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Community Health Leaders Join with Federal Officials, Private Foundations and Payers to Eliminate Health Disparities

Communities Joined in Action (CJA) will host its 6th annual national conference, October 5-7, 2011, at the Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. This year's conference will showcase how communities are **Improving Health ~ Eliminating Health Disparities in an Age of Health Reform**. More than 200 community health leaders are expected to attend and share best practices for addressing health disparities in light of the new national health policy.

The conference opens with five pre-conference workshops covering such topics as Congressional Advocacy and Accountable Access Patient Care Coordination. The conference continues on Thursday and Friday with presentations from community leaders, foundation representatives and health plans. Ascension Health will host a reception on October 6th to honor Congressional officials and staffers. Conference keynote speakers include Assistant Attorney General Thomas E. Perez, and CDC Research Director for Social Determinants of Health and Equity, Dr. Camara P. Jones.

This year's conference sponsors include Kaiser Permanente, Ascension Health, Trinity Health, the Georgia Health Policy Center, the Northwest Health Foundation, PacificSource Health Plans, MedData Services, the Pharmacy Services Support Center, CareScope, Language People, PhRMA, Community Health Ventures, the Hopkins Center for Health Disparities Solutions, Lyon Software, MaineHealth, MedCall, and the Regional Primary Care Coalition (RPCC).

Throughout its ten-year history, CJA has supported community health collaboratives by promoting best practices and capacity building among our members. CJA's vision includes disruptive change that broadens and strengthens the health care system by addressing head on the social determinants of health, such as unhealthy housing conditions, transportation barriers, lack of food, and continuous healthcare coverage.

According to CEO Dr. Christopher Holliday, "Healthy communities and reducing the cost of healthcare are beyond the reach of the traditional healthcare model." The Affordable Care Act places greater emphasis on community organizations in the fight to keep Americans healthy. The implementation of national health reform has vast implications for local delivery systems, community health improvement initiatives, and financing methods.

"We look forward to bringing together stakeholders and partners to strengthen our communities' voices and especially the voice of the underserved. This conference provides our members and others working in communities throughout the US another opportunity to collaborate in person and share experiences and best practices for reducing health disparities and bending the cost curve" says Laura Brennan, Conference Planning Chair, CJA Chair-Elect and Community Affairs and Outcomes Senior Manager for CareOregon.

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About CJA: CJA's nearly 200 member organizations work for approximately 8.5 million individuals who are underserved by the traditional health care community. Founded in 2001, CJA is a national membership organization of local and state health collaboratives committed to improving the health of individuals, families, and populations. CJA is a leader in mobilizing communities to build public/private community-based partnerships that ensure access to needed health and human services that produce positive health outcomes. CJA convenes and supports leaders from across the health community to help achieve better health for all people at less cost.