

## **Diversity in the Media: Your Turn to Cover Minority Health**

There are huge differences along racial and ethnic lines in terms of health outcomes, morbidity, mortality and severity; level of care; stage of diagnoses; maternal and infant health; and more. In many cases, complex issues like racism, wealth inequality, and zoning policies are just as pernicious in their root cause of these disparities as family tradition, lifestyle choices, and personal discipline. But the former set of issues is not always given fair attention in the discourse about health.

Perhaps it is the very complex nature of the former issues that keeps them hard to see. Perhaps for those benefiting – or at least not hurting – from the income imbalance – it is more logical focusing on the latter set of issues. Or perhaps there is an absence within the ranks of those determining news content of those who are familiar, sensitive, or curious about the links and distinctions between systemic factors and personal contributions to differences in health care and outcomes.

And it is this last point in particular that I'm interested in talking to you about. To improve "Minority Health" and close disparities gaps; to get at the root causes; to bring forth the missing stories and lessons...

If you look at Diversity in the Media as an indicator...It may be up to you...

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In the summer of 2007, the National Urban League's Opportunity Journal released an explosive issue: "Diversity Lacking in Media And What Do We Do About It?" Publishers, editors and contributors of the magazine examined print and broadcast news, and they looked at consumer practices, industry data, sponsor involvement, and their own study on Sunday morning network TV. Their work was instructive:

- According to research, African-Americans rely less on newspapers and more on tv, radio, direct mail, and internet
- Results of a national survey conducted in relation to a goal of increasing newsroom diversity found that, in 2007, only 11% of newspaper supervisors were minorities – and this was an incline.
- Radio has seen a decline, where minority newsroom staff went from 16% in 1998 to 6.4% in 2006. Minority radio news directors were only at 4.4%.
- A closer look at radio through A 2004 study found that only 17% of the public regularly listened to talk radio; the audience essentially was male, middle class, and conservative.
- More analysis of talk shows include a study of 8000 talk show hosts, where 70% of them identified as conservative.
- A study of Diversity in the Washington press corps found that of reporters, columnists, editors, and bureau chiefs working for daily newspapers in DC, only 10.5% were of color.