

News Release



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DECEMBER 11, 2008

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South LA Shortchanged for Health

Report Calls for Coordinated Leadership to Reinvest in Community

Press Conference & Symposium • Thursday, December 11, 2008 • 9-11:30 am
Holman United Methodist Church • 3320 West Adams Blvd, LA 90018

Keynote Address: Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas

Los Angeles, CA—Community Health Councils and the Coalition for Health & Justice have just completed a year-long study of more than 50 socioeconomic and environmental factors that influence health behaviors and outcomes. The *South LA Health Equity Scorecard* report, which will be released on December 11th, documents the inequities in South LA’s healthcare and physical resource environments. The report challenges city and county officials to take action and develop a joint power agreement that outlines a comprehensive plan to address the inequities and identifies benchmarks and performance standards for public accountability.

“When we talk about South LA, it’s generally in terms of the deficits and rise in violence, obesity or other health risk factors with little or no analysis about the root causes. In this report, we examine the inequality in the distribution and quality of the resources a community needs to be healthy and point to the policies or lack of public policy that allow such conditions to persist,” says Lark Galloway-Gilliam, executive director of CHC and a primary author on the report. Home to more than one million people, the area encapsulates the health consequences that result from the disturbing inequality in the distribution of power, income, goods and services in Los Angeles County. Galloway-Gilliam continues, “From hospitals, clinics, and preventive care services to healthy foods, places to be physically active, safe housing and adequate schools, South LA residents are forced to live and raise their families with less.”

The study shows unequivocally that South Los Angeles does not share equally in overall regional resources. It underscores the interrelationship among the many factors that contribute to health, high among them the depressed socioeconomic status of South LA residents. The data in the *Scorecard* link a comprehensive overview of the community’s health with immediate policy opportunities to eliminate inequities in resources and ultimately banish health disparities. The findings provide a framework to

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galvanize support across public and private sectors in Los Angeles County for policy change and community reinvestment for health equity.

The study calculated scores for 50 socioeconomic and environmental factors that influence health behaviors and outcomes for the 100-square-mile of South Los Angeles and, for comparison, West LA where there are more favorable health outcomes. Both areas were evaluated against the whole of Los Angeles County. The resources were grouped into broad categories, which were scored against the county as a whole.

Most of the indicators revealed a chasm between resources in South LA and West LA. For example—

- In South LA, there are approximately 11 pediatricians for every 100,000 children, compared to 193 pediatricians for every 100,000 children in West LA. LA County overall has 57 pediatricians for every 100,000 children.
- In South LA, 30 percent of adults are uninsured, compared to 12 percent in West LA.
- Uninsured women in South LA are less likely to receive preventive screening services. Only 34 mammograms per 1,000 uninsured women occurred through the South LA Public Private Partner (PPP) clinics, compared to 169 mammogram screenings per 1,000 uninsured women through West LA PPP clinics and 41 mammograms per 1,000 uninsured women at PPP clinics throughout LA County.
- South LA has 8.5 liquor stores per square mile compared to 1.97 stores in West LA.
- In South LA, 37 percent of households are overcrowded compared to fewer than 8 percent of households in West LA.
- In South LA, 64 percent of schools are classified as insufficiently staffed, resourced, and without a clean, safe, and functional learning environment according to Williams settlement standards. Only 8 percent of West LA schools did not meet these standards.

“Achieving health equity in both physical and healthcare resources will take coordinated leadership and a comprehensive agenda for policy change. These efforts must extend beyond the walls of City and County Halls and include the active participation of community, business and faith-based leadership,” says Nancy Watson, Policy Director on the project. “Every step will require coordinated efforts across multiple stakeholders.”

A number of coalitions and organizations are already hard at work addressing these indicators. The Press Conference will present the *Scorecard* data and recommendations, followed by a community panel focusing on highlights, barriers, and options for next steps with a response by newly-elected LA County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas. The *Scorecard* is intended to guide the agenda for South LA and provides key recommendations along with the agencies responsible for their implementation.