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- Kentucky Hospital Association
- Q3 Health Innovation Partners
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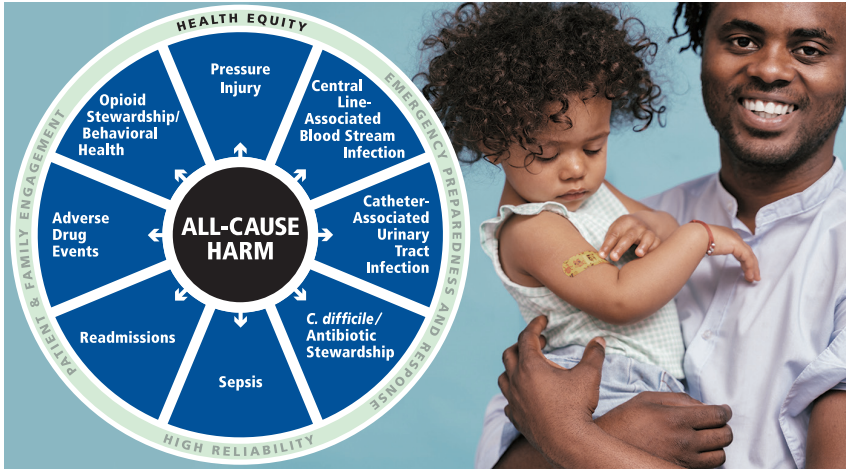
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HEALTH EQUITY GUIDE

December 2023



[CMS Discusses its Strategy to Promote Equity in Quality Reporting Programs](#)

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has outlined its strategy to promote equitable care to underserved populations by leveraging its quality-reporting and payment programs. The approach, called “Rewarding Excellence for Underserved Populations (REUP),” focuses on healthcare organizations that treat a high percentage of underserved patients and offers rewards to those that increase the percentage of this population that receives care. This program will be promoted across all CMS quality and value programs.

In addition to REUP, CMS will continue to focus on equity-specific measures, including those that promote screening for social determinants of health.

[HSS Call to Action Addresses Health-Related Social Needs](#)

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has issued a call to action to catalyze community-based partnerships uniting health systems, clinicians, payers, public health agencies and health information technology groups in addressing unmet health-related social needs.

Suggested actions for health systems and providers include engaging community partners, identifying health-related social needs for patients, identifying and understanding local resources, and implementing financial mechanisms to pay for social care services.

December: National Influenza Vaccination Week and HIV AIDS Awareness Month

Low rates of [flu vaccination uptake](#), especially among Black, Hispanic, and American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI/AN) adults, require an ongoing focus on vaccine education and promotion.

In recognition of HIV AIDS Awareness Month, it is important to note that [HIV disproportionately impacts Black and Hispanic/Latino communities](#).

The CDC provides [fact sheets](#) with information on the impact of HIV on different populations as well as [resources and tools](#) for providers.

Rural/CAH Corner

[Rural-Urban Disparities in Medicare](#)



Read about rural-urban disparities in care and experience among Medicare beneficiaries. Findings include lower than national average rates of flu vaccination for rural Medicare Advantage enrollees and disparities by race and ethnicity.

[Opioid Response Program Targets Rural Communities](#)

Watch a series of six brief videos on the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy’s Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP) multi-year initiative on treating and preventing opioid use disorder in rural communities.

In the News

[HHS Updates its Language Access Plan Resource](#)

HHS has issued its 2023 Language Access Plan, outlining the agency's plans to ensure greater access to life-saving services for individuals with Limited English Proficiency. An estimated 68 million people in the U.S. speak a language other than English at home. Prior work on this issue led to the development of a [resource](#) for hospitals aimed at improving patient safety systems for patients with Limited English Proficiency.

[CMS Final Physician Payment Rule Helps Promote Health Equity](#)

Policies finalized by CMS in the [Physician Fee Schedule](#), effective in 2024, include payment changes that address health-related social needs. Finalized changes to coding and payment include payment for community health integration; SDOH risk assessments; and expansion of access to behavioral and certain oral health care.

[Results of Survey of Healthcare Professionals' Views on Health Equity Published](#)

The [Rise to Health Coalition](#) surveyed 1,400 professionals to understand their perspectives related to health equity. Close to 60% of the respondents noted that health equity is a significant issue for health systems. The survey participants indicated that the three most effective strategies to advance health equity are addressing social determinants of health (53%), enhancing health literacy (34%), and expanding cultural competency training (30%). The greatest barrier to advancing health equity was reported to be affordability of care.

[Closing the "Techequity" Gap](#)

This *JAMA* article highlights the importance of closing the technological equity gap by promoting access to patient portals. The recommendation is based on research indicating that access to patient portals can lead to better engagement by patients in their care. The article also recommends ongoing monitoring of patients' portal access and usage, identification of disparities and adoption of equitable approaches to facilitating technology use, and educating patients on the use of the portal.



For more health equity news: <https://qi.ipro.org/health-equity-resources>

Upcoming Events

[Health-Related Social Needs Session 5](#)

IPRO

January 10 & February 14, 2024

12:00 – 12:45 PM ET

For a PDF version of this newsletter, including hyperlinks to resources for additional information, scan this QR code.



Or follow this link:

bit.ly/43iLayH