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## COMMISSION ON MINORITY HEALTH

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **PRESS RELEASE**

***The Ohio Commission on Minority Health Announces the Release of its Second Medical Expert Panel White Paper, "Achieving Equity and Eliminating Obesity and Diabetes Disparities within Racial and Ethnic Populations"***

Columbus, Ohio – At its September 16, 2016 Board meeting, The Ohio Commission on Minority Health released the second volume, of its Medical Expert Panel White Paper Series. Copies may be viewed and downloaded from the Commission website at [www.mih.ohio.gov](http://www.mih.ohio.gov).

In 1987, the Ohio Commission on Minority Health became the first freestanding state agency in the nation to address the disparity that exists between the health status of minority and non-minority populations. Today there are Offices of Minority Health in 47 states. The Commission's mission is to eliminate disparities in minority health through innovative strategies and financial opportunities, public health promotion, legislative action, public policy and systems change. In 2014, the OCMH established the Medical Expert Panel Series as a part of its strategic plan to overcome health disparities and achieve health equity in Ohio. The panels function under the OCMH's Communication Committee and each panel is comprised of experts with extensive experience in addressing inequitable health outcomes of minority populations based on research, policy formulation, modification of clinical practices and enhancement of public health interventions.

The Ohio Commission on Minority Health's Medical Expert Panel on Obesity and Diabetes (OCMHMEP-O/D) purpose is to offer insight and recommendations to address diabetes and obesity disparities in Ohio with the goal of achieving health equity. The OCMHMEP-O/D seeks to influence the thinking, actions and policies, which function to transcend the status quo of unacceptable high incidence and prevalence rates of these diseases. Director Dawson also shared that, "The Commission convened this panel to address the significant challenge of diabetes and obesity disparities, in 2012 Ohio had the sixth highest age-adjusted diabetes death rate among the 50 states and the District of Columbia."

The OCMHMEP-O/D acknowledges that there are important political considerations surrounding this topic. Recommendations, which solely focus on clinical and programmatic interventions without analyzing the social determinants of health related to diabetes and obesity, are less likely to lead to equitable health outcomes.

The release of this White paper is timely given the recent introduction of Senate Bill 287 which calls for the development of a state plan to assess the diabetes epidemic in the state, share and analyze existing data, make recommendations for reducing the prevalence of diabetes, provide a budget for the recommendations and report every two years on the progress of the plan. The Commission has been identified to work with the Office of Health Transformation along with other state agencies in the development of the statewide diabetes plan. In 2012, Blacks in Ohio had a 79% higher age-adjusted diabetes death rate compared with whites, given that the racial disparity gaps are continuing to widen, the Commission's collaborative effort will be to ensure that state plan addresses these long standing disparities.

For more information on the Ohio Commission on Minority Health, please visit their website at [www.mih.ohio.gov](http://www.mih.ohio.gov).

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