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 Q3 Health Innovation Partners  
 Superior Health Quality Alliance

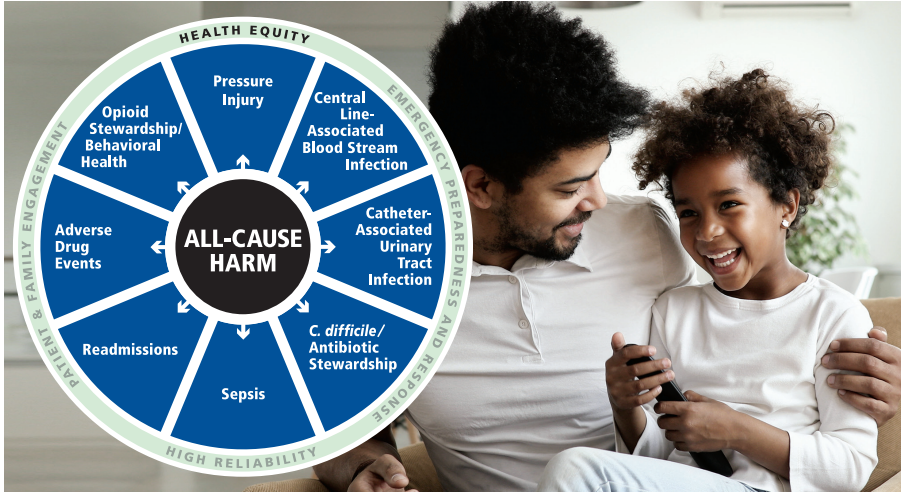
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Hospital Quality Improvement Contractors  
 CENTERS FOR MEDICARE & MEDICAID SERVICES  
 EQUALITY IMPROVEMENT & INNOVATION GROUP



# HEALTH EQUITY GUIDE

May 2024



## Health Disparities Persist Across States

The Commonwealth Fund’s State Health Disparities Report found:

- Differences in health system performance by race and ethnicity within and across states.
- Higher mortality from avoidable causes for Black people compared to others; higher rates for American Indian and Alaska Native in specific states.
- Variability in access to insurance by state for non-White adults.
- Higher rates of hospital admissions and emergency department use for Black Medicare beneficiaries for conditions that might be treated in a primary care setting.

The report highlights the importance of access to high-quality care which can improve health outcomes and notes the broader implications of socioeconomic disadvantages that contribute to healthcare disparities.

## CMS Proposed Rules Includes Changes to Diagnosis Codes for Homelessness and Better Access to Care for Underserved Communities

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued its 2025 proposed rule for the Medicare hospital inpatient prospective payment system (IPPS). They include:

- Revising the severity of diagnosis codes for inadequate housing and housing instability resulting in higher payments to reflect increased resource use.
- Promoting better access to treatments for rural and underserved communities.
- Soliciting comments to drive improvements in maternal care given the disparities in outcomes and access to care.

## May Health Observances

**Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, Mental Health Month, and National Women’s Health Week**

National Alliance on Mental Illness has a [toolkit](#) to prioritize mental health and reduce stigma.

OMH highlights specific health concerns for AA and NHPI individuals.

HHS’s Office on Women’s Health provides [resources](#) for National Women’s Health Week May 8 - 14.

## Rural/CAH Corner

[HHS Office of Inspector General Reports Lack of Access to Behavioral Health for Medicare and Medicaid Enrollees](#)



A new report found a lack of behavioral health providers participating in Medicare and Medicaid, especially in rural areas. Despite demand for mental healthcare, fewer enrollees received treatment, and many had to travel long distances to obtain care.

## Case Study Explores the Role of Public Transportation in Food Insecurity

A recent study funded by the Small Urban, Rural and Tribal Center on Mobility (SURTCOM), found that transportation barriers limit access to healthy foods, especially in rural counties without adequate public transit. Transportation programs, community outreach, and culturally sensitive approaches can help address food insecurity for rural populations.

## In the News

### [New AHRQ Guide Discusses Implementing a Digital Healthcare Equity Framework](#)

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) provides a new framework for the use of digital healthcare technologies. It highlights the importance of considering the end users of the technology and understanding whether their needs will be met, thinking about cultural beliefs, ensuring access, and assessing outcomes, and ensuring data is being used equitably and transparently.

### [Triage Center Highlights a Person-Centered Culturally Sensitive Mental Health Approach](#)

In South Dakota, a community triage center is using a culturally sensitive approach for mental health and addiction care. The center, a public-private partnership between two healthcare providers and the city and county, adapts

its approach to each individual, connects individuals to community-based resources, and engages community stakeholders in its work. It has helped divert those in crisis from law enforcement and hospital emergency departments that are not equipped to provide needed care.

### [Three Public-Private Partnerships Focused on 'Food is Medicine' Launched](#)

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) unveiled partnerships with Instacart, the Rockefeller Foundation, and Feeding America to advance the “food is medicine” movement. The partnerships focus on expanding access to healthy food, understanding how food-based programs can improve outcomes, and evaluating existing programs that address food insecurity. This initiative is aligned with the agency’s goal to reduce food insecurity and improve chronic disease management.



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

## Upcoming Events

### [Social Drivers of Health - The Missing Link](#)

National Rural Health Resource Center  
and Indiana Hospital Association  
May 15, 2024  
12:00-1:00 CT

### [Sleep Disparities and Social Determinants of Health](#)

Health Equity Action Network  
May 22, 2024  
1:00-2:00 PM

**SAVE THE DATE**

[CMS Health Equity Conference](#)  
[Sustaining Health Equity Through Action](#)  
May 29-30, 2024  
Hyatt Regency, Bethesda, MD  
(in-person and virtual)

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