



Environmental Scan: Role of Corporate America in Community Health & Wellness

Although the U.S. spends more on health care than any other nation, 17.7% of its GDP (gross domestic product), the U.S. continues to lag behind other countries in terms of life expectancy (ranking 27th), and other health indicators (OECD, 2013). The inequities within the U.S. health care system are even more startling than those between nations, as the social determinants of health--neighborhood and built-environment, economic stability, education, and cultural community context-- are directly affecting health access and outcomes.

HERO has established the HERO Employer-Community Collaboration Committee (HECC Committee composed of 25 members representing a variety of business and foundation stakeholders). The purpose of this committee is to develop a framework and report that presents a rationale for businesses to be involved in addressing population health at the community level and the role that business community plays or can play in this arena.

This report focused on establishing a baseline of current knowledge regarding the role and extent of involvement that corporate America has in population health efforts. The environmental scan includes the following: major stakeholders among businesses, coalitions/association, and foundations; review of key documents and resources; summary of the current state of affairs; and initial statement of the business case for corporate investment in community health improvement.

The phase one report, sponsored by the Roundtable on Population Health Improvement at the Institute of Medicine (IOM), is the first systematic attempt to document these efforts. Future phases will build on the knowledge gained from this study and include a dialogue session with key stakeholders and development of a Web resource for employers. (Author: Denise Stevens, PhD, contributors: Cathy Baase, MD, Nico Pronk, PhD, Jerry Noyce)

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