

Health Funders Urged To Target Underserved

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While social factors like geography, poverty and literacy rates have a greater combined impact on health outcomes in the U.S. than do disease, injury or mortality, the needs of underserved communities are the top priority of less than a third of 880 foundations and institutional grantmakers that give billions of dollars for health-related causes in the U.S., a new report says.

Only 28 percent of 363 foundations that gave at least \$1 million on average in domestic health grants from 2007 to 2008 dedicated at least half their grantmaking for the intended benefit of underserved communities, and only 7 percent designated at least a fourth of their grantmaking for systemic change, says Towards Transformative Change in Health Care, a report from the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy.

"If improving the health of our national is important to philanthropy, then we have to focus more on the needs of the most underserved and on making these communities integral participants in systemic reform efforts," Aaron Dorfman, the group's executive director, says in a statement. "We can't wait for health reform to slowly trickle down, especially given the uncertainty of the current political climate."

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