



IDPH Recognizes National Minority Health Month

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SPRINGFIELD – Recognized every year in April, National Minority Health Month is a time to focus on raising awareness about health disparities that continue to affect racial and ethnic minority populations. Supporting this year’s theme, *Active & Healthy*, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is raising awareness about the important role an active lifestyle plays in keeping people healthy and emphasizing the health benefits of incorporating even small amounts of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity into daily life. Physical activity promotes health and reduces the risk of chronic diseases and other conditions that are more common or severe among racial and ethnic minority groups.

“We are committed to the vital work of raising awareness through outreach and education and fostering public/private partnerships across Illinois in order to advance health equity and eliminate health disparities” said Ngozi Ezike, Director of IDPH. “I also want to recognize our valuable partners who are committed to the cause and doing great work in their communities.”

Illinois’ racial and ethnic minorities make up 39% of the state’s population, but share higher rates of disease burden for diabetes, cancer, heart disease, stroke, HIV, substance use disorders, infant mortality, and low birth weight. Although health indicators such as life expectancy and infant mortality have improved for most Americans, minorities still experience shorter life expectancy and higher rates of disability compared with non-minorities.

To increase awareness and promote good health, IDPH’s Center for Minority Health Services is hosting an event in the State Capitol rotunda on April 2, 2019, from 10 am to 2 pm. IDPH, in conjunction with other public health organizations and community partners, will have information and resources on programs and initiatives focused on minority health in Illinois.

IDPH also wants to encourage people to enroll in the U.S Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health month-long steps competition designed to motivate people to take that extra step to be healthy. The challenge begins today, April 1, 2019, and will end at midnight on April 30, 2019. Find *Active & Healthy* Challenge step-by-step instructions [here](#).

More information about Minority Health Month Events in Illinois can be found on the dph.illinois.gov website.