



# NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP FOR ACTION

to End Health Disparities



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Contact:**

Josie Rodriguez, Chair  
josie.rodriguez@nebraska.gov  
office: 402-471-1409

## Heartland Regional Health Equity Council releases Environmental Scan Addendum

(Lincoln, NE, April 29, 2016) The Heartland Regional Health Equity Council (RHEC) released an Environmental Scan Addendum that identifies heart disease disparities among different population groups in Region VII, which includes the state of Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, and Nebraska. The RHEC seeks to achieve health equity by using the best available data information to influence health policy in the region.

“Heart disease continues to be one of the leading causes of death among minority populations. Publication of this addendum allowed the council to highlight heart disease disparities among the non-Hispanic White and racial and ethnic minority populations in Region VII. It also allowed the council to build upon the environmental scan that was published in 2014 and encouraged collaboration among various individuals involved in the Heartland Regional Health Equity Council.” said Josie Rodriguez, Chair, Region VII Heartland Regional Health Equity Council.

The addendum provides an overview of demographics, health disparities, social determinants of health, and other factors affecting minority populations in Region VII. It identifies challenges, opportunities, and next steps to promote health equity and the elimination of health disparities. The RHEC Data Committee established heart disease as a priority area for 2015 because it is one of the leading causes of death for minority populations, accounting for approximately one-third of the potential life-years lost disparity between White and African American populations (American Heart Association, 2015).

Some of the key findings include:

- The age-adjusted heart disease mortality rates for the total population decreased from 2001 to 2010 for all race and ethnicity groups for all states, with the exception of Asians in Kansas. The mortality rates for African Americans continue to be higher than that of Whites and other racial and ethnic groups.
- In Missouri, African Americans had 840.5 more years of potential life lost per 100,000 relative to whites, which is still problematic but is an improvement over previous decades.
- In Nebraska, American Indians had the highest mortality rate, followed by African Americans.
- In Iowa, the overall age-adjusted death rate due to heart disease from 2001-2005 was 210 per 100,000 people. The rate decreased to 180 in 2006-2010.
- The total percentages (e.g. all racial or ethnic groups combined for each state) of people told they had a myocardial infarction ranged between 3.6% (NE, KS) and 4.7% (MO) for all four states for 2006-2010. It is important to note that African Americans of Missouri had a high percentage (11%) as did American Indians of Iowa (12.6%) in 2006-2010.



Heartland Regional Health Equity Council



# NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP FOR ACTION

to End Health Disparities



Programs to improve cardiovascular health in the Heartland are necessary to continue health improvements and reduce health disparities. Potential programs include: health education campaigns, worksite wellness programs, efforts to improve quality of care, community efforts to strengthen emergency care systems and efforts to increase access to community and social supports to help individuals manage their condition (American Heart Association, 2015; KDHE, 2010).

The Heartland RHEC is a member of the National Partnership for Action to End Health Disparities (NPA), the first national multi-sector community and partnership-driven effort on behalf of health equity. RHEC is one of ten regional councils that focus on strengthening health initiatives, leveraging resources, and encouraging innovative strategies that ensure improved health outcomes for all Americans.

To view the report and to learn more on the efforts of RHEC to improve health equity, visit <http://region7.npa-rhec.org/>



Heartland Regional Health Equity Council