



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 1, 2010

Contact: Betty Anne Williams, 202-789-3505
bawilliams@jointcenter.org

Joint Center Receives \$3.6 Million Grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Funds to be Devoted to Research and Policy Development to Reduce Racial Health Inequities

WASHINGTON, DC -- The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, a Washington-based research and policy institution that focuses on the concerns of African Americans and other people of color, has received a three-year, \$3.6 million grant to fund its economic research and the work of its Health Policy Institute (HPI).

The funding comes from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation of Battle Creek, MI.

The grant will enable the Joint Center to continue HPI's work with regard to research and policy development on health inequities, particularly those related to higher infant mortality, higher rates of disease and disability, and shortened life expectancy.

Those inequities added more than \$50 billion a year in direct U.S. health care costs over a four-year period, according to a study released by HPI last fall, which found that more than 30 percent of direct medical expenditures for African Americans, Asian Americans and Hispanics were excess costs linked to health inequalities. The study also estimated that the indirect costs of racial inequalities associated with illness and premature death amounted to more than a trillion dollars over 2006-2009.

"The health inequities experienced by minority Americans have a major impact across our society," said Ralph B. Everett, the Joint Center's President and CEO. "They hamper our workforce readiness and competitiveness as a nation, and they frustrate our ability to contain health care costs and improve overall health care quality. This grant will enable the Joint Center to continue our groundbreaking research and explore policy options that will drive solutions to this immense problem."

Over the three year grant period, HPI intends to serve as an anchor institution for a wider effort among national and local partners to use its research and policy development activities in the quest for a more equitable health system and fairer health outcomes. Among the key elements of HPI's activities will be:

- More effective advocacy for public and private efforts to address racial and ethnic health inequality, at local, state, and national levels.
- Greater public awareness of the consequences and costs of inequitable health opportunities for children, and of their relationship to structural inequality, particularly as manifested by racial and ethnic residential segregation.
- Greater awareness among policymakers, particularly those at local levels, of promising practices to address community-level determinants of children's health.
- Local, state and federal government action toward developing and implementing comprehensive strategies to address health inequality.

“Given the nation’s changing demographics by the year 2042, half the U.S. population will be people of color, which means that their health status increasingly defines the nation’s health. So it is critically important that we eliminate these health disparities,” said Brian D. Smedley, Ph.D., Vice President and Director of the Joint Center Health Policy Institute. “Through its initiatives to develop knowledge and a platform for action on health disparities, HPI is already having a broad impact on an issue that is becoming increasingly vital to our national well-being and our economic future. We are excited that the W.K. Kellogg Foundation has decided to continue to help us carry on this work.”

The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies is one of the nation's leading research and public policy institutions and the only one whose work focuses primarily on issues of particular concern to African Americans and other people of color. The Joint Center will mark its 40th Anniversary of service in 2010. To learn more, please visit www.jointcenter.org.

Established in 1930, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation supports children, families and communities as they strengthen and create conditions that propel vulnerable children to achieve success as individuals and as contributors to the larger community and society. Grants are concentrated in the United States, Latin America and the Caribbean, and southern Africa. For further information, please visit the Foundation’s website at www.wkkf.org.

###