



CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES

DISABILITY PREVENTION THROUGH PUBLIC HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT THAT REDUCES POVERTY

There should be infrastructure development designed to protect and promote an effective public health system to ameliorate poverty and disability.

A forum was held by the “Campaign for America’s Future” to discuss the implications of economic problems as they relate to investments of the American infrastructure. Participants at the forum were member of congress, economic experts, a representative from labor, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and a political pollster.

Summary

There were hundreds of billions of dollars in federal expenditures for federal stimulus packages to finance infrastructure development and provide a jump-start to the economy. In addition, unpaid foreign wars cost in the range of \$1 to \$3 trillion. At the same time, poverty in America increased to over 37 million and people under 50% of poverty increased to nearly 13 million during the first decade of the 21st century. Furthermore, if European measures of poverty were used (i.e. 60% of median income) there would be 60 million impoverished people in America.

High rates of poverty are associated with the health and safety of people. While economic growth of the U.S. has been strong during the mid 2000s, the U.S. is 46th in life expectancy and 42nd in infant mortality and a child in Cuba has a 60% greater chance of reaching the 5th birthday than a child in the U.S. Thus, it appears that economic growth has little relationship to health and safety of people in America.

Disability Prevention Issue

Of particular concern is the plight of impoverished people with disabilities. There are over 50 million people with disabilities in America of which approximately two-thirds receive no public benefits. The employment rate is 19% among people with disabilities compared to 80% of people without disabilities. There are 40% to 65% of people with disability who work, do so at sub poverty wage levels. People of poor health with disability and in poverty face barriers for access to public health services that can diminish their health and may contribute to disability and secondary disabling conditions.

Intervention

A letter was sent to the House of Representative Caucus Co-Chair of the Hunger Coalition to comment on presentations from a perspective of disability prevention through effective public health with links to poverty.

Recommendation

There should be infrastructure development designed to protect and promote an effective public health system to ameliorate poverty and disability.