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Dear Colleagues,

The *Health Indicators for Women in Los Angeles County: Highlighting Disparities by Ethnicity and Insurance Status* report has been released to draw attention to the health needs of women in our county. The report, the first to focus on health issues for women, highlights the health disparities apparent among the diverse communities living in Los Angeles County. Many factors contribute to these health disparities including poverty, gender, race/ethnicity, lack of health insurance, access to care, environmental and lifestyle factors.

All health indicators in the report were examined by race/ethnicity for the following groups: Latinas, African Americans, Whites, and Asian Pacific Islanders (API). This includes data for the following categories: Causes of Death and Premature Death, Social and Physical Environment, Health Status, Health Risks and Behaviors, Health Care Access, and Health Outcomes. The report also includes a subgroup analysis of Latinas examined by region of origin (Mexican, Central and South American) and API women (Chinese, Filipino, Korean, and Vietnamese women) as well as adolescents. All are populations often overlooked in composite studies.

The complex interplay of sociodemographic, environmental and health factors is illustrated in the dramatic disparities revealed for African American women (see reverse for summary). Although African American women are accessing medical care more than women of other ethnicities for the screening of hypertension, high cholesterol and colorectal cancer, African American women had the highest overall mortality rate including the highest mortality rate for coronary heart disease, stroke and cancer. One-in-two African American women (52 percent) were found to be at risk for developing heart disease.

Multi-faceted strategies are needed to eliminate the health disparities identified by this report including additional research, community-based interventions, and the promotion of prevention and quality health care for all. The need highlighted by the report should assist strategic, programmatic and funding priorities.

The full report can be accessed on the Department of Public Health website at: www.publichealth.org/owh or is available by calling the Office of Women's Health at 626-569-3850.

Sincerely,

Jonathan E. Fielding, MD, MPH
Director of Public Health and Health Officer

Ellen Eidem, MS
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