

Health Equity and Accountability Act of 2009: Summary

The TriCaucus wants to see the first four titles in any health reform bill:

Title I: Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Health Care

Title II: Health Workforce Diversity

Title III: Data Collecting and Reporting: The bill — with appropriate safeguards to protect privacy — will require federal agencies and recipients of federal funds to collect and report data on race, ethnicity, and primary language. Additionally, this bill will provide grants to minority-serving institutions to access and analyze such data to assess the effectiveness of efforts to eliminate health disparities.

Title IV: Accountability and Evaluation: The bill will require each federal health agency to develop and implement a national strategic action plan to eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities; expand the Office of Civil Rights and the Office of Minority Health at the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS); create minority health offices within agencies at DHHS and at the Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services; and establish compliance offices in federal health agencies.

Community Prevention and Equity Elements:

- Improving environmental justice by strengthening Environmental Protection Agency efforts to ensure that the EPA is addressing disproportionate environmental health threats
- Health empowerment zones: establishes health empowerment zones, communities that experience disproportionate disparities in health status and health care. Health empowerment zones given priority for federal competitive grants.
- Community-Based Practice: Codifies the CDC's Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health program, which provides grants and assistance to communities to improve equity in health and healthcare.
- Congressional Budget Office scoring of prevention: Requires the CBO to incorporate health care savings associated with clinical and community preventive services and programs in its health care cost estimates.