

Welcome  
**Minority Health Conference**  
**Friday, February 25, 2011**

*Remarks by*  
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Dean and Alumni Distinguished Professor

**Welcome to this important event on behalf of the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health. Welcome to those here in this room and our many virtual participants.**

**Thank you conference co-chairs Kristin Black and Paul Gilbert, Minority Student Caucus co-chairs Che Smith and Patsy Polston, Felicia Mebane, Vic Schoenbach, staff of the NCIPH, IIS, External Affairs, special donors, and many others who helped make today's conference happen.**

**Thanks to our speakers and workshop leaders and to all of you attending today.**

**This conference is a signature event in our School's commitment to increase diversity and reduce health disparities in North Carolina and globally.**

**Over the years, 1000s of articles have described, deconstructed, decried, identified and tried to explain the reasons for persistent health disparities in this country. There has been real progress in some areas, like breast cancer screening. In many other areas, such as overall mortality, childhood mortality, smoking, obesity, diabetes, hypertension and many other health risks and conditions, disparities persist.**

**UNC-Chapel Hill has a long, notable history of important research and practice related to health disparities. Our knowledge and interventions have made a positive difference.**

**Still, I fear that over the next few years, health disparities will intensify as budgets tighten further, and our country becomes meaner. At the 30<sup>th</sup> conference, we celebrated the election of Barack Obama and the potential of his leadership to make the country a better place. Last year, we celebrated the Affordable Care Act which could be a major superhighway for reducing health disparities.**

**Today, the 32<sup>nd</sup> conference should be a day not so much for celebrating as for rededicating ourselves to the goals of assuring equity, reducing health disparities and increasing diversity and inclusion in all our institutions.**

**We could become paralyzed by all that's happening in the world, but that would be a cop-out. There is a lot of work to be done to make this country more equitable and just and to reduce health disparities. We are the people to do it. Thank you for taking this day to learn, share, communicate and reflect.**

**I look forward to hearing Dr. Duran. As she said in a recent paper, the real challenge lies ahead—to develop, implement and sustain**

**effective strategies to eliminate disparities in clinical and public health systems and population health status.**

**Before I leave the stage, I'd like to share some good news. Earlier in the week, we received a special gift from Michael, an alumnus, and Barbara Arrighi of an expendable scholarship in honor of Vic Schoenbach. They gave the scholarship for pharmacoepi. When I asked if we could use it for a minority student, Michael said, "We'd like that." Please join me in thanking Vic for all he does and our all donors.**

**Thank you and Welcome...**