

Good Behavior



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Spring Forward

Our Web site has a new look, we've tweaked our Center's name and we've added a tag line. These changes both renew and refresh our commitment to our vision of improved HEALTH and high-quality, equitable, and accessible HEALTH CARE built on the foundation of an active, engaged public.

As a society we have been lulled into believing that new scientific discoveries, "wonder" pills and technology are the keys to living well. But they're only part of the solution. I know — from my own experience with life-threatening illness and through discussions with hundreds of patients and health care "consumers"— that advances in scientific knowledge can only increase the length and quality of life if people are able to make informed decisions about their care...and then act on them. Moreover, people must be willing to change lifelong habits and manage complicated medical regimens. The success or failure of modern medicine is dependent on our ability to engage more fully in our own health.

This largely ignored but critical role of individuals is the focus of our activities. At the Center, we conduct research that documents the growing responsibilities of the public in health care. Through the Health Behavior News Service, we disseminate original stories and articles that translate the latest health behavior research into news for the public. And we support the development of new leadership in the effort to reduce and eliminate health disparities through our Kellogg Health Scholars Program. We communicate to the public, health professionals and decision makers both public and private about what it means — and what it will take — for all Americans to engage in their health

and health care. And we advocate for policies and practices that will support them doing so.

Current efforts to contain costs and increase access to health care relegate the role of patients in their care to something that is nice but not necessary. We believe that neither individuals nor the nation will achieve these aims — or the larger goal of a better health for all — without knowledgeable participation of every person in their health care. And so we have sharpened focus of the Center. Since the Center's founding in 1992 by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the Nathan Cummings Foundation, our work has been guided by three principles:

- That scientific **evidence**, while always evolving, offers the best guide for positive changes in the health of the individuals and the nation.
- That individuals, sick or well, will only benefit from the expertise of health professionals and available technologies if they have the knowledge, skills, judgment and willingness to **engage** in their health and health care over time.
- That minimizing the social and behavioral barriers to people's engagement in their health and health care will contribute to **equity** of opportunity for health for all.

The launch of our enhanced Web sites (www.cfah.org and www.hbns.org), the modest change in our name and the addition of our new tag line — *Evidence. Engagement. Equity.* — are all intended to heighten and emphasize the Center's belief that citizens can no longer be passive recipients of health care. Such passivity is a luxury that neither we as individuals nor our society can afford.

From the Health Behavior News Service

The Health Behavior News Service regularly distributes stories summarizing new research on health behavior issues. These stories can be found online at <http://www.cfah.org/hbns/current.cfm>

February Releases:

- **ETHNIC BACKGROUND MATTERS FOR TYPE 2 DIABETES** The prevalence of diabetes is at least twice as high in some ethnic groups as it is in whites, even among people with similar body mass index (BMI) numbers, a large new study finds.
- **PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES FACE MORE DAILY STRESS** Raising a child with a disability can cause more daily stress and long-range health problems than parenting a child without disabilities, according to a new study.
- **HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS URGED TO ADDRESS UNHEALTHY TEEN DIETING** Discouraging unhealthy dieting - and reminding teens that dangerous diet practices could backfire and lead to added pounds - could prevent obesity and other weight-related problems in youth, according to recent recommendations based on a large-scale study of teens.
- **KIDS NEED MORE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN SCHOOL, REVIEW SAYS** A new review from Canada supports programs pushing more - and more active - physical education, both in gym class and throughout the school day. Along those lines, proposed legislation aims to increase the quality and quantity of physical education in U.S. schools.
- **OLDER ADULTS SAY CASH MIGHT MOTIVATE THEM TO WALK** In 2006, a team of researchers set out to examine what sorts of walking programs and incentives might induce sedentary people over age 50 to put on their sneakers. They found that small cash payments might just provide that extra push.