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# HEALTH EQUITY HIGHLIGHTS

January 2023



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## January: Poverty Awareness Month and Glaucoma Awareness Month

In 2021, 37.9 million people were living in poverty. While the overall US poverty rate was 11.6%, 19.5% of Black people and 17.1% of Hispanic people were living in poverty.<sup>1</sup>

Glaucoma can result in vision loss and even blindness. About 3 million Americans have glaucoma, the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of blindness worldwide.

Black and Hispanic individuals are at greater risk of developing glaucoma. Black people have more optic nerve damage from glaucoma at the time of diagnosis, their glaucoma is more difficult to treat, and they have higher risk of blindness as a result.<sup>2</sup>

## ADA Advises New Blood Pressure and Lipid Targets for People with Diabetes

New more aggressive targets for blood pressure and lipids are among the changes to the annual American Diabetes Association (ADA) Standards of Care in Diabetes — 2023.

Also introduced for 2023 is guidance to use community health workers to support the management of diabetes and cardiovascular risk factors, help people navigate and engage with the health system, and assist with screening for food insecurity.

## Managing Conversations about Weight in Non-White Patients

Body weight and even the term "obesity" are fraught discussions for many healthcare professionals and patients alike. Our society has stigmatized weight with inherent assumptions about character, intelligence, worth, and work ethic.

With all that baggage, it's no wonder that many healthcare professionals avoid the subject with their patients. However, by avoiding the topic, patients are done a disservice, and from a health equity perspective, people of color who have higher rates of obesity are further disadvantaged in efforts to achieve a state of healthfulness and well-being.

## Rural/CAH Corner

### As Overdoses Soar in Rural America, More Clinicians are Prescribing Addiction Medications

In 2016, just 40% of rural counties nationwide had at least one health care provider certified to prescribe buprenorphine. That figure climbed to 63% by 2020.

### Geospatial Analysis of Access to Health Care and Internet Services in the US

Expanding telemedicine without improving internet access and digital literacy, along with mitigating clinician shortages could contribute to rural-urban health disparities in the US.

<sup>1</sup>Pfeiffer, Robert S. "U.S. Poverty Statistics | Poverty Estimates." Federal Safety Net, 30 Sept. 2022, [federafsafetynet.com/poverty-statistics/](https://www.federafsafetynet.com/poverty-statistics/). Accessed 19 Dec. 2022.

<sup>2</sup>Ou YO. Health disparities in glaucoma. Health Disparities in Glaucoma | BrightFocus Foundation. <https://www.brightfocus.org/glaucoma/article/health-disparities-glaucoma>. Accessed December 19, 2022.

## In the News

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### [Necessary Conversations: Understanding Racism as a Barrier to Achieving Health Equity \(Free E-Book\)](#)

Structural racism and inequity have led to wide-scale poorer health outcomes and shorter life spans. Authentic conversations about racial inequities are essential, difficult, and urgent.

### [PhenX Social Determinants of Health \(SDOH\) Assessments Collection Toolkit](#)

The PhenX Toolkit (consensus measures for Phenotypes and eXposures) provides a web-based catalog of recommended standard data collection protocols for SDOH.

### [Fewer Patients Have Usual Source of Care, Primary Care Provider](#)

The number of Americans with a usual source of care has dropped 10 percent in the last 18 years. Hispanic people who have less than a high school education, are uninsured, and are younger are less likely to have a usual source of care than their counterparts.

### [US Remains Worst in the World for Maternal Mortality, Health Equity](#)

A new Commonwealth Fund brief reports that the United States has maintained a global title it probably doesn't want: the worst maternal mortality rates in the developed world. Black mothers in the US are twice as likely to die as their White counterparts.

### [Issue Brief: Social Needs of People of Color with Substance Use Disorders](#)

People of color have more unmet needs for substance use disorder (SUD) treatment services, and they experience worse outcomes when they access such services compared with non-Hispanic White people. Treatment barriers include but are not limited to, stigma, discrimination, limited availability or affordability of SUD treatment options, unmet social needs, and limited availability of culturally and linguistically effective providers.



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

## Upcoming Events

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### [Effective Health Communication and Health Literacy: Understanding the Connection](#)

National Library of Medicine

**Date:** January 26, 2023

**Time:** 1:00-2:00 PM ET  
(Login required, CE available)

### [Confronting US History: We Must End Racism to End Health Disparities](#)

George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences

**Date:** January 11, 2023

**Time:** Noon – 1:00 PM ET  
(CE available)

### [Sepsis Alliance Institute Enduring Educational Activities](#)

Sepsis Alliance Institute

**Date:** On Demand  
(Multiple offerings, CE available)