

Discussion Guide

Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Medical Care

Sparking Physician Dialogue On Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care

Background - Physician Dialogue Session

Physicians are in an excellent position to positively affect the patient, clinician, and health system factors that likely contribute to disparities in health care. The physician dialogue session—designed to follow the speaker presentation—provides a valuable opportunity to obtain perspectives from physicians on how they view their role and the types of educational or clinical resources they may need. The following brief guide provides a framework for leading the dialogue.

Facilitator Goal: To create an environment in which physicians can begin to define the problem, identify potential solutions, and provide insights on resources needed for change.

Dialogue Objectives

- Discuss key issues, concerns, barriers to action
- Discuss possible solutions or resources

Part I. Introduction (10 minutes)

Briefly discuss the dialogue objectives. Explain that the group's participation will provide insights for possible initiatives to support physicians in eliminating racial and ethnic disparities. Ask participants to introduce themselves.

Part II. Identification of Key Issues and Shared Concerns (20 minutes)

Identifying key issues and shared concerns is a critical step that allows participants to express their own reactions to the issues. The aim is to allow the audience to discuss their opinions and then to move the dialogue from individual to physician community perspectives—or from “I” to “We.”

Questions to spark dialogue:

- What is the strongest, most convincing evidence to support the idea that racial and ethnic disparities are a national problem? If nothing you have heard so far convinces you, what type of research or data would sway your opinion? What is the most credible source?
- Can you give any examples of unequal treatment of racial and ethnic minorities? Why does this happen? Who is responsible?
- What is the impact of disparities on the health system and/or on Americans seeking care?
- What impact could addressing disparities have on a physician's medical practice? On the local health care community?
- What concerns do you have about physicians being identified as playing a key role in eliminating disparities?

Part III. Identification of barriers and solutions (20 minutes)

Identifying possible barriers and solutions gives participants a common goal to work towards. The aim is to secure and capture unique audience insights into the larger community environment that will, ultimately, support or resist change.

Questions to spark dialogue:

- What do you view as the major barriers to improving health outcomes for racial and ethnic groups? Do these barriers exist in your community?
- Who or what might provide essential support for addressing the issues on a local or state level? Can they be involved effectively? What conditions will make this possible?
- Who or what might oppose efforts to solve the problem? How can they be involved effectively?
- How can the barriers and resistance be overcome? Can change happen in your community?

Part IV. Resources for Change (20 minutes)

Discuss and secure suggestions from participants on useful tools, resources, and technical assistance. Emphasize that audience feedback is crucial to designing initiatives that meet physicians' needs.

Questions to spark dialogue:

- What resources or tools have you seen being used to address ethnic and racial disparities?
- What resources or tools would be useful?
 - CMEs
 - Grand rounds
 - Annual meeting workshops
 - State medical society workshops
 - Practice guidelines
 - Patient-provider communication toolkits
 - Cultural competency toolkits
 - ListSrvs that focus on topic areas of interest
- What formats do you find most useful (rate 1 to 5)
 - Audio/video tapes with instruction guides
 - Workbooks
 - Interactive Web-based instruction w/immediate feedback
 - Personal or group training sessions
- Who do you view as the most credible source of resources and tools?

Part V. Conclusion (5 minutes)

Thank all participants for their time. Encourage attendees to log on to www.kff/whythedifference.org to share their comments.

Remind Recorder to mail session notes to:
(insert address)

**This guide is designed as a resource for discussion facilitators and is not meant for distribution.*