



HEALTH RESEARCH &  
EDUCATIONAL TRUST  
In Partnership with AHA

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## ***NEWS RELEASE***

### **HRET Releases Updated Health Disparities Toolkit** *Update reflects recent Affordable Care Act legislative changes*

CHICAGO – February 28, 2012 – The Health Research & Educational Trust (HRET), an affiliate of the American Hospital Association (AHA), today released an update to its existing HRET Disparities Toolkit. The toolkit has been updated to reflect recent federal legislation requiring the collection of sex and disability information. The Toolkit provides hospitals, health systems, clinics, and health plans information and resources for systematically collecting race, ethnicity, and primary language data from patients.

The toolkit helps build and support a process and protocols for the collection of important demographic data. This data is important as hospitals, and the health care field, continue quality improvement efforts, especially in the areas of equity of care. This update brings the document into line with both the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, so called meaningful use criteria and Joint Commission standards.

“Ensuring that the care of all patients and the resulting outcomes are equitable is fundamental to the mission and goals of all hospitals,” said Rich Umbdenstock, president and CEO of the AHA. “Hospitals are seeking resources and best practices to help them improve their care and this toolkit is an established and respected option for their use.”

Originally published in 2007, the toolkit helps health care organizations assess their organizational capacity to collect accurate demographic data and implement a systematic framework for obtaining this data directly from patients/enrollees or their caregivers. The website includes information on why the collection of this data is important and how to use the data once it is collected, as well as staff trainings on how to collect data in a respectful manner.

“Hospitals understand that the elimination of health care disparities is a top priority and an important aspect of any quality improvement journey,” said Maulik Joshi, president of HRET and senior vice president for AHA. “This updated toolkit will serve as a powerful tool to those in the health care field for data collection, which is a central component of eliminating health care disparities.”

**(more)**

Key changes to the Toolkit include revisions to reflect required questions under the Accountable Care Act that seek more details on race, ethnicity, language preference and disability status. Sections on the language needs of the deaf or hard of hearing or visually impaired have also been expanded to offer more guidance. Also new resources have been added to reflect the most relevant research from the field.

The free web-based toolkit is available for download by going to [www.hretdisparities.org](http://www.hretdisparities.org).

**Health Research & Educational Trust (HRET)**

Founded in 1944, the Health Research & Educational Trust (HRET) is the not-for-profit research and education affiliate of the American Hospital Association (AHA). HRET's mission is to transform health care through research and education. HRET's applied research seeks to create new knowledge, tools, and assistance in improving the delivery of health care by providers in the communities they serve. For more information about HRET, visit [www.hret.org](http://www.hret.org).

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