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Pacific and Southwest Regional Health Equity Council Releases Environmental Scan that Reveals Health Disparities

(Las Vegas, NV, April 19, 2016) The Pacific and Southwest region of the United States including the US Pacific Territories is experiencing a shortage of doctors; individuals who do not have health insurance, and others who are unable to receive health care services due to the geographic expanse of the region, according to a new Environmental Scan released by the Pacific and Southwest Regional Health Equity Council (PSRHEC). The Environmental Scan looked at issues in the US Department of Health and Human Services' Region IX, which encompasses Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, and the Pacific Territories and identifies opportunities and challenges for addressing health disparities and health equity across the region.

"I'm thrilled to present this Environmental Scan because it provides regional information about health disparities and access to health care in one place," said Dr. Melva Thompson-Robinson, Professor and Executive Director of the Center for Health Disparities Research in the School of Community Health Sciences at the University of Nevada Las Vegas as well as co-chair of the PSRHEC. "We hope to use the data presented in this document to educate groups and increase understanding about Region IX as well as to serve as a benchmark by which progress toward health equity across the region can be compared."

Key findings from the Environmental Scan include:

- The Pacific and Southwest region is geographically larger than the continental United States, which can significantly impact the ability of residents of the Pacific Territories, in particular, to access health care.
- The Pacific and Southwest region is very diverse racially and ethnically. As such, disaggregation of data by race and ethnicity is important in order to target efforts to address health disparities and health equity.

The PSRHEC is a branch of the National Partnership for Action to End Health Disparities (NPA), the first national movement to end health disparities and move the nation towards health equity. The NPA is a multi-sector community and partnership-driven effort that is implemented at the state level by Regional Health Equity Councils (RHECs). The PSRHEC is one of ten regional councils that focus on strengthening health initiatives, leveraging resources, and encouraging innovative strategies that ensure improved health outcomes for all Americans.

