

## **Regional Health Equity Coalition (RHEC): Cohort II Grantees Announcement**

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) Office of Equity and Inclusion (OEI) recently awarded funds to three organizations to establish three community-based Regional Health Equity Coalitions (RHECs). The purpose of these coalitions is to convene organizational partners, including community based and coordinated care organizations and health systems to address regional health disparities.

Organizations awarded funds include the **Health Care Coalition of Southern Oregon**; **Klamath County Public Health Department**; and **Nuestra Comunidad Sana**, a program of The Next Door, Inc. According to US Census Bureau's 2008-2012 American Community Survey five year estimates, approximately 18.3% of the population in the counties within the new RHEC regions are people of color, who are over-represented within the Medicaid population. The Health Care Coalition of Southern Oregon will focus their efforts initially on Jackson County, with possible expansion to Josephine, and Douglas Counties in future years. The Klamath County Public Health Department, who has strong connections with the Klamath Tribal Health and Human Services will also focus on Hispanic/Latino, low income, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities, and people with disabilities. Nuestra Comunidad Sana will cover Hood River and Wasco Counties and work with Latino, migrant and seasonal farmworkers, and low-income individuals.

The RHECs utilize community health assessments, community outreach, education and engagement; equity and cultural competency training; collaboration and coordination; media advocacy and earned media to advance policies that reduce health disparities and promote health equity.

On July 1, 2011, OHA funded the first three RHECs covering seven of the most diverse counties in Oregon: Benton, Linn, Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas, Marion, and Jefferson Counties, as well as the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Indians. This first cohort of RHECs included Healthy Oregon Partnerships for Equity (HOPE), Let's Talk Diversity, and the Benton Linn Health Equity Alliance (BLHEA).

The Office of Equity and Inclusion funding partners for this effort include the Oregon Public Health Division, DHHS Office of Minority Health, and a three-year grant the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) State Innovation Model (SIM) grant.