Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities: A Way Forward

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The W. Montague Cobb/National Medical Association Health Institute (The Cobb) was launched 10 years ago with the aim of working to address racial and ethnic health disparities. I first met Dr. Montague Cobb when he visited Harvard Medical School to speak to our medical school class. He was a supremely impressive figure, whose breadth of knowledge and insight, from medicine, to basic research, to social science, to politics, I found to be unparalleled. In retrospect, in meeting with him during my first days, the first Black M.D.-Ph.D. I had encountered, I was convinced to pursue the same path.

Dr. Cobb was one of the original champions of the elimination of health disparities. Whether it was through his work as the President of the National Medical Association, President of the NAACP, or Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of the National Medical Association, he was indefatigable in his efforts to create change, and so, on behalf of my colleagues affiliated with The Cobb, we bring you the next chapter in Dr.

Cobb's legacy, the Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities.

Issues surrounding racial and ethnic health disparities are not new and that is precisely the problem. We are not making the type of headway we need to effectively address and eliminate disparities in health taking place in this country. While some may feel there is progress, we are in fact at a crisis point in many ways, as gaps in many areas of disparities have actually not closed and as our population in America grows to reflect these disparities.

We are blessed to live and work in a truly great country. We have the ability to shape destiny in unprecedented and unpredictable ways. Every great journey begins with a first step, and we believe that the Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities in many ways is an important first step for our nation in understanding and combating disparities that clearly continue. We must understand our past and embrace a future knowing that we cannot continue doing things as we have done.

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