

## Subcommittee Addresses Minority Health Disparities

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Examines legislation aimed at improving the health of

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The hearing focused on H.R. 3014, the "Health Equity and Accountability Act of 2007," sponsored by Rep. Hilda Solis (D-CA), which addresses issues relating to cultural and linguistically appropriate care, workforce diversity, data collection, accountability, improvement of health services and rural health care.

"I am delighted that after eight long years, Congress is finally addressing inequities in health for communities of color. The collective voices of minorities in Congress and calls from diverse advocates resulted in this hearing, and I am proud that our issues are finally being raised before the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health. H.R. 3014 will improve access to health services for millions around the country and reduce health disparities in vulnerable communities," said Rep. Solis, Chair of the CHC Health and the Environment Task Force. "I thank our leadership for their support and look forward to working with my colleagues to move this important legislation forward."

H.R. 3014 would specifically require each Federal health agency to implement a national strategic plan to eliminate disparities based on race, ethnicity, and primary language and improve the health and health care of minority populations. It would also require the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to establish an Office of Health Disparities within the Office of Civil Rights.

"The existence of racial and ethnic health disparities in every aspect of health care is well documented," said Rep. John D. Dingell (D-MI), Chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce. "In a country as great as ours, the idea that one's ethnic or racial background factors into your chances of living a healthy and productive life is simply unacceptable."

During the hearing, witnesses, including Reps. James E. Clyburn (D-SC) and Jerry Moran (R-KS), Administration officials, and other stakeholders, stressed the importance of improving minorities' access to health care and the need for affordable health coverage and greater workforce diversity.

"Today, our Subcommittee shed light on the glaring inequalities in our health care system along ethnic, racial, gender, geographic and income lines," said Rep. Frank Pallone Jr. (D-NJ), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Health. "The Health Equity and Accountability Act targets the underlying causes of the current health disparity crisis. I am hopeful that the information we took away from this hearing will help us as we explore comprehensive health care reform."

Prepared by the Committee on Energy and Commerce

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