



# Congressional Black Caucus

of the Congress of the United States  
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## The Health Equity and Accountability Act of 2009

(NOTE: This legislation currently is in development)

The **Health Equity and Accountability Act of 2009** will address the root causes of this nation's health disparities crisis by working to achieve health equity across lines of race and ethnicity, gender and geography. In addition to strengthening the National Center for Minority Health and Health Disparities at the National Institutes of Health, bolstering the capacity of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and Asian-American and Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions, supporting the implementation of health information technology as a means to measure, monitor and reduce health disparities, codifying the Minority AIDS Initiative and the Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health across all relevant federal agencies, offices, and addressing the environmental determinants of health, the **Health Equity and Accountability Act of 2009** also will:

- ❖ **Bolster efforts to ensure culturally and linguistically appropriate health care and remove language and cultural barriers to healthcare.** The bill will help patients from diverse backgrounds, including those with limited English proficiency, with provisions such as codifying existing standards for culturally and linguistically appropriate health care, assisting health care professionals in providing cultural and language services, and increasing federal reimbursement for these services.
- ❖ **Improve workforce diversity.** The bill strongly supports the programs covered under Title VII and will expand programs to address the shortage of under-represented minority health care providers across of medical realms, including dental, oral and mental health care.
- ❖ **Strengthen and coordinate data collection.** 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.
- ❖ **Ensure accountability and improve 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.
- ❖ **Improve health care services.** The **Health Equity and Accountability Act of 2009** will establish community-centric initiatives to coordinate existing resources to address health disparities in communities, provide grants to launch prevention demonstration projects, address border health issues, and promote positive health behaviors.

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