald Murdock
- Office of Governor Mike Beebe
Last year, over 150 citizens, legislators, community leaders, and public health advocates attended a panel discussion that highlighted the significant health disparities across the state. The panelists explained the current challenges and the efforts to improve the health of all Arkansans.

This year’s panelists were Glen Mays, PhD, MPH (Department of Health Policy and Management, Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health); Lindsey Clark (Arkansas Office of Health Information Technology); and Fred Allen (State Representative District 33). Introductions were given by UAMS Chancellor Dr. Dan Rahn and AMHC Executive Director, Dr. Idonia Trotter followed by opening remarks by Governor Mike Beebe. The discussion was moderated by Dr. Michelle Smith, director of the ADH Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities.

This year, the event focused on the Affordable Healthcare Act, health information technology (HIT), health information exchange, and Healthy People 2020.

Gov. Beebe stressed the need for health education and follow up within the health care system. He stated that when patients leave the hospital someone should follow up with the patient to ensure he or she is taking the necessary medications correctly and is following their doctor’s instructions. “The health education component cannot be overstated,” he said. “The Minority Health Commission has a role and a scope to get this message across.”

Dr. Mays provided an overview of what changes will be implemented as a result of the Affordable Healthcare Act. He said that the bill will prevent lifetime limits by insurance companies, will allow individuals to cover children to age 26 and provide preventive care screenings without copayments just to name a few.

“We have reached a point where change in healthcare is imperative,” said Dr. Mays. “The cost alone is a major factor… the amount of care is another.” He stated individuals are receiving around 50% of the care they should receive when they are seen by their doctor based on current evidence-based guidelines. “It’s a flip of the coin whether you will receive evidence-based healthcare,” he said. He stressed it’s even less likely for an individual to receive evidence-based care if the individual stays in a rural area, is a minority and underinsured.

In addition to the Affordable Care Act, Health Information Technology (HIT), a relatively new concept, was explained in depth by Lindsey Clark. HIT is the application of information processing involving both

“Health education component cannot be overstated”
--Governor Mike Beebe

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AMHC celebrates 20 years of Service

As a grand finale to AMHC’s April events, a 20th Anniversary Gala was held at the Peabody Hotel on April 23rd. This event brought together key leaders and supporters of health initiatives in Arkansas.

Not only did the AMHC celebrate its accomplishments over the past 20 years, the Commission introduced its new focus of Nutrition and Fitness which was also the theme of the gala.

Hector Mendoza of the Governor’s Council on Fitness greeted the crowd of 300. The Council’s mission is to encourage health and wellness for all individuals in Arkansas by promoting healthy lifestyles through increased levels of physical activity.

“Everyone can make a difference in the health and wellness of Arkansans,” he said. Mendoza also suggested that the Council and AMHC should come together and address health and fitness on a greater scale and offered to assist the AMHC with the summer fitness camp. In addition, Jimmy “Mr. Get Better” Robinson of The Movement got the crowd moving with various practical every day exercises and dance moves.

The Commission honored five “Minority Health Heroes” who have made an impressionable mark in championing the cause.

The “Minority Health Heroes” honored were Stalwart Legislator, Senator Jack Crumbly; Public Health Visionary, Dr. Thomas Bruce; Member Organization, AARP and Maria Reynolds-Diaz; and Corporate Innovator, Pfizer and Mike Mitchell.

Entertainment was provided by host Bruce Bruce, a nationally renowned comedian, as well as live music by Rodney Block and the Real Music Lovers.

All of the gala proceeds will benefit the AMHC’s First Annual Fitness Camp, Camp iRock to be held June 19-25 at Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center in Little Rock.

Click here to view more photos or to view the documentary!
The Arkansas Minority Health Commission (in collaboration with Arkansas Children’s Hospital and Girl Scout-Diamonds of Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas) will host its first ever residential fitness camp. Camp iRock is for girls in sixth, seventh and eighth grades and will be held at Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center in Little Rock on June 19th-25th.

The camp is a week-long program of activities, workshops and exercises aimed at promoting physical activity, healthy lifestyles, and building self-confidence in young girls. Campers will be equipped with the necessary tools and support to help them achieve and maintain optimum fitness and nutrition in their daily lives. The camp is free for 40 girls from around the State of Arkansas.

This year campers will be joined by actress, singer, songwriter Raven-Symoné of The Cosby Show and That’s So Raven. She has been active in various programs to encourage self-esteem and self-confidence such as the Dove Self-Esteem Initiative.

In Arkansas, the highest obesity risk among females was found in African Americans (45 percent) followed closely by Hispanic females (44 percent). Native American females had an obesity risk of 38 percent while 34 percent of White females, and 25 percent of Asian females were classified as obese or overweight.

For kindergartners, 33 percent entered the school system either obese or overweight. The percentage of students who were obese or overweight increased to 35 percent for second-graders, to 40 percent for those in the fourth grade, and peaked at 44 percent with the sixth grade class.

“Our goal is to instill the campers with tools that promote healthy eating habits, physical activity, and self-confidence building that will last a lifetime,” said Idonia Trotter, AMHC Executive Director.

Click the logo for more information!
Arkansas Minority Health Commission: 20 Years Of Service

Bridging the Gaps

By Cozetta Jones

This year marks 20 years of service and accomplishment by the Arkansas Minority Health Commission (AMHC). During this time, the AMHC has worked tirelessly to reduce health inequities faced by minority populations in the state. The commission has sought to address the disparities that exist within the communities it serves, focusing on improving access to care and ensuring that all Arkansans have equal opportunities to maintain good health.

In celebration of its 20th anniversary, the AMHC has developed a comprehensive strategy to continue its work in advancing health equity. The strategy includes initiatives aimed at improving access to care, increasing awareness of health disparities, and strengthening partnerships with communities and organizations to address the root causes of health inequities.

The AMHC recognizes that achieving health equity requires a multi-faceted approach that addresses the social determinants of health. By focusing on education, policy, and community engagement, the AMHC seeks to empower communities to take ownership of their health and well-being.

Over the past 20 years, the AMHC has made significant progress in improving health outcomes for minority populations in Arkansas. However, there is still much work to be done to ensure that all Arkansans have access to quality care and have the opportunity to lead healthy lives.

The AMHC invites everyone to join in the celebration of its 20th anniversary and to support its efforts to bridge the gaps in health care access and outcomes for Arkansans.

For more information about the AMHC and its initiatives, please visit www.arminorityhealth.com.
Lilly salutes the AMHC for 20 years of improving minority health in Arkansas.
The life you live is the legacy you leave. Do good.

For some it’s raising money for charity. For others it’s ushering at church or helping out in their community. Whatever your passion, when it comes to doing good in your life and the lives of others, AARP has programs and resources that can assist you along the way. From health and wellness to finances, volunteerism to simply enjoying life, AARP is here to support your commitment to making things better.

For more information, visit aarp.org/blackcommunity.
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Celebrating with our friends at AMHC!
May is Mental Health Month!
Special Guest will be Jannie Cotton of Professional Counseling Associates

May is also National Physical Fitness and Sports Activity Month

Post questions @ www.power923.com