

Good Morning

I'm delighted to be with you on this happy occasion - the 15<sup>th</sup> annual minority HTH Conference. This morning I'm going to do more than just offer the usual welcome and greetings. Later in the program you'll hear and learn about the critical health issues affecting minorities. You'll hear about the gap - unacceptable I must say - between minorities and other groups in the population. You'll also hear that we - in the school of Public Health - are leading the way in this area of inquiry. That's why I want to do more than the usual welcome and greetings.

I'm going to give you a progress report on the SPH plans to establish a Minority Health Research and Education Center (MHREC).

As you recall, last year at the 14<sup>th</sup> annual meeting, I told you that the faculty - through the STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS - identified minority HTH as a priority area for the school. I also told you that I intend to proceed to seek the University's support to establish a center for minority HTH research in the SPH.

Here are the points of the PROGRESS REPORT

- ① Chancellor Hardin & V.C. Heeshey - who will be greeting you shortly - have pledged their total & undivided support for this effort.

② I've submitted a charge budget request to the University for funding a MHR EC. This was requested as the top priority for the SPT

③ I've asked a committee - chaired by Professor Dorothy Browne & Professor Victor Schoenbach to develop plans for the center. ~~I've already~~ They've already submitted a report, which included preliminary plans for how the center should be structured, what its mission should be and what it takes to sustain it. Let me take this opportunity to thank members of the committee - in addition to Dot & Vic - Asst Dean William Dull, Professor Sandra Headen, Professor David Fox, Professor Lloyd Edwards, & Assoc Dean Ernest Schoepfeld. As I'd like to thank the numerous faculty, staff & student who contributed to the effort.

④ I've allocated a modest amount of money to stimulate small grant proposals from the faculty of the SPT. I'll repeat this process in the near future.

⑤ I've provided resources for a research assistant to compile courses, research projects, community linkages that are devoted to minority HR research & education. All these will be presented in an attractive & informative brochure.

⑥ I've ~~provided~~ <sup>made available</sup> a modest amount of salary support for some faculty who are pursuing work in this area.

Obviously, there is a lot of research & education being done on minority health issues by our faculty. The Center Concept will provide an intellectual home, an intellectual focus, & an intellectual thrust for these activities.

I hope that the state budget situation will be healthy enough so that the change budget request is approved. With this in hand, we can really put the Center on firm grounds.

Let me say, in closing, neither the SPT ~~nor~~ nor the University is doing this as a political gesture - - Far from it!

We will ~~build~~ grow slowly, first-rate scholarship will be the underpinning.

It will take time, but in the not-too-distant future I can see a Center of Excellence for M+R+EC serving not only the SPT but the University & the State, & hopefully the nation as well.

Thank you.