



National Minority Health Month in Region V, 2015
By the Great Lakes Regional Health Equity Council

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the nation's annual report on health, *Health United States, 1983*, noted that while the nation's health was continuing to improve, there were glaring disparities in the health and longevity of non-Hispanic whites and racial and ethnic minorities, the then Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Margaret M. Heckler, took unprecedented action and established the Task Force on Black and Minority Health to document the extent of those health disparities; and

WHEREAS, the Task Force's findings, released in 1985 as the landmark *Heckler Report, Black and Minority Health* brought minority health into the national spotlight. This year commemorates thirty years of progressively working to eliminate health disparities and advancing health equity through legislation, policy and programs; and

WHEREAS, through the combined efforts of the National Library of Medicine, the Office of Minority Health Resource Center, the Library of Congress FedScan Service, and the Internet Archive, the full pioneering Heckler Report became readily accessible via the Internet on June 15, 2011; and

WHEREAS, former Ohio State Representative and Senator Ray Miller initiated the Ohio Taskforce on Black and Minority Health in 1985 to conduct field hearings and document racial/ethnic disparities in the state after attending a health conference in Rensselaerville, New York addressing health disparities; and

WHEREAS, Miller sponsored legislation creating the first in the nation Commission on Minority Health (1987) and the first Minority Health Month Celebration (1989) in Ohio (Region V - Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio); with the first National Minority Health Month being recognized in 2000;

WHEREAS, we celebrate National Minority Health Month, 2015 with the theme "*30 Years of Advancing Health Equity; The Heckler Report: A Force for Ending Health Disparities in America*", and reflect on our collective efforts to accelerate the momentum towards achieving a nation free of disparities in health and health care, and to advance health equity; and

WHEREAS, the Great Lakes Regional Health Equity Council (Great Lakes RHEC), an initiative of the Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health's National Partnership for Action to End Health Disparities, has joined forces with local Stakeholders to raise awareness and call all citizens to take action to end health disparities in *Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio*, and

WHEREAS, in the forefront are the members of the Great Lakes RHEC ALONG WITH THEIR RESPECTIVE ORGANIZATIONS; and

WHEREAS, other community stakeholder groups and individuals representing government, academia, healthcare delivery, private sector, and civic/non-profits, are all working together to end health disparities in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio, by identifying health inequities and their root causes, promoting equitable opportunities to be healthy through wellness, providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services, advancing health equity legislation, policies and programs, and hosting activities and events to raise awareness; and,

WHEREAS, National Minority Health Month is an inclusive initiative addressing health needs of racial and ethnic minorities, including African Americans, Hispanics, Latinos, Asians, Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans, and other minority groups, with the aim of strengthening the capacities of local communities to eliminate the disproportionate burden of premature death and preventable illnesses through prevention, early detection, and control of disease complications; and,

WHEREAS, inequities begin before birth and continue throughout life, leading to unnecessary health care, social, and economic costs, as well as reductions to lifespan and quality of life; and opportunities to be healthy are hindered by income inequality and place of residence; and

WHEREAS, despite improvements in health and health care, and our progress towards achieving health equity, significant disparities and inequities in opportunities to be healthy persist for citizens of Region V, and throughout the Nation. Our work is not yet done.

NOW, THEREFORE, We, the Great Lakes RHEC, do hereby commemorate **April 2015**, as **NATIONAL MINORITY HEALTH MONTH**, and call this observance to the attention of all citizens where we work and live, and invite our fellow citizens to take action towards ending health disparities by becoming involved and participating in the various activities and events to raise awareness throughout the month.

