

RWJF Commission to Build a Healthier America

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Overall Goal

The RWJF Commission to Build a Healthier America is a national, comprehensive effort to raise awareness about the large socio-economic status (SES) differences in health among Americans and then seek practical, common-ground solutions to improve the health of all.

Key Objectives

- Increase awareness about the relationships between social factors and health, and how these relationships have produced large inequalities in health among Americans
- Generate concern and motivate efforts to address the problem of health inequalities based on socioeconomic status and race/ethnicity
- Foster and inform constructive public discourse about ways to reduce these health inequalities
- Identify and prioritize the adoption of public and private policies and interventions to reduce social inequalities and thereby improve the health of Americans overall

Commission Infrastructure

- RWJF Foundation Board and Staff
- Central Office: George Washington University, Dept. of Health Policy
- Research Arm: Center on Social Disparities in Health, UCSF
- Communications Partners:
 - Burness Communications
 - Health 360 Strategies -- a service of Chandler Chicco Agency and Mehlman Vogel Castagnetti, Inc

Approach

Raise awareness and identify areas for action by

- Targeting decision-makers in public and private sector
 - Reaching beyond health care to non-traditional allies and advocates
 - Making academic research on social inequalities more accessible to policy makers
 - Conducting work in a resolutely nonpartisan fashion
 - Designing a plan that is sustainable, flexible and relevant
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Background Activities: Setting the Stage

- Message testing
 - Qualitative research to identify how to approach topic in ways that resonate with the public and key stakeholders
- Polling
 - Public opinion data collection to gauge the public's knowledge of health disparities and to monitor change over time
- Interviews with key stakeholders
 - Interviews with key policymakers, stakeholders, and influentials for their impressions and input

Setting the Stage - II

- Scanning the environment
 - Tracking what is being done on poverty/disparity issues and assessing opportunities
- Recruiting Commissioners
 - Nationally recognized persons
 - Diverse backgrounds
 - Networks to broad constituencies
 - Non-partisan and bi-partisan
 - Demonstrated leadership and commitment to improving life for all Americans

Commission Activities

- Commission meetings & Special Events
 - Field Hearings
 - Reports
 - Storybank Development
 - Outreach
 - Website
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Commission Meetings & Field Hearings

- Raising awareness across the country
- Taking the message beyond Capitol Hill to real communities
- Listening to and learning from real people and communities who face the problem of social inequalities every day
- Highlighting promising potential solutions

Commission Timeline

- Two Year life
- December 2007 launch
- Ongoing activities in 2008 and 2009
- Culminating in actionable recommendations that policy makers can embrace

Save the Date

- When: December 5, 2007
 - Where: Union Station (Columbus Room)
Washington, DC
 - What: Formal announcement of the
Commission. Release of the
Commission's First Report
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Summary

A serious commitment on the part of the RWJ Foundation to:

- Explore the factors that influence health
- Raise public awareness of social inequalities in health
- Provide meaningful recommendations to spur action so that millions of people will have a chance to lead healthier lives