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# HEALTH EQUITY GUIDE

April 2022



## April: National Minority Health Month, Public Health Week (Apr. 4-10), STD Awareness Week (Apr. 10-16).

The HHS Office of Minority Health announced the theme for National Minority Health Month: [Give Your Community a Boost!](#) Focused on COVID-19 vaccinations.

The CDC offers [resources](#) to reduce STD-related stigma, fear, and discrimination.

The APHA offers several daily themed [resources](#) and events focused on public health and equity.

## Medicaid and Racial Health Equity

Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF) assessed how and whether Medicaid can help to reduce racial disparities. Research shows health insurance ensures access and financial protection and has broader implications. The authors suggest Medicaid expansion would help reduce disparities for people of color as would other expansions in coverage and access.

Other equity initiatives via Medicaid are being pursued to improve maternal health disparities by increasing postpartum coverage, providing or connecting individuals to non-medical resources e.g., housing, expanding eligibility for individuals with substance use disorders or severe mental illness, and improving data collection and reporting of health disparities.

Managed care organizations are leveraging performance improvement projects to address racial health disparities and trying to achieve NCQA's [Distinction in Multicultural Health Care](#).

Additional policies might be on the forefront that advance health equity priorities whilst leveraging the Medicaid program.

## NCQA Launches a Health Equity Resource Center

The National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) recently launched a [Health Equity Resource Center](#) to assist health plans, health systems, government, and employers in making quality improvements to advance health equity.

NCQA also recently [proposed](#) a new measure addressing social determinants of health. The measure assesses whether members were screened for unmet food, housing, and transportation needs, and whether they received a corresponding intervention, if needed.

## Rural/CAH Corner

### Grantee Sourcebook: Rural Health Opioid Program

This report provides highlights from 26 rural grant projects that received federal funding over three years to focus on opioid-use disorder using community-based consortiums.

### Leveraging Quality Measurement to Improve Rural Health

This report provides a summary of an environmental scan from the National Quality Forum on measures to improve rural health. Included are 4 measures related to equity and SDOH.

## In the News

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### [HHS Celebrates 12 Years of Advancing Health Equity via the Affordable Care Act](#)

HHS announced a celebration for the 12<sup>th</sup> year of the enactment of the Affordable Care Act. Accomplishments include expansion of insurance coverage, expansion of Medicaid eligibility up to 138% of the Federal Poverty Level, extension of protection for Americans with disabilities from being discriminated against, coordinated efforts to reduce disparities in mental health and substance use, among others.

### [Accelerate Health Equity launches with New Approach to Health Inequality in Philadelphia](#)

A new city-wide initiative in Philadelphia aimed at addressing health equity and racism launches and it brings together 11 local organizations. Initial pilot programs will focus on housing, targeting social determinants that impact cardiovascular outcomes, and maternal health outcomes. A health equity [dashboard](#) will be used to share data based on a needs assessment and input from stakeholders.

### [Raising The Stakes To Advance Equity In Black Maternal Health](#)

This Health Affairs article highlights a health system's effort to reduce major maternal morbidity and mortality and screen for colorectal cancer for Black patients. The health system developed a composite quality metric which included hemorrhage, infection, and embolism, morbidity metrics, and HELLP syndrome. The system also developed a quality improvement framework using a bundle for obstetric hemorrhage. An equity-based survey was also used to address staff concerns around inequities.

### [The surprising link between Covid-19 deaths and ... internet access](#)

This article highlights the lack of internet access associated with an increased risk of dying from COVID-19. Surprisingly, this finding was not just true in rural areas but also in urban areas. The researchers hypothesized that a lack of information related to COVID-19 may help explain the findings. The research community has long identified high-speed broadband, as a critical component of health, more specifically social determinants of health.



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

## Upcoming Events

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### [ACO REACH - Health Equity Webinar](#)

CMS

**Date:** April 5

**Time:** 4:00 – 5:00 PM EST

### [Equity and accessibility in community: Lessons from the pandemic and beyond](#)

APHA

**Date:** April 8

**Time:** 2:00 – 3:00 PM EST

### [The Role of Social Determinants of Health in Value-Based Payment Models During COVID-19: An Evolving Rural Perspective](#)

National Rural Health Resource Center

**Date:** April 19

**Time:** 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM EST