

**PUBLIC POLICY AND ADVOCACY**

***Hearing on the Measurement of Health Disparities in Racial and Ethnic Populations  
Subcommittee on Populations of the National Committee on Vital and Health  
Statistics***

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On February 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, the Populations Subcommittee of the National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics convened a hearing on the measurement of health disparities in racial and ethnic groups. The hearing was designed to receive testimony from a number of federal agencies that maintain surveys that are instrumental in gathering data on the health status, health behaviors, health care experiences and health outcomes of racial and ethnic groups. Scheduled testimony at the hearing provided information on the capacity of the surveys to inform on health disparities, and for which racial and ethnic groups, what variables would be beneficial in measuring health disparities, how these datasets can be linked to other datasets to provide contextual data and a number of other issues relevant to the measurement of disparities.

It is the subcommittee's perspective that accurate, timely, and relevant information about the health of the American people enables the identification of health problems, the discovery of specific vulnerable groups in the population with particular problems, the design and targeting of private and public sector programs to address those problems, and the evaluation and redesign of those programs. The Subcommittee on Populations examines the far-ranging considerations raised in generating information about the health of the American people, and in ensuring that this information is accurate, timely, and relevant. The Subcommittee focuses both on (a) population-based data concerning the U.S. population generally, as well as on (b) data about specific vulnerable groups within the population which are disadvantaged by virtue of their special health needs, economic status, race and ethnicity, disability, age, or area of residence. The subcommittee on populations has followed with interests a number of activities of federal groups germane to accomplishing the goals of the generation of health data on racial/ethnic groups particularly in meeting the objectives of Healthy People 2010.

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