



COMMUNITY ADVOCATES
Public Policy Institute

NEWS RELEASE

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FREE SEPT. 2 SCREENING OF “UNNATURAL CAUSES” EXPLORES CONNECTION BETWEEN INCOME DISPARITIES, HEALTH OUTCOMES

MODERATED DISCUSSION TO FOLLOW SCREENING

Milwaukee (Aug. 21, 2009)—Are income disparities in the United States making us sick? Can the social circumstances in which we are born, live and work actually disrupt our physiology as much as germs and viruses?

On Sept. 2, the Community Advocates Public Policy Institute and The Salvation Army of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan will host a special screening of “Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making Us Sick?,” the acclaimed documentary series originally broadcast by PBS.

The screening features the hour-long segment “In Sickness and In Wealth,” which explores the connections between healthy bodies, healthy bank accounts and skin color, and why patterns of health and illness reflect underlying patterns of class and racial inequities. A moderated discussion will follow the screening.

The screening will be held from 7-8:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 2 at St. Matthew’s Church, 1615 N. Wauwatosa Ave., Wauwatosa.

Admission is FREE, however space is limited. To register, contact Conor Williams, Economic Policy Analyst for the Community Advocates Public Policy Institute, at conor.williams@stonedimensions.com.

For more information or to download a flyer, visit the Community Advocates Public Policy Institute Web site, www.ca-ppi.org.

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The screening is a project of the Wisconsin Tobacco Prevention and Poverty Network, which is coordinated by The Salvation Army of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan and funded by the Wisconsin Tobacco Prevention and Control Program of the State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

Patterns of Health, Illness, Class and Race

“In Sickness and in Wealth” travels to Louisville, Kentucky, not to explore whether medical care cures us but to see why we get sick in the first place.

The lives of a CEO, a lab supervisor, a janitor and an unemployed mother illustrate how class shapes opportunities for good health. Those on the top have the most access to power, resources and opportunity—and thus the best health. Those on the bottom are faced with more stressors—unpaid bills, jobs that don’t pay enough, unsafe living conditions, lack of control over work and schedule—and the fewest resources available to help them cope.

The net effect is a health-wealth gradient, in which every descending rung of the socioeconomic ladder corresponds to worse health.

And it’s not just the poorest among us who are suffering, but the middle classes too. Louisville Metro Public Health Department data maps reveal 5- and 10-year gaps in life expectancy between the city’s rich, middle and working-class neighborhoods. We also see how racial inequality imposes an additional burden on people of color.

The Community Advocates Public Policy Institute has a clear and simple goal: To explain why so many Milwaukeeans are poor, and to develop and implement a practical strategy to greatly reduce the level of poverty in our community and offer the poor the tools they need to lead better lives.