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# HEALTH EQUITY GUIDE

October 2023



## CMS Announces Transformative Model to Give States Incentives and Flexibilities to Redesign Health Care Delivery, Improve Equitable Access to Care

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced a new model for states to improve overall population health. The Advancing All-Payer Health Equity Approaches and Development Model (AHEAD Model) is a state-based, all-payer model that includes payment models for participating hospitals. The goals of the model are to improve care coordination for patients on Medicare and Medicaid, increase screening and referrals for social drivers of health, and strengthen primary care. It's modeled on state-based programs in Vermont, Maryland, and Pennsylvania and will be awarded to eight states.

## CMS Releases a New Z Code Infographic

CMS released an infographic highlighting the use of ICD-10-CM Z Codes to improve the collection of social determinants of health (SDOH) data. Z Codes provide ways to report SDOH e.g., transportation barriers and food insecurity. The codes can be notated for patient-provider interactions or for SDOH self-reported information, and they can be included in the medical record as long as a provider/clinician signs off.

The infographic provides an overview of recent updates to Z Codes and new codes e.g., Z55.6 (problems related to health literacy) and Z59.12 (inadequate housing utilities). An [analysis](#) of Medicare Advantage Z code utilization identified the five most used Z codes to be: problems related to living alone, disappearance and death of a family member, homelessness, problems in relationship with spouse/partner, and other specified problems related to upbringing.

## October: Health Literacy, Breast Cancer Awareness, Domestic Violence Awareness

Institute of Healthcare Advancement has several [health literacy resources](#).

American Cancer Society offers educational materials on [breast cancer](#) and materials on [disparities](#).

The Office of Women's Health provides resources on [domestic or intimate partner violence](#).

## Rural/CAH Corner

### [National Rural Health Day Review](#)



This factsheet offers key insights into rural health equity and calls for increased communication, education, collaboration, and innovation in rural health.

#### **Some key messages:**

- 17% of rural residents are living at or below the poverty line.
- Rural minorities have higher rates of poverty and obesity than rural White and urban children.
- Almost 16% of rural residents report having food insecurity.

### [Reaching Recovery in Rural and Tribal Areas](#)

A recent Department of Justice blog post details a national [program](#) designed to promote opioid, stimulant, and substance use recovery through financial and technical assistance to states, local government, and Indian tribal governments. Strategies including peer support networks and application of cultural competency are being used to foster change with rural Native Americans.

## In the News

### [Access Challenges For Patients With Limited English Proficiency: A Secret-shopper Study Of In-person And Telehealth Behavioral Health Services In California Safety-net Clinics](#)

A recent Health Affairs Scholar article discusses the impact of limited English proficiency (LEP) on how patients navigate access to care. Patients with LEP face challenges accessing telehealth due to the lack of translations and interpreters during the visit, a disparity that was exacerbated by the growth of telehealth during the pandemic. 22% of Spanish-speaking callers were unable to engage someone and obtain an appointment.

### [Health and Health Care Experiences of Immigrants: The 2023 KFF/LA Times Survey of Immigrants](#)

The results of a survey conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation and the LA Times indicate that one in four immigrant adults who had received care reported unfair treatment due to their race/ethnicity, insurance status/ability to pay, and/or their ability to speak English. Three in 10 reported having experienced challenges related to obtaining respectful and culturally competent care. Immigrant adults also reported uncertainty about how to use/ask for assistance on social drivers of health due to their immigration status.

### [Energy Insecurity and Health: America's Hidden Hardship](#)

Published in the June 29, 2023, issue of Health Affairs, this article provides insight about the implications of energy insecurity for health and health equity; particularly in light of climate change, recognition of unacceptable disparities, and the clean energy movement. Low-income households and families comprising Black, Indigenous, and people of color are disproportionately affected. The effects of energy insecurity impact individuals' physical and mental health and potentially can result in poorer health outcomes

### [Achieving Health Equity Hinges on Iteration, Continuous Learning](#)

Patient Engagement HIT recently published an article discussing a New Jersey-based hospital's continued refinement of its strategies addressing health disparities after being named the first hospital in the nation to earn a Health Care Equity Certification from The Joint Commission. Hackensack Meridian University Medical Center is now looking closely at post-discharge health outcomes data, e.g., readmission, ED recidivism, and SDOH screenings, to make improvements. The hospital has pooled together community resources in eight counties and leveraged IT and other technology to support their efforts.



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

## Upcoming Events

### [Creating Accountability through Data: From Racism and Neglect to Transparency and Repair](#)

National Health Equity Grand Rounds  
October 10  
12:00 – 12:45 PM ET

### [Health-Related Social Needs Series](#)

IPRO  
Monthly on the second  
Wednesday, September through  
February.  
12:00 – 12:45 PM ET

### [An In-Depth View of Health Disparities Through Chronic Disease Research](#)

American Physiological Society  
November 7  
11:00 – 12:00 PM ET

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



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[bit.ly/43iLAyH](https://bit.ly/43iLAyH)