



Contact:
Charmaine Ruddock
212-633-0800 ext. 1232
Cell: 917-561-5589
craddock@institute2000.org

PRESS RELEASE

\$4.2 million Awarded to Institute for Family Health to Eliminate Disparities in Health

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The Institute for Family Health was recently awarded 4.2 million from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities. The five-year funding recognizes Bronx Health REACH, a coalition led by the Institute, as the New York Center of Excellence for the Elimination of Disparities (CEED.) The NY CEED will focus on disparities in diabetes and cardiovascular disease among African American/black and Latino/Hispanic communities in the Bronx, New York City and New York State.

The CEED builds on seven years of effort led by Bronx Health REACH, a coalition of more than 40 community and faith-based organizations. Since 1999, the coalition has worked to increase the community's capacity to address racial disparities and promote health equality. Its activities include nutrition and fitness programs, a faith-based outreach initiative, a small grocer initiative, and a patient advocacy and rights campaign. Bronx Health REACH was a critical player in the grass-roots movement to remove whole milk from New York City public school menus last year. In 2005, it published a report titled *Separate and Unequal: Medical Apartheid in New York City* that describes disparities in the way health care is delivered. In 2003, it brought 500 Bronx residents to Albany to speak to legislators about its Statewide Advocacy Agenda to eliminate disparities.

“Despite these efforts, and the efforts of similar projects across the country, and despite the fact that health outcomes in general are improving, the difference in health status between whites and people of color has not really changed. The gap is still there.” stated Neil Calman, M.D., the project's principal investigator and the president and CEO of the Institute for Family Health.

Project director Charmaine Ruddock agreed, and added “This award is especially significant because Bronx Health REACH is one of only a few of the programs funded by CDC that is led by a community-based organization. We are completely committed to the importance of the community's role in eliminating disparities - those most affected must be part of the solution. We regret that more community based projects across the country were approved but not funded due to CDC's budgetary constraints.”

Dr. Calman continued, “This award confirms our commitment to this work. It is not enough to provide health care - we must make certain that everyone has access to the highest quality care available, as well as to the information and resources that enable us to stay healthy. It’s not just about access to health care facilities; it’s about access to providers who speak your language, to health information that is understandable, and to healthy foods and places to exercise.”

The CDC awards, funded through Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) U.S. program, target five racial and ethnic groups (African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, Asian Americans, Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders, and American Indians/Alaska Natives) and key health areas that contribute to health disparities, including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, breast and cervical cancer, hepatitis B, asthma, infant mortality, and adult immunizations.

“Despite improvements in the overall health of the nation, health disparities remain one of the most important public health challenges of our time,” said Janet Collins, Ph.D., director, CDC’s National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. “We are extremely excited about the new REACH award recipients because their innovative approaches will help improve people’s health in our communities, health care settings, schools, and work sites.” For more information about the CDC REACH program, visit www.cdc.gov/reach.

The Institute for Family Health provides primary health care services at 25 locations in the Bronx, Manhattan, Ulster and Dutchess counties. It also operates health promotion and outreach programs, and engages in health professional training and health services research. To learn more about Bronx REACH, please visit the website at www.bronxhealthreach.org or call 212.633.0800 x1232.