

**Update Memo: The State of the Health Equity Movement – November 2009**

One page summary of DRA Project Reports 09 01 and 09 03

The health equity movement seeks to prevent or remedy the glaring socio-economic and racial disparities that exist in the United States. Most of these disparities are systematic and avoidable, and therefore unjust and unfair. In an effort to identify and track the health equity movement, the DRA Project has released two companion memos: [The State of the Health Equity Movement](#) and [Health Equity Policies: A Review of the Recommendations](#).

*The State of the Health Equity Movement* Memo provides a look at the many activities currently underway. The memo identifies health equity offices in 10 states, health equity initiatives or centers in 8 cities/counties and 2 regions, 42 conferences, and highlights 7 out of the many, many publications in the area of health equity. All of the identified activities indicate the growth of the health equity movement. Further indication of the growing awareness of this movement is the screening of [UNNATURAL CAUSES: Is Inequality Making Us Sick?](#) in hundreds of organizations and communities since its release in 2007.

This memo identified five key themes that have emerged across these various health equity activities:

- Increasing awareness of health inequities and the social determinants of health
- Advocacy and leadership for health equity and social justice
- Emphasizing community empowerment and involvement
- Increasing collaborative partnerships across all sectors
- Need for coordination and utilization of research and outcome evaluations for more effective results

While health equity and the social determinants of health have had an increasing presence in the national discourse, the largest developments in health equity have been at the state and local level. Spearheading this movement, state and local entities are designing plans to address health equity in specific areas.

Noting these actions, the second parallel memo, *Health Equity Policies: A Review of the Recommendations*, collects the specific recommendations for achieving health equity presented in 28 reports from key actors involved in the movement. Common categories emerged across the large number of recommendations:

- Early childhood investment
- Education
- Environment, housing, and transportation
- Healthy eating and behaviors
- Employment
- Law enforcement/criminal justice
- Health care

To compare the specific recommendations within these categories, this second memo presents an illustrative chart comparing the recommendations from 10 of the reports. This chart shows the many commonalities of recommendations throughout the reports. The breadth of the recommendations reflects that health and equity are influenced by virtually all policies. The consideration of health and equity in all policies is beginning to grow. Finally, the activities and recommendations in both memos suggest that community cohesion, voice, and collaboration are important aspects of the health equity movement.

The full memos are available at: <http://www.altfutures.com/draproject>. If you have information to add, please email [futurist@altfutures.com](mailto:futurist@altfutures.com) to be included in future updates.

*"The challenge is not only to anticipate the future, but to create it."*