

## **S. Leonard Syme, PhD**

### **BIOSKETCH**

Dr. Leonard Syme has been a Professor of Epidemiology at the University of California, Berkeley, since 1968. His major research interest has been psychosocial risk factors such as job stress, social support and poverty. In doing this research, he has studied San Francisco bus drivers; Japanese living in Japan, Hawaii and California; British civil servants; and people living in Alameda County, California. Dr. Syme has written two books and over 150 published papers, and has been a visiting professor at universities in England and Japan. He was elected to the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences and has received several honors related to his teaching and research, among them, the Lilienfeld Award for Excellence in Teaching, the J.D. Bruce Award for Distinguished Contributions in Preventive Medicine from the American College of Preventive Medicine, and the University of California Distinguished Emeritus Professor Award. Now retired, Dr. Syme is Director of the Health Research for Action Center at Berkeley which is attempting to empower people and communities using printed materials, television, and community resource development.

S. Leonard Syme, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

Can We Do Anything About Health Disparities in America?

It is well known that people in racial and ethnic minority groups and in lower social-class positions have higher morbidity and mortality rates from virtually every disease. It is not clear that we will be able to do anything about this problem unless we figure out a way to adopt a more appropriate conceptual model that focuses on the fundamental determinants of health. In addition, we will need to understand how important this is for all Americans as a society and we will need to better deal with the issues people care about: their children, homes, jobs, safety, education, families, retirement, and future prospects. These are very challenging issues but we really have no choice.

