

Philanthropy Blogs Round-Up: Cancer, Global Health, Health Reform

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... “A Number Every Grantmaker Should Memorize: 0.1%,” Sean Dobson, September 26, National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy’s (NCRP’s) Keeping a Close Eye blog. Dobson cautions foundation staffers not to feel too comfortable and powerful, because the dollars that foundations invest to “ameliorate” huge social problems “amount to a mere drop in the bucket.” The percentage in the post’s title is relevant for GrantWatch readers: Dobson derives that percentage by comparing the total investment in health by U.S. foundations in the years 2007–2009 with total health care spending in this country in 2009, Dobson states. Foundations contributed “an infinitesimal 0.1 percent of the U.S. health care sector,” he then concludes.

So, what should foundations do to be more effective in health (and other funding areas)? Fund more advocacy, Dobson says, and he explains why. Citing a recent NCRP report, *Towards Transformative Change in Health Care: High Impact Strategies for Philanthropy*, by consultant Terri Langston (formerly of the Public Welfare Foundation), Dobson says that just 11 percent of the biggest health grantmakers’ domestic grant dollars went for advocacy (social justice efforts). Most of the rest went for direct services or research. Read why Dobson thinks that common grant-making strategy is “worse than futile.” The NCRP receives funding from more than sixty foundations.

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