

“Opening Our Eyes to Health Disparities: A Look Through the Lens of Critical Race Theory”

The Hamline Journal of Public Law & Policy’s annual symposium will be held on Friday, March 12, 2010. This symposium is joint effort of the Journal and the Hamline Critical Legal Studies Group.

There are currently significant and persistent gaps in the health statuses of different racial and ethnic groups in the United States. Disadvantaged racial and ethnic groups have less access to primary and preventive health care, and do not receive adequate diagnosis and treatment for many health conditions, including heart disease, asthma, many types of cancers, and HIV/AIDS, according to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). The symposium will seek to reveal these disparities and examine strategies for narrowing racial and ethnic health gaps.

The Journal symposium will use Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a lens with which to examine the significant health disparities facing our nation. CRT emerged in the late 1960s as an area of legal scholarship that challenges the idea that law is neutral. Specifically, CRT seeks to dislodge the idea that law is founded on racially neutral principles, instead positing that the law has historically been constructed in ways that perpetuate discrimination and racially inequitable outcomes. CRT uses a variety of analyses, including narrative, critical analysis of laws and judicial decisions, and traditional legal methods, which seek to unveil underlying norms that appear neutral but are in fact biased in ways that perpetuate racial inequality.

The symposium will gather national and local scholars, law practitioners, policymakers, and government officials to address racial and ethnic disparities in health outcomes, determinants, and access to health care. For more information on the 2010 Hamline Journal of Public Law & Policy Symposium, please contact Maria Breu, Symposium Editor at mbreu01@hamlineuniversity.edu.