

Secretary Sebelius releases new report on health disparities

Written by
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U.S. Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Kathleen Sebelius last week released a new report on health disparities in America and will participate in a White House Health Care Stakeholder Discussion on the importance of reform that reduces disparities that exist in our current health care system. The new report *Health Disparities: A Case for Closing the Gap* is available at www.HealthReform.gov

“Minorities and low income Americans are more likely to be sick and less likely to get the care they need,” said Sebelius. “These disparities have plagued our health system and our country for too long. Now, it’s time for Democrats and Republicans to come together to pass reforms this year that help reduce disparities and give all Americans the care they need and deserve.”

A Case for Closing the Gap highlights some of the glaring disparities that exist in the current health system. Under the status quo:

- 48 percent of all African Americans adults suffer from a chronic disease compared to 39 percent of the general population.
- 8 percent of white Americans develop diabetes while 15 percent of African Americans, 14 percent of Hispanics, and 18 percent of American Indians develop diabetes.
- Hispanics were one-third less likely to be counseled on obesity than were whites – only 44 percent of Hispanics received counseling.

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- African Americans are 15 percent more likely to be obese than whites.

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The report also notes that 40 percent of low income Americans do not have health insurance. About one-third of the uninsured have a chronic disease, and they are six times less likely to receive care for a health problem than the insured. In contrast, only 6 percent of high income Americans lack insurance.