

**SOCIAL & CULTURAL BARRIERS**  
Program Year 2012

**GOAL:** “To improve health equity and reduce health disparities among racial, ethnic and linguistic minorities in New Hampshire”

A person’s health is determined by many things including environment, income, family history, behavior, and access to care. Additionally, age, race, ethnicity, language, gender, sexual preference, or disability can create barriers to health. Racial, ethnic and language minorities experience higher incidence, prevalence, and mortality from preventable illnesses, calling for attention to the factors that create health disparities and inequities. New Hampshire is a state with growing diversity, with the minority population growing by 60% since 1990. Achieving good health for all of New Hampshire’s people requires our society’s understanding of the causes of disparities and collective action to promote health equity.

**Investment to date: \$5,848,191**

**Number of grants to date: 144**



*At the end of Program Year 2011, the Endowment for Health Board approved revisions to the Theme Outcomes and Strategies. The new outcomes and strategies for PY2012 through PY2015 are below:*

**Theme Outcomes**

- New Hampshire’s health care workforce is more diverse
- Persons of minority background develop health literacy and are empowered to navigate New Hampshire’s health care systems
- Newcomer populations and minorities are welcomed, included and integrated in New Hampshire’s communities, and thus experience better well-being
- New Hampshire’s decision makers and community leaders have increased knowledge and understanding of health inequities and the factors causing them
- State, local and organizational policies address health disparities and promote health equity for racial, ethnic and linguistic minorities

**Theme Strategies**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support efforts to develop and strengthen pipelines for minority students in health professions</li> <li>• Support efforts to help minority health care professionals maximize their contributions to the health care system</li> <li>• Bolster efforts to develop health literacy and capacity to navigate the health care system, particularly for ethnic and language minorities</li> <li>• Encourage inclusive and appropriate opportunities and environments for physical activity, access to healthy foods and safety for racial and ethnic minorities where they live, learn, work and play</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support initiatives that facilitate multi-ethnic and inter-cultural collaboration to achieve integration</li> <li>• Engage scholars/researchers to examine data and disparities to generate and disseminate knowledge of the prevalence, the causes and the solutions for addressing disparities and promoting health equity in New Hampshire</li> <li>• Educate and engage non-traditional partners, including stakeholders from non-health fields, who impact where minorities live, learn, work and play</li> <li>• Help build advocacy capacity by and on behalf of racial, ethnic and language minorities to advance health equity and reduce health disparities in New Hampshire</li> </ul> |
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## Progress

Over the past year, Endowment investments have accomplished the following:

### *Improving state, local and organizational policies*

- The Medical Interpretation Advisory Board (MIAB) worked with the NH Hospital Association and the NH Department of Health and Human Services to provide guidance and education to help hospitals meet the new requirements for the collection of race, ethnicity, and patient language data.
- A collaborative effort of the Endowment, the NH Office of Minority Health and Refugee Affairs, the Foundation for Healthy Communities (FHC), University of NH, and others led to the creation of a *Plan to Reduce Health Disparities and Promote Health Equity in New Hampshire*.
- This year, the MIAB merged with the newly-formed New Hampshire Health & Equity Partnership (H&EP), a collaboration of diverse public and private stakeholders which has a broader mandate to advance health equity and implement the Plan. Since its formation in 2001, the MIAB has made tremendous strides in addressing issues of language access and culturally appropriate care.

### *Increasing access to culturally and linguistically appropriate health care*

- Several Endowment-supported projects have worked to enhance health care access for cultural and linguistic minorities. A community-based health project for Somali refugees in southern NH provided medical interpretation and case management to increase access to health services and community health education by a local hospital.
- An evidence-based, ethnic-led family support program for African immigrant and refugee families struggling with mental well-being and social isolation expanded this year to include Bhutanese refugees.

### *Improving the cultural effectiveness of health care providers*

- The first year of the multi-funder project, *NH Nursing Diversity Pipeline* helped to enhance awareness of nursing careers among minority students in middle and high school through nursing after-school and summer-camp programs. The project also launched activities to support minority nurses and nursing students by establishing the Diverse Nurse Network and a pre-college minority nursing student orientation.
- The FHC's Cultural Awareness Healthcare Workgroup focused on helping hospitals to better meet the needs of patients with hearing loss by supporting the development of an educational DVD about hospital stays.

### *Increasing social inclusion and social connectedness*

- A community-wide immigrant integration pilot in Nashua was completed during this program year. Working closely with refugee resettlement agencies, the volunteer community, and refugees themselves, the project established community-based groups to address needs related to language access, schools, employment and economic mobility, health and mental health, and housing.
- A planning effort to examine promising state and national immigrant integration practices is informing a statewide Immigrant Integration Working Group and an integration conference planned for 2012.
- The NH Humanities Council continues to bring together native-born persons and immigrants in reading, discussion, and personal reflection on issues of immigration and diversity within a context of civil discourse.

## Current Funding Interests

In the coming year, the Endowment is particularly interested in:

- Supporting the implementation of the *Plan to Reduce Health Disparities and Promote Health Equity in NH*.
- Engaging scholars/researchers to assist in increasing local knowledge of the prevalence, the causes, and the solutions for addressing disparities and promoting health equity in NH.
- Community-based programs to develop health literacy and skills to navigate the health care system.
- Strategies to expand the multi-cultural, multi-lingual workforce by cultivating health careers among minority youth and addressing barriers that keep foreign-trained health workers out of NH's health care workforce.
- The development of an immigrant integration working group to share lessons learned, create synergy, and increase impact among local efforts in Laconia, Concord, Manchester, Nashua, and elsewhere.

The Program Director for the Social & Cultural Barriers theme is Kelly Laflamme at [KLaflamme@endowmentforhealth.org](mailto:KLaflamme@endowmentforhealth.org) or (603) 228-2448, Endowment for Health, 14 South St., Concord, NH 03301. A listing of Endowment Social & Cultural Barriers grants is available at [www.endowmentforhealth.org](http://www.endowmentforhealth.org)