

The DRA Project

Disparity Reducing Advances Project

- **Accelerating health
disparity reducing
innovation**

Founding Sponsors



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Robert Wood Johnson Foundation



DRA Project Description

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The ***Disparity Reducing Advances Project*** (the DRA Project) is a multi-year, multi-stakeholder project developed by the Institute for Alternative Futures (IAF) to identify the most promising advances for bringing health gains to the poor and underserved and accelerating the development and deployment of these advances to reduce disparities.

The last century has seen major advances in public health, health technology, economic wealth and prosperity. While these advances have translated into increased health status for Americans there are many underserved communities that have been left behind.

The next decade will see a myriad of advances in prevention and treatment that will yield significant health gains. Notable advances are likely in: *community approaches to prevention, healthy eating & active living, the expanded care model, patient navigation, complementary and alternative medicine, and biomonitoring.*

Typically the poor and underserved are the last to benefit from such advances. Health disparities in the US are significant. African-Americans are 23 percent more likely to die from all types of cancer than whites, and in 2001 the death rate from diabetes in Hispanics was 40 percent higher than the death rate of whites.

The DRA Project will work to overcome this reality by accelerating key advances in public health and health care. Several reports have been prepared and are available at www.altfutures.com/dra. Reports focused on emerging opportunities in biomonitoring are also available at www.altfutures.com/bfp.

Developing the Network of Sponsors and Partners

The DRA Project includes a wide range of health and health care organizations, including community organizations and community health centers, health systems, government agencies, health technology companies, research centers, public policy and advocacy organizations. Partners contribute to DRA Project efforts. Currently there are over 55 organizations that are DRA Project Partners.

Creating a Portfolio of Disparity Reducing Advances

In 2006 the DRA Project reviewed the literature on disparities, considered what might be the most important disparity reducing advances, and developed forecasts for key areas related to disparity reducing advances. These reports are available at www.altfutures.com/dra.

Efforts

The DRA Partners chose several efforts to pursue. Four of these efforts will seek to accelerate advances in public health, with four others in health care.

Public Health Efforts

Refocusing on the Social Determinants of Health: The work of the DRA Project has shown the importance of focusing “upstream” on the determinants of health and disparities. DRA and its partners are also creating awareness of the social determinants of health through Policy briefings and support for other campaigns.

Lessons from National Healthy Eating and Active Living Programs: Healthy eating and active living (HEAL) are the keys to preventing obesity as well as health disparities in diabetes, heart disease and cancer.

Obesity Prevention in Schools: Schools are an important setting to encourage good health and to prevent obesity.

REACH 2010 Lessons: The Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Public Health (REACH) is CDC’s cornerstone initiative aimed at eliminating disparities in health status experienced by ethnic minority populations.

Health Care Focused Efforts

Expanded Care Model: One of the most important ways to reduce health disparities is to have low income and marginalized populations receive quality health care including preventative services.

Integrative Primary Care: Many low income and minority communities and their health care providers use complementary or alternative approaches (CAM).

Consumer-patient Navigation: One source of health disparities is the inability of patients to navigate and appropriately access health care treatment, particularly for diseases with complex treatment regimens, such as cancer.

Continuous Passive Biomonitoring: New technology for monitoring patients in their homes and in their daily routines offers promise in conducting research, preventing disease, screening for risk factors and monitoring treatment or progression of disease.

Other Partners Welcome

The DRA Project is extending an open invitation to your organization to become involved in reducing health disparities. In 2008, the DRA project will work to accelerate appropriate advances and consolidate the learning from its partner network. Throughout the project, there will be twice yearly meetings of all the partners. The next Partners meeting will be **March 31, 2007** in the Washington D.C. area.

Organizations committed to reducing health disparities are welcome to join and should contact the DRA Project at futurist@altfutures.com. For more information check the DRA Project website at www.altfutures.com/dra or call **703-684-5880**.

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