



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DHMH Receives Grant to Address Health Disparities

New program to focus on minority student recruitment, program assessment

BALTIMORE, MD (September 29, 2005) -- The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) has received a \$785,750 federal grant to help improve minority health in Maryland.

The five-year grant is the first ever received by the department's Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities. The office was established by the Maryland General Assembly during its 2004 session.

"Health disparities are beginning to get the attention they have long needed," said DHMH Secretary S. Anthony McCann. "We will not be able to solve this problem overnight, but thanks to this grant, we will be able to take positive steps forward."

The grant provides for support for a new project entitled *Maryland Eliminating Disparities -- Now* (MED-Now).

MED-Now will concentrate on two areas: enrollment of minority students in health-related fields and an internal assessment of DHMH programs that impact health disparities.

A Healthcare Workforce Diversity project will be established to work in partnership with health care professional schools of medicine, nursing, dental and others to increase the number of minority students. The Systems Change - Internal project will concentrate on a review of DHMH programs to enhance best practices and reduce health disparities.

"We must keep proper pace with the changing demographics of the populations we serve," said Dr. Carlessia A. Hussein, director of the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities. "We need to take practical and reasonable measures that are sensitive to diversity in language, lifestyle and socio-economic realities."

This grant is from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health's State Partnership Grant Program to Improve Minority Health. The grant is awarded over the next five years based on the availability of federal funds.

More information about the DHMH Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities is available on the Internet at www.mdhealthdisparities.org.

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