Health Reform and Health Equity: Sharing Responsibility for Health in the United States

New Directions in American Health Care
A Hofstra Cultural Center Conference

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Social Inequalities in Health

- Differences in health by social class, race, geographic region
  - Persistent
  - Significant
  - Growing
Health disparities within the United States are “enormous by all international standards”

U.S. Health Care Reform

- Universal access to quality primary care
- Necessary but insufficient
Health Equity Abroad

- WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health
  - Childhood health and development
  - Healthy workplaces and neighborhoods
  - Social safety net across life course
  - Intersectoral action (HIA)
  - Political empowerment
  - Gender equity
Examples of Leadership

- England
- Canada
Personal Responsibility for Health

- Role
- Causal
- Liability
Social Responsibility for Health

- Inequalities regardless of behavior
- Social conditions shape behavior
Shared Responsibility for Health

- Rejection of binary models
- Enhanced effectiveness and equity
- Respect and recognition
U.S. Health Policy Experiments

- Personal and punitive
- Collaborative and progressive
Thank you Hofstra Cultural Center and conference organizers