

FOREWORD

RESEARCH CENTERS IN MINORITY INSTITUTIONS (RCMI): CURRENT SCIENCE

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On behalf of the Division of Research Infrastructure in the National Center for Research Resources (NCRR) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), let us once again congratulate the members of the Research Centers in Minority Institutions (RCMI) Community for moving forward with another timely supplement highlighting some of the remarkable achievements of the RCMI community over the last two years.

The RCMI program has applied interdisciplinary strategies to reduce health disparities for more than 20 years, many of which are presented at the biennial RCMI International Symposium on Health Disparities. Congressional legislation sponsored by both Congressmen Louis Stokes and William Natcher appropriated funds to initiate the RCMI program to enhance the research mission of minority health professional schools that produce healthcare professionals who provide health care to minority communities. This critical funding to support the research infrastructure of minority institutions that awarded doctoral degrees in biomedical or health sciences has grown from an initial seven institutions to the present cohort of 18 institutions.

The RCMI program was created, in part, as a vehicle to address some of the key disparities in health outcomes for minority populations noted in the landmark report by Dr. Margaret Heckler in 1985. The need for cutting edge translational research identifying and providing solutions for

the healthcare needs of minority populations continues to be addressed by the RCMI community.

It has been an honor and a privilege to have the opportunity to participate with the RCMI community in the evolving scientific agenda to improve outcomes for minority populations. With a portfolio of minority research institutions ranging from Puerto Rico to Hawaii, the RCMI community has grown to be a major contributor to the improvement of the nation's health. This special supplement of *Ethnicity & Disease* from RCMI highlights a few of the many exciting research activities that are representative of the excellence within the RCMI community. It is our firm belief that the institutions within the RCMI community will continue to play a leading role in the nation's health as the increasing diversity within America obligates the scientific and healthcare agenda of the nation to integrate cultural, environmental and psychosocial influences alongside molecular and pharmacodynamic variations that affect health outcomes.

It is the mission of the National Institutes of Health to provide a foundation of scientific evidence in order to advance health care without the limits of race, ethnicity, gender, culture, or generation. We are proud to see each member institution within the RCMI program embrace this moral imperative with the passion and dedication required to eliminate the unacceptably high rate of health inequities, and by so doing, advance health promotion and disease prevention, truly leaving no patient behind.