

HEALTH MATTERS

New Medicines In Development For Minorities

(NAPSA)—The bad news is that minority communities—especially African-American—are at higher risk for certain diseases such as asthma, breast cancer, diabetes, prostate cancer and sickle cell disease. For example, the American Lung Association reports that African-Americans face higher rates of asthma than white Americans and are three times more likely to die from the disease.

The good news is that there are nearly 700 new medicines now being developed at U.S. pharmaceutical research companies to help treat diseases that adversely affect African-Americans, according to a recent report from the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA).

New Hope

“The reasons for the health disparity between African-Americans and other Americans are complex and not fully understood,” said PhRMA President and CEO Billy Tauzin. “But these 691 medicines now being developed represent real hope for closing the troubling health gap and increasing the likelihood that every American can share in the benefits of medical progress.”

For instance, a new asthma medicine now in late-stage development is one of a new generation of inhaled corticosteroids. The drug, which is being tested for its lung-targeted anti-inflammatory effects, results in almost none of the side effects often associated with steroid use.

Like asthma, breast cancer has also had a particularly harsh impact on the African-American community. African-American women are 10 percent more likely to be diagnosed with the disease.



Medicines are now being developed for diseases that take a high toll on the minority communities.

Further, according to the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Office of Minority Health, 35 percent of African-American women are more likely to die from the disease.

New Medicines

Nearly 100 medicines are now being tested for the prevention and treatment of breast cancer, according to the new report.

Ninety-five new medicines being developed to treat diabetes may also improve the health of minority communities. According to the American Diabetes Association, African-Americans suffer from diabetes at twice the rate of white Americans.

A new, first-in-class medicine in development has been shown to significantly improve long-term glycemic control in clinical trials. By increasing levels of GLP-1, the new medicine could improve the imbalance between insulin and glucose that causes type 2 (adult onset) diabetes.

The new report about drugs in development—specifically, drugs that target those diseases prevalent among African-Americans—is available on PhRMA's Web site at www.phrma.org.