

MINORITY HEALTH & HEALTH DISPARITIES



● Chronic Disease ● Environmental Health ● Emergency Preparedness ● Family Health
● Immunizations ● Infectious Disease ● Public Health Laboratory ● Local Public Health ● Minority Health

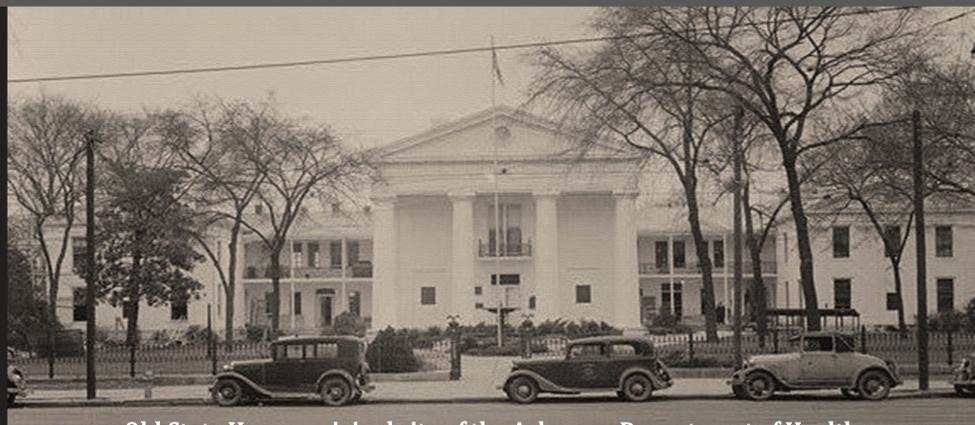
Arkansas's long history of slavery, Jim Crow laws, poll taxes, separate but equal doctrines, segregation, racism, and discrimination played a significant role in the health and welfare of African Americans and other minority populations. Only in the last 30 years have noticeable changes occurred to address health disparities and health equity.

In 1987, Governor Clinton appointed Dr. Joycelyn Elders to serve as director of the Arkansas Department of Health. She was the first African American and the first woman to hold that position. Central to Dr. Elders' vision for public health in Arkansas was access to adequate and appropriate services for minority populations. In 1991, the Arkansas legislature passed Act 912 that established the Arkansas Minority Health Commission (AMHC). That same year, Dr. Elders established the Office of Minority Health, now the Office of Minority Health & Health Disparities (OMHHD), within the Department of Health.

In recent decades, progress been made to address health disparities and health equity among the state's minority populations. Minority health outreach has broadened to include Latinos, Marshallese, HIV-infected individuals and others disproportionately affected. Efforts have been made to address cultural and language barriers that limit healthcare delivery.

The Department continues to provide public health services that are affordable and accessible, using best practices and ensuring diversity, innovation, creativity, and sensitivity to all Arkansans.

100
Years
of Public Health
in Arkansas



Old State House, original site of the Arkansas Department of Health