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FIRST ANNUAL ACADEMY FOR HEALTH EQUITY MEETING TO ADDRESS RACIAL AND ETHNIC HEALTH DISPARITIES

PITTSBURGH, June 25 – Eliminating racial and ethnic health disparities is one of the goals of Healthy People 2010, the nation’s roadmap to improving the health of all Americans. To address this challenge, the Center for Minority Health (CMH) at the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health has joined forces with researchers, community organizers, philanthropists and federal and state agencies to launch the Academy for Health Equity. The international organization will hold its inaugural conference June 26-27 at the Colorado Convention Center in Denver.

The goal of the conference, “Building Capacity to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities,” is to identify and better address health disparities through affordable, quality, timely and culturally competent medical care. Conference attendees also will address the social, economic and environmental factors that contribute to excess illness and death among minority populations.

“We believe that no one discipline has the ‘magic bullet’ to solve this problem and that only by working together and engaging the community as trusted partners will we be able to accelerate efforts to close the health disparity gap,” said Stephen B. Thomas, Ph.D., CMH director and the Philip Hallen Professor of Community Health and Social Justice at the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health. Dr. Thomas also is the founding executive committee co-chair of the Academy for Health Equity.

“We are proud to play a role in the establishment of the Academy for Health Equity as an international organization because it represents the maturation of a new field of research, teaching and public health practice dedicated to eliminating racial and ethnic health disparities by focusing on health equity,” said Donald S. Burke, M.D., dean, University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health and UPMC-Jonas Salk Professor of Global Health.

The opening address will be delivered by Colorado Governor Bill Ritter. Additional speakers include:

- Garth N. Graham, M.D., deputy assistant secretary for minority health, Office of Minority Health, Department of Health and Human Services
- Joyce A. Hunter, Ph.D., deputy director, National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities
- Thomas A. LaVeist, Ph.D., co-chair, Academy for Health Equity and director, Hopkins Center for Disparities Solutions, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
- Stephen B. Thomas, Ph.D., CMH director and the Philip Hallen Professor of Community Health and Social Justice at the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health
- Irene M. Ibarra, president and CEO, The Colorado Trust

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Additionally, former U.S. Congressman Louis Stokes and former Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Louis W. Sullivan, will be receive the 2008 National Minority Health Leadership Award for their lifelong work and dedication to health policy and legislation designed to improve the health of all people.

For more information on the Academy for Health Equity, please visit:

<http://www.academyforthequity.org>.