

## Communications

### Letter to the Editor

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In a recent article, Johnson and Woll presented qualitative information on health disparities among people with disabilities. (Johnson & Woll, 2003) While the article rightly emphasizes that one of the two major goals of *Healthy People 2010* (the health agenda for the nation) is the elimination of disparities, we are concerned that there was no mention of the specific chapter addressing the health of people with disabilities - Chapter 6, Disability and Secondary Conditions. (U.S. DHHS, 2000) Nor was there mention of *Healthy People 2010*, Chapter 6, Vision for the Decade, the proceedings of a recent workgroup symposium that provides data on disparities between people with and without disabilities as well as guidance in addressing the disparities. (NCBDDD, 2001)

The definition of disparity is narrowly defined in the article relative to "health care" without providing a frame of reference. *Healthy People 2010* disparities are more broadly defined and measured between people with and without disabilities. Johnson and Woll's discussion and qualitative review of health status measures for the disability community is strong, but could have been greatly enhanced with the actual *Healthy People 2010* data on health disparities between people with and without disabilities. More information on health disparities in *Healthy People 2010 Disability and Secondary Conditions* can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/dh.html>.

In addition, the article did not mention another recently readily available source of data on the health of people with disabilities and disparities, by state. For the first time, all 50 states will administer two disability identifiers in the core of the states' Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. To access the BRFSS disability database, log into <http://disabilityhealth.forum.cdc.gov>. Barriers to health in the disability community were also highlighted by the authors. It is important to note that guidelines for overcoming barriers to health can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/dh.html>.

Johnson JL, Woll, J. (2003). "A National Disgrace: Health Disparities Encountered by Persons with Disabilities," *Disability Studies Quarterly* Winter, 23:1, 61-74.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2000) "Healthy People 2010, 2nd edition. Understanding and Improving Health and Objectives for Improving Health 2 vol.," Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, November, Volume 1, Chapter 6.

National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities (2001). "Healthy People 2010 Chapter 6, Vision for the Decade: Proceedings and Recommendations of a Symposium," Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, December 2001.