

HEALTH

CLAUDIA R. BAQUET, M.D., NAMED DEPUTY ASSIST. SECRETARY FOR MINORITY HEALTH

HHS Secretary Louis W. Sullivan, M.D., has announced the appointment of Claudia R. Baquet, M.D., as deputy assistant secretary for minority health in the Public Health Service.

"Dr. Baquet is exceptionally well qualified to assume her new responsibilities of coordinating disease prevention, health promotion, service delivery and research initiatives concerning disadvantaged racial and ethnic minority populations," Secretary Sullivan said. "As a scientist and educator, Dr. Baquet brings both commitment and excellence to our efforts to improve the health of racial and ethnic minority populations."

As deputy assistant secretary for minority health, Dr. Baquet will direct the Office of Minority Health within the Public Health Service. The office is primarily responsible for establishing long and short-range objectives for HHS minority health activities and coordinating the department's minority health programs.

With a fiscal year 1992 budget of \$20 million, the office maintains a national minority health resource center, active liaison with state and local agencies, grant programs and other related projects intended to support minority community groups taking action on health issues.

Included among these efforts is administration of Secretary Sullivan's Minority Male Grant Program, which provides conference, coalition development and demonstration project funding for efforts to improve outreach, health and social services to minority males living in risk-laden environments.

Dr. Baquet leaves her previous position with the National Cancer Institute, where she was associate director for the Cancer Control Science Program in the Division of Cancer Prevention and Control. As director of an \$85 million science program, her accomplishments included development of the first national cancer prevention and control intervention research programs focused solely on black and Native American populations. These programs seek to eliminate cancer rate differentials

between the general population and minority or medically underserved populations.

She also played a major role in the establishment of the National Black Leadership Initiative on Cancer and has been instrumental in initiating similar efforts for Hispanic and Appalachian populations.

She also initiated the development of national cancer control research networks for American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, Hispanic and black populations.

"Dr. Baquet is one of the leading national experts on cancer in minority and low-income groups, and her breadth

of interest and expertise will enable her to provide critically important leadership to all of our Public Health Service-wide minority health efforts," said Dr. James Mason, assistant secretary for health and head of the Public Health Service.

Dr. Baquet received her medical degree from Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tenn., and her master of public health degree from the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health in Baltimore, Md. She received training in pathology at St. Louis (Mo.) University and Wadsworth Veterans Administration Hospital, Los Angeles, Calif.

VIEW FROM HHS

by
Louis W. Sullivan, M.D.



Improving the health of all Americans will ensure better health for African-Americans, but because African-Americans lag so far behind, my department has invested millions of dollars in a number of programs—some of them newly initiated—aimed specifically at helping them bridge the decades-old white-black health status gap.

Many of the health, social services and welfare programs of the Department of Health and Human Services are designed to serve poor and disadvantaged persons. Those programs are being provided additional funding so they can help more people enjoy longer, healthier lives.

I have included an extra \$156 million in the 1993 fiscal year budget to further support my five-point plan to reduce minority health disparities.

The focus of the five-point plan will be on increasing access to appropriate primary and preventive care in urban and rural areas; increasing the supply of health professionals in underserved areas; encouraging early preventive care for children, including immunizations and screenings; improving health to enhance learning; and preventing hypertension through enhanced research and education.

You know about the sundry challenging problems our community faces in relationship to the general population: Our life expectancy is shorter; we suffer disproportionately from many conditions such as communicable childhood diseases, hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, stroke, cancer, HIV infection and AIDS; deaths linked to alcohol, drug abuse and violence are too high; and, as individuals we pay too little attention to preventive steps we could take.

To mention just a few of our special efforts planned for fiscal year 1993:

- Through our Healthy Start Initiative, we are reducing infant mortality by increasing prenatal care

and nutrition for more low-income pregnant women and children;

- Our "Project Awareness" provides free screenings and breast examinations to women in underserved minority communities;

- The Minority Male Initiative assists our young men to overcome special obstacles they face;

- To curb the spread of HIV infection and AIDS, this year the federal allocation is almost \$4.9 billion for research, treatment, income support and education programs. HHS alone is seeking nearly \$4.3 billion and almost \$200 million of that is directly targeted to minority populations;

- 111,000 drug abuse treatment slots, 17,000 more than last year, are being made available;

- \$12 million will fund a new grant to minority educational institutions to improve their research infrastructure; and,

- Funds for 130 new community and migrant health center sites, bringing the total to 1,634 sites.

However, when we examine the health problems plaguing our people, we see that much of the suffering, disability and death is preventable. With the federal government committed to a stronger more active role, prevention becomes a key to overcoming some of the health disparity African-Americans suffer.

This is no "cure thine own self" admonishment. These are choices that can make a long-life or early-death difference:

Make a promise each day to choose to be healthier. Choose to visit a doctor regularly. Choose to cut fat, shake salt and reduce sugar from your diet. Choose to eat at least five fruits and vegetables a day. Choose to exercise regularly. Don't smoke and don't abuse alcohol or drugs.

If we all do our part, safer environments and longer, healthier lives will be the payoff.

(Dr. Sullivan is U.S. secretary of health and human services.)

MINORITY-OWNED MEDIA TO EXPAND HEALTH CARE COVERAGE

PRINCETON, New Jersey—Increased media coverage of health matters affecting minorities is the purpose of a \$412,000 grant that was announced this week.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation awarded the funds to the Scientists' Institute for Public Information (SIPI), New York, to boost reporting of health issues by the organization's Minority Media Outreach Program.

The program will now be able to increase its services to more than 600 minority-owned media serving African American, Latino, Asian American and Native American communities, providing them with monthly packages of news stories and columns prepared by minority health experts of journalists. In addition, a newsletter will be prepared specifically for use by magazine editors and a news tipsheet for use by radio stations.

"Minority-owned media are important gateways of delivering information to ethnically-diverse communities," commented Steven A. Schroeder, M.D., president of the Johnson Foundation, the nation's largest health care philanthropy. "By encouraging more and sharper reporting of health care issues in this way, we hope to break down some of the cultural barriers blocking the flow of sound health information and advice," he said.

Under the grant, SIPI's Minority Media Outreach Program also will arrange educational services to journalists of minority-owned media similar to those routinely supplied to reporters of mainstream media; including expert panel presentations on

relevant issues to minority press organizations and community-based health advocacy organizations.

"Culturally relevant health reporting has long been ignored by the mainstream press," said Alan McGowan, President of SIPI. "We think the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's support will make it possible for us to have a significant impact on the quality and quantity of health coverage."

The Princeton, N.J. - based philanthropy is the nation's largest foundation devoted to improving the health and health care of Americans. In 1992, an estimated \$175 million will be committed for health care projects.

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THERE'S NOTHING MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD.

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