



Wyoming
Department
of Health

Commit to your health.

**Wyoming
Department
of Health**

**Public
Health
Division**

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Wyoming Office of Multicultural Health

Spring Edition 2014

April is Minority Health Month

PREVENTION IS POWER



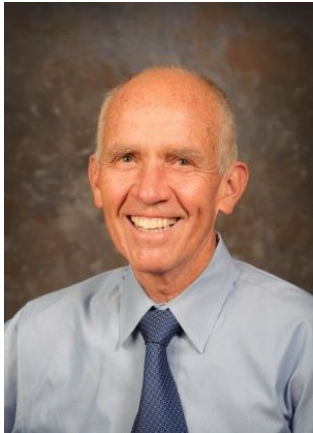
**April
2014**

**National
Minority
Health
Month**

Office of Minority Health | 800-444-6472 | minorityhealth.hhs.gov
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Why talk about race in Wyoming?



Charles Ksir

Minority Health Month has a special piece written by Dr. Charles Ksir. This series is a reprint from the Casper Star. We would like to thank Dr. Ksir for allowing WOMH to reprint his work for Minority Health Month.

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Today we begin publishing a series of interviews on race relations. Conversations were conducted with five citizens from different parts of Wyoming, each of whom provided a different perspective on the subject. We discussed how things have changed in the 50 years since Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have A Dream" speech, the significance of President Barack Obama's election and presidency, and how racial

issues have affected each of them in their own lives here in Wyoming. Why are we talking about race, and is this really an important issue in Wyoming?

When it comes to noticing someone's race, no one is totally color blind. That doesn't mean that we go around committing hate crimes, but we can't avoid sorting people into racial categories. We might not approve of ethnic jokes, but we'll laugh at one that is told well, because the jokes are based on stereotypes that are so longstanding and widely understood in our culture that we have all been exposed to them. Awareness of a person's race or ethnicity does not automatically mean that we will mistreat that person or be disrespectful, and many people these days will claim that race is not important to them at all. It's especially easy for a white person living in a place like Wyoming to make such a claim. In my experience, it's less common for people who identify as black or Latino or American Indian or Asian to believe that race is unimportant in their lives. Why is that?

Let's imagine a situation in which a person is driving down the street and is pulled over by a police officer. Further assume that the driver wasn't greatly exceeding the speed limit or driving erratically, so there's some doubt as to what triggered the officer's interest. A white person living in Wyoming will likely ask himself, "Was I going a little too fast? Did I cruise through a stop sign? Do I have a taillight out?" A black driver might also think all those things, but also is likely to consider that he was considered suspicious at least partly because of his race. If he later tells a white friend about the incident, it is practically guaranteed that the white friend will try to reassure his minority friend that he wasn't pulled over for racial reasons, and wonder why his black friend was so sensitive about race. One person experienced the event as racially-based mistrust, and the other wanted to deny that experience. If you find yourself in such a situation and you care about the other person, you'll make an effort to understand his or her perspective. What different life experiences could account for the difference in how this situation is perceived?

Why talk about Race in Wyoming?

To begin to explore how and why race continues to be important even in today's America, we need to understand two things. First, when we identify someone as belonging to a race, that categorization doesn't have much to do with any biological reality, and a lot to do with our own cultural history and perception. The people we categorize as black may have in common certain characteristics, such as darker skin and some African ancestry. But in reality there is wide biological variation among even current African people, which include some of the world's shortest (Bushmen) and the world's tallest (the Masai), as well as wide variation in language and other traditions. Those we call Latino may come from Cuba, Mexico, Puerto Rico or Central or South America, and again exhibit a wide variety of physical traits. American Indians also represent people whose origins were widely diverse, with Navajo people sharing little in terms of biology, language, religion or tradition with Algonquin or Arapahoe people. Certainly the same is true for the variety of people we see as Asian. We use a complex mixture of skin color, facial features, speech patterns, hair style and even dress as cues when we decide that someone is black, Latino, American Indian or Asian, and often we aren't sure unless we ask.

The second thing is that humans lived for many thousands of years in small bands or tribes, and there was real survival value in recognizing members of your own group, but also in fearing, even hating and killing, those who did not belong. Thus, fear, distrust, and disrespect for others runs deep in human history and tradition. Modern societies celebrate their diversity and draw strength from it, but it is smart for us to realize that there are baser human instincts that can divide us and still cause us to mistreat each other. We might not be able to avoid some pre-judgments based on race, many of which are based in reality. For example, we might assume that a black person grew up in a disadvantaged situation, because the reality is that so many do. We see and hear so much about recent immigrants that we might ask a Latino person where she is from without considering that her family could have been in this country longer than our own.

Those prejudices might be embarrassing, but they are not necessarily harmful. It's when we allow ourselves to believe that someone is less worthy, less deserving or less capable because of their race that we allow for the systematic disrespect or mistreatment of that entire group — and that's what we call racism.

Racial categories and the risk of outright bigotry and racism will be with us for many, many years. I believe that it is better for us to be aware of the history and current status of our race relations than to pretend that we can simply ignore race and everything will be fine. That is why I wanted to conduct these interviews and share them with the people of Wyoming.

Why talk about race in Wyoming?

Part 1: Mel Hamilton



Mel Hamilton

If you ask Casper's Mel Hamilton, racism is alive and well in Wyoming. Hamilton, a solidly built former University of Wyoming football player, is now retired, a grandfather with a white beard. His reflections are the first in a series of conversations about race in Wyoming, 50 years after the 1963 March on Washington and Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. He stopped for a moment to think about what has changed in Wyoming since then.

"No doubt that we've come a long way since 1963, however, just because we have a black president doesn't mean that we have attained everything that Doctor King dreamed," Hamilton said. "We still have discrimination in employment. We still have discrimination against women. We still have discrimination in education, where an enormous amount of kids are mislabeled because of their behavior, and we find that kids that are of color are more pulled out and more labeled than other groups. So we still have a long ways to go.

"I was encouraged when Barack Obama became president. I was really encouraged; never thought that would happen in my lifetime, and it just hasn't proven to solve any of our racial biases. I spoke to a leader of the Ku Klux Klan the other night, and he says their enrollment is high now that Barack became president, you know, really, really high. So it didn't stop things from getting worse. It got worse. You know, there's no doubt in my mind that they are obstructing Barack's progress, or ability to do what he knows should be done. And being from the South, I know that a lot of that has to do with because he's black, and I think that's the only reason they are fighting him so hard."

His own experience in Casper seems to mirror his observations. He's been an officer in the local NAACP chapter. "We've got a lot of cases where there is a complaint, and a real complaint, and as far as I'm concerned, most of them are very serious complaints. But when you get to that paper and say, 'Sign your name,' they are afraid of the consequences. And I am so frustrated, because if we can highlight these atrocities, as I call them, if we can highlight them to the public, I think we can be more effective and things would get better.

"But, then again, these people are protecting their families and themselves by not signing and letting people know who is instigating this proceeding. Now, I bet you 50 percent of our cases are that way. People in Wyoming are blind to racism. I don't think it's a conscious thing, it's a lack of cultural exposure, it's a lack of education, and they will look me in the face and say, 'There is no racism in Wyoming.' And truly believe it. Until you expose these cases that come to us, until they are in the public's eye, they will continue to believe that. So, it's nice that they believe that, but it's not reality."

Hamilton described a recent incident when, as a member of the Wyoming Board of Parole, he was meeting the new governor and said, "If there's anything I can do for you, let me know," at which point one of his fellow board members called out, "You can hold the door for him."

Why talk about race in Wyoming?

Part 1: Mel Hamilton (cont.)

That was followed by, "Oh, you know I'm just kidding you."

Hamilton's experience has given him a chance to test Obama and Attorney General Eric Holder's call to reform the country's criminal justice system because of disproportionate arrest and sentencing rates for minority groups.

"You know when I came on the board, I said, 'I'm going to make sure that we treat these prisoners fairly, and I'm going to definitely look out for the minority people.' Obviously I'm going to look out for everybody, but that was part of my game plan. And the discrepancy in sentencing is so out of whack, so obvious, and so painful to sit through, but there's nothing we can do as board members," Hamilton said.

"We can't change the sentence, but we sure try to give input where we can, and we'll say things like, 'Man, this guy got a raw deal.' And then we sometimes will approach the governor and talk about these things; how can we change what's going on? It's happening so clearly; it's out in the open, it's happening everywhere, the disparity of sentencing for the same crime."

Like many, Hamilton has watched the reaction to the George Zimmerman-Trayvon Martin case in Florida. Though it took place more than a thousand miles away, Hamilton sees ties to Wyoming.

"You know any time a black man is killed, it's inevitable that the black community is going to say, 'OK, how was he killed? What are the circumstances?' Because, immediately as a black man, I am saying, 'Wait a minute. I'm thinking back to the lynching days when I hear a black man is killed.' Then I say, 'What are the details?' But my first impression is, that is foul play. And I think that we have been conditioned over the years, over our history, to think -- foul play.

"Now just because the young man, Mr. Zimmerman, was Hispanic, white Hispanic, doesn't mean he wasn't racist. Just because he tutored black kids doesn't mean that he's not racist. Look at the scenario. Black man with a hoodie. Zimmerman even says he looked like he's up to no good. Now we're used to that, but that doesn't make him right. He's not in Trayvon's head, he doesn't know what's happening mentally, so how could he assume? He assumed it because Trayvon was a black man. In a hoodie, and he was tired of these guys getting away with the crimes. Personally, and I think a lot of blacks feel that Zimmerman is racist, regardless of his effort in his community."

Still, with much to be done, in Hamilton's opinion, the situation remains hopeful.

"You know I'll never give up hope," Hamilton said. "I think now it's on such a polarized level, the difference is going to be me and you, face to face, one on one. I think that's the only avenue we have left. How do I treat you as a human being? And if I treat you well, and you treat me well, then we'll move on to someone else and start that process all over again. I think it's gotten so bad that that's the only effective way of eventually, before this earth is over, to get people to understand and respect each other. One to one."

For Your Information

The New York Times

Mapping Poverty in America

The New York Times

Data from the Census Bureau show where the poor live.

<http://www.nytimes.com/newsgraphics/2014/01/05/poverty-map/>



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation released the 2014 *County Health Rankings* on March 26, 2014 .

"The *Rankings* allow communities to see county-by-county where they are doing well and where they need to improve. This year's *Rankings* include new factors, such as housing, transportation, food environment, and access to mental health providers which help to paint an even more comprehensive picture of what impacts a community's health.

<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>



eHealthEquity.com is a news and information-sharing website focused on raising literacy around Health Information Technology (HIT) and Mobile Health (mHealth). We are targeting communities of color and underserved communities of any color. Our mission is to improve health care services to communities of color and underserved populations by informing, educating and engaging the leadership of underserved communities to be ambassadors and users of HIT and mHealth.

<http://ehealthequity.com/>

From Just Surviving to Thriving!



Want a **Better 2014?**

Five FREE Workshops
Laramie County Library
2200 Pioneer, Cheyenne
5:30-6:30 pm

March 20 - Achieving Wellbeing

"There's got to be more than this ...". You've probably said these words about something in your life. Maybe your career isn't fulfilling, your relationship isn't clicking, or you have a dream that just won't come true. We'll discuss significant HAPPINESS FACTORS you can tap into to increase satisfaction, handle stress, and overcome adversity. Presented by Dick Berry, Psy.D. and John Ellis, M.A., L.P.C. Cottonwood Room, 1st Floor.

April 17 - Finding Your Greatness

Are you just trying to get through each day without a real sense of zest or purpose? Don't just eek your way through life. Instead, learn how to identify your personal strengths and protective factors to live your life with greater potential and deeper meaning. Participants will learn how to move beyond past traumas and live life to its fullest potential. Presented by Glenn Garcia, M.S.W., L.C.S.W. Storytime Room, 2nd Floor.

May 15 - Sleep Tight

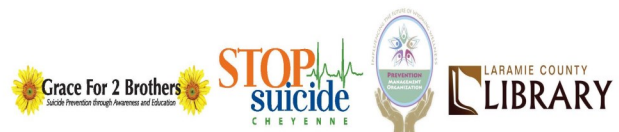
Sleep deprivation can cause fatigue, daytime sleepiness, clumsiness and weight loss or weight gain. It adversely affects the brain and cognitive function, and makes us grouchy! Learn about sleep, and get tips for getting a better night's rest. Presented by Candise Leininger, L.P.C. Sunflower Room, 3rd Floor.

June 19 - Letting the Sunshine In

Depression is a serious biological disease that affects millions of people each year. Alcohol and marijuana can make it feel worse. The good news is that it can often be successfully treated. Learn ways to stop the dark cloud of depression and substance abuse, and let the sunshine in! Presented by Jonna Hilzer-Dickie, M.A., L.P.C. and Jon Baillie, M.S., L.P.C. Sunflower Room, 3rd Floor.

July 17 - Celebrating Sadness

James Ednie, Musician and Founder of Rock for Life, will share his personal stories of loss and the challenges he's faced during his lifetime, including a near brush with suicide. He'll discuss self-induced and outside circumstances, and offer some tools to cope with tough situations. It is OK to be sad. James and Co-Presenter, BJ Ayers, Suicide Prevention Professional with the Prevention Management Organization of Wyoming, will give tips on how to not only deal with sadness, but how to celebrate it! Sunflower Room, 3rd Floor.



Workshops are designed for adults (mature youth are welcome to attend at parents' discretion)

Cultural Competency Trainings



Wyoming
Department
of Health

Commit to your health.

HEALTH EQUITY

Culture &
Health

What is cultural competency?

The ability to work effectively across cultures in a way that acknowledges and respects the culture of the person or organization being served. J.H. Hanley (1999)

Did you know that culturally competent care results in :

- Improved patient outcomes
- Increased patient satisfaction
- Reduced risk

<p>April 8, 2014</p> <p>Rock Springs</p> <p>Rock Springs Community Center 86 Pilot Butte Ave. 9 am to 4 pm</p>	<p>May 12, 2014</p> <p>Cheyenne</p> <p>Laramie County Library Cottonwood Room 2200 Pioneer Ave. 9 am to 4 pm</p>	<p>May 13, 2014</p> <p>Cheyenne</p> <p>Department of Workforce Services Conference Room 1141 (south entrance) 1510 East Pershing Ave. 9 am to 4 pm</p>
<p>July 29, 2014</p> <p>Casper</p> <p>Ramada Plaza Riverside 300 F Street 9 am to 4 pm</p>	<p>No cost to attend (includes lunch)</p>	
<p>August 5, 2014</p> <p>Powell</p> <p>North West College West Campus 1397 Fort Drum Drive 9 am to 4 pm</p>		

Facilitated by : Jose Reyes, Ed.D

Register @ www.womh.org

For more information call 777-8940 or 777-5601



WYCSP | Wyoming Community
Services Program



Bridges into Health Trainings

Save the Dates!

**With Bridges Out of Poverty
Co-Author, Terie Dreussi Smith**

Bridges Into Health dovetails the Bridges Out of Poverty concepts and tools with the growing body of health inequities research. Poor health is a huge cost of poverty in the United States. Economic class affects all aspects of health and health care. To improve this, strategies must address economic class and other social determinants.

The workshop includes a continuum of policy and practice critical to improving health among the disadvantaged. Research links overall health to economic stability, education, safe and affordable housing, nutrition/food security, and other factors. Meaningful learning tasks, direct teaching, videos, and large-group dialogue are integrated into this workshop.

Dates and Locations

July 7, 2014 Rock Springs, WY

July 9, 2014 Riverton, WY

July 11, 2014 Powell, WY

July 14, 2014 Gillette, WY

July 16, 2014 Casper, WY

July 18, 2014 Laramie, WY

Click link to Register or register
@ www.womh.org



WYCSP | Wyoming Community
Services Program

Monthly Events/Observances

April 2014

Minority Health Awareness Month
Alcohol Awareness Month
Foot Health Awareness Month
Humor Month (National)
March for Babies
Child Abuse Prevention Month
Autism Awareness Month
National Donate Life Month

May 2014

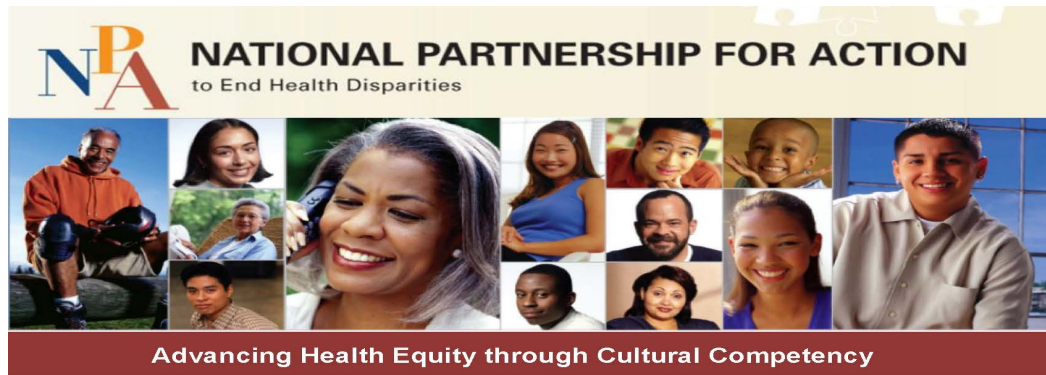
National Physical Fitness and Sports Month
Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month
High Blood Pressure Education Month
Liver Awareness Month
Motorcycle Safety and Awareness Month
Neurofibromatosis Awareness Month
Stroke Awareness Month
Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month

2014 National Health Observances. National Health Information Center.

<http://healthfinder.gov/NHO/nho.aspx?year=2014#400>

2014 Health Observances Recognition Day. http://www.evms.edu/media/evms_public/departments/library/

Regional Health Equity Council Announces:



Are you interested in learning how to build and sustain a culturally competent organization?

In commemoration of National Minority Health Month, the [Mountain States Regional Health Equity Council \(RHEC\)](#) is hosting the webinar *Advancing Health Equity through Cultural Competency*, which will help organizations and businesses explore ways to cultivate cultural competency in the workplace. Speakers will discuss the skills, protocols and structures that integrate the value of diversity and promote effective work with employees and patients in an effort to advance health equity.

Join Us for the Webinar!

DATE: April 17, 2014

TIME: 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Mountain Daylight Time

SPEAKERS:

Susana Centeno Perez, MPH, Region VIII Women's Health Coordinator

Renee Gamino, Associate Director-Outreach, AARP Wyoming, Mountain States RHEC member

Mailyn Salabarría, Community Outreach Coordinator & Translations Associate Manager, One World Translation

Register Here:¹ <https://events.na.collabserv.com/portal/wippages/register.php?id=c1afdfc4bd&l=en-US>

The Mountain States RHEC is one of ten regional health equity councils formed in 2011 as a part of the National Partnership for Action to End Health Disparities (NPA). The NPA is a national movement with the mission to improve the effectiveness of programs that target the elimination of health disparities through coordination of leaders, partners, and stakeholders that are committed to action. The Mountain States RHEC is a coalition of leaders and health disparities experts representing several sectors and the states of Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming. The Mountain States RHEC envisions a region free of disparities in health and healthcare, where all people attain the highest level of health.

¹ If the registration link does not work, please copy the entire link and paste it into your web browser. For webinar-specific questions, contact the moderator at csantos@explorepisa.com. For technical questions, contact support at csr@conferencegroup.com



Mountain States Regional Health Equity Council



[Click Here](#)

About the Game

Languages

There are perhaps six or seven thousand languages in the world. Even so-called hyperpolyglots, people who learn to speak six or more fluently, barely scratch the surface. You and I will never be able to communicate in all these languages without machine aids, but learning to identify what's being spoken near us, that's within our reach.

The game

The Great Language Game challenges you to distinguish between some eighty or so languages based on their sound alone. In each game you're allowed three mistakes, which are kept for you to study at the end. If you're feeling competitive, share your score with some friends and compete for some serious bragging rights.

<http://greatlanguagegame.com/>



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WWW.WOMH.ORG

***We look forward to working with you
to eliminate health disparities in
Wyoming.***

The mission of the Wyoming Office of Multicultural Health (WOMH) is to minimize health disparities among underserved populations in the state through networking, partnerships, education, collaboration, and advocacy; and to promote culturally competent programs aimed at improving health equity.



Growing Together



With the calendar indicating spring has officially arrived, many are starting to make plans for their gardens and flower beds. The University of Wyoming has many resources available to help with planning questions and to assist those new to Wyoming. Many publications can be found at the University of Wyoming Extension homepage <http://www.uwyo.edu/ces/>. *Barnyards and Backyards* can also be a great resource to locate information on many topics, not just gardening and horticulture. The magazine highlights articles and resources to help those with small acreage property questions such as native landscape, water quality, grazing livestock, horses and lots more. The *Barnyards and Backyards* magazines can be picked up at any Extension office around the state or found online at <http://www.uwyo.edu/barnbackyard/>. If you have any questions please contact your local Extension office and they can help answer your questions. A list of Extension offices and their personnel can be found at <http://www.uwyo.edu/ces/county/>.

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