Health Disparities Among the Elderly

Preparing a Representative Health Care Workforce in Geriatrics
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Overview of Presentation

- **Demographics of minority elders**
- **Health care workforce:**
  - Poor preparation for elder care
  - Lack of inclusion of underserved minority groups
- **Programs and policies to address “The Perfect Storm”**
Minority Elderly Population, U.S. 2000-2050

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, p25-1130
Life Expectancy at Birth

Leading Causes of Death
Persons Age 75-84

The Importance of Having a Representative Health Care Workforce

- National policy priority: HRSA, HP2010, NIH Roadmap
- Equality and economic well-being of under-represented minorities (URMs)
- The three-A’s of public health: ACCESS, Affordability, and APPROPRIATENESS of health care provided
Our Focus: Selected Types of Health Care Professionals

- Physicians*
- Nurses*
- Pharmacists*
- Social Workers*
- Public Health

* Have either added qualifications exam or competencies established + Physical therapy
Preparation of Physicians: The Perfect Storm

- 10% of physicians are American Indian, African American or Hispanic
- 3 of our 145 medical schools have a geriatrics department
- 14 medical schools (less than 10 percent) require a geriatrics course
- Currently we have 6,000 certified geriatricians
Preparation of Nurses:  
The Perfect Storm

- 10% of registered nurses are American Indian, African American or Hispanic
- 30 of our 670 baccalaureate nursing programs have exemplary geriatric programs
- Less than 1 percent of the 2.2 million practicing registered nurses in the U.S. are certified in geriatrics
Preparation of Pharmacists: The Perfect Storm

- CA pharmacy graduates 2000:
  - <1% are American Indian
  - 8% are African American
  - 3% are Hispanic

- 48% of pharmacy programs provide a course on geriatric pharmacotherapy

- 25% of programs offer a specialization in geriatrics

- 700 pharmacists (<1%) have the geriatrics certification nationwide
Preparation of Social Workers: The Perfect Storm

- 7% of LCSW’s are African American
- 4% are Latino and 1% are Native American
- 59 (of 150) MSW programs offer a concentration in aging or gerontology
- 3 (of 432) BSW programs offer this concentration
- 2.4% of professional MSWs specialize in geriatrics
Preparation of Public Health Professionals: The Perfect Storm

- Sectors of public health have good URM representation
- Most public health schools offer at least one elective on an aging topic; none have a requirement
- Public health dept units have not identified aging as a priority area of concern nor as a priority training area for public health practice.
Programs and Policies

- **Series of programs focused on URMs**
  - Magnate schools and special tracks
  - HCOP, HETCs, RCMARs

- **Programs focused on aging curriculum**
  - Geriatric education centers (HRSA)
  - Healthy Aging Network (HAN) includes 8 accredited public health programs (CDC)
  - Discipline-specific initiatives (many by JAHF)
California’s Educational Pipeline to Create Representative Health Profession’s Workforce
Resources

- www.hrsa.gov
- http://futurehealth.ucsf.edu
- www.rcmar.ucla.edu
- www.geronet.ucla.edu
- My email: jcfrank@ucla.edu