Economic Inequality, the Occupy Movement, & Public Health

Brown Bag University
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Economic Inequality:
A Growing Threat to Public Health
The income gap between the bottom 20% and the top 1% has more than tripled over the past four decades.

In 2009, the top 1% of households owned a larger share of total wealth than the bottom 90% combined.
In 2005, for every $1 dollar of wealth owned by the typical White family, the typical Latino family had 14¢ and the typical Black family had 9¢.

In 2009, for every $1 dollar of wealth owned by the typical White family, the typical Latino family had 6¢ and the typical Black family had 5¢.

Total loss of wealth for people of color due to subprime loans taken from 2000 to 2008 is estimated at between $164 billion and $213 billion – which can be considered the greatest loss of wealth for people of color in modern U.S. history.
Wealth = Health

Individual income and wealth matter for health.

1. Resources that enable good health
2. Chances of living in a neighborhood that promotes good vs. ill health
3. Daily and chronic stress
4. Social inclusion and political power

Where You Live Affects Your Health

Communities of Opportunity
- Parks
- Safe/Walkable Streets
- Grocery Stores and Healthy Foods
- Good Schools
- Clean Air
- Quality Housing
- Public Transportation
- Good Jobs
- Strong Local Businesses
- Financial Institutions

Good Health Status

Disinvested Communities
- Limited/Unsafe Parks
- Crime
- Fast Food Restaurants
- Liquor Stores
- Poor Performing Schools
- Pollution and Toxic Exposures
- Limited Public Transportation
- Absence of High Quality Financial Institutions
- Predatory Lenders

Poor Health Status
In Alameda County, there is a strong social gradient in health based on neighborhood poverty levels.

The concentration of people of color in high-poverty neighborhoods is a major driver of disparate health outcomes by race.
The gap in life expectancy between African Americans and Whites in Alameda County has widened.

Economic inequality matters for everybody's health.
To Learn More

1. Go to http://www.acphd.org/ and click on “Economic Inequality”

2. Read article by Michael O’Donnell from the March/April 2012 issue of American Journal of Health Promotion

3. Consider attending the April 4 Teach-in organized by UC Berkeley Labor Center