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# HEALTH EQUITY HIGHLIGHTS

March 2023



## March: National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month and National Kidney Month

Colorectal cancer (CRC) is the third most common cancer in both men and women in the United States and the second most common cause of cancer-related death.<sup>1</sup>

Black people bear a disproportionate burden, with an incidence of CRC that is >20% higher than in Whites and an even larger difference in mortality.<sup>1</sup>

Kidney disease disproportionately affects communities of color. Blacks are almost 4 times more likely, and Hispanics are 1.3 times more likely to have kidney failure compared to White Americans.<sup>2</sup>

## Decision-Making Tool for Older Adults with Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) Improves Choices

The choice of treatment can be particularly challenging for older patients, who may become overwhelmed while navigating the myriad of information they receive. As a result, many believe that dialysis, a time-consuming and physically taxing therapy, is the only option for them, while other potentially better options are available.

A new study has found that easy access to reliable education outside the doctor's office and clearly understanding the prognosis with each treatment option can improve decision-making quality.

## Race-Free Kidney Equation Changes Status of Millions in the US

The race-free, creatinine-based equation for calculating estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR), introduced in 2021 and gaining traction as the default tool for assessing kidney function in routine US practice, is expected to identify about 434,000 new cases of CKD among Black adults. At the same time, use of the new equation would undo a CKD diagnosis for about 5.5 million non-Black adult Americans.

## Rural/CAH Corner

### Patients Receiving Organ Transplants Undervaccinated Against Influenza, Pneumococcus

Vaccination rates against influenza and pneumococcus were lower in patients receiving organ transplants who lived outside of urban areas and had lower socioeconomic status.

### Looming Cuts to Emergency SNAP Benefits Threaten Food Security in Rural America

Food pantries are hustling to meet the needs of their communities ahead of a precipitous drop in SNAP benefits across 32 states in March. Those on the front lines fear it won't be enough.

<sup>1</sup>Augustus GJ, Ellis NA. Colorectal Cancer Disparity in African Americans: Risk Factors and Carcinogenic Mechanisms. Am J Pathol. 2018 Feb;188(2):291-303. doi: 10.1016/j.ajpath.2017.07.023. Epub 2017 Nov 9. PMID: 29128568; PMCID: PMC5785537.. Accessed February 27, 2023.

<sup>2</sup>National Kidney Foundation. Health Disparities.. <https://www.kidney.org/advocacy/legislative-priorities/health-disparities>. Accessed February 27, 2023.

## In the News

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### [Disparities in Kidney Transplant Access Can Be Reduced Through a Multilevel Quality Improvement Effort](#)

The interventions increased access to transplants without affecting outcomes, with the researchers noting that virtual visits likely had the most impact in reducing barriers to evaluation.

### [National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable: Data & Progress](#)

Significant disparities in colorectal cancer screening, incidence, and mortality persist by socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, geography, and other factors. In addition, recent research indicates colorectal cancer incidence rates are rising in young and middle-aged adults.

### [Social Determinants of Health \(SDOH\) Data: Survey Results on the Collection, Integration, and Use](#)

This February 2023 report from AHIMA includes results of a survey they conducted of their members regarding SDOH, to better understand how SDOH is collected, coded, and used and to inform the development of policy, tools, and resources to further the standardization and use of SDOH.

### [AHRQ Announces Funding to Prevent/Treat SUDs, Accelerate Health Equity](#)

Nonprofit hospitals and health systems and other eligible entities can apply until April 14 for up to \$2.5 million from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality to support evidence-based interventions to prevent, diagnose and treat substance use disorders in primary care; and until April 21 for up to \$2.5 million to support evidence-based interventions to accelerate health equity in health care delivery systems, among other funding opportunities.

### [Rural Homelessness Increased from 2020 to 2022](#)

Causes of the increase include housing stock shortage, lower wages, and lack of public transit.



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

## Upcoming Events

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### [Prioritizing Equity Video Series](#)

The AMA Center for Health Equity now offers CME for the Prioritizing Equity video series and more health equity education.

On demand video content

### [Health Equity and Hypertension Treatment](#)

Free webinar with CME available through the American Heart Association.

On demand webinar content

### [2023 Patient Safety Awareness Week is March 12th-18th](#)

Download a free toolkit from the Institute for Healthcare Improvement.