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Quality Innovation Network -  
Quality Improvement Organizations  
*CENTERS FOR MEDICARE & MEDICAID SERVICES*  
*iQUALITY IMPROVEMENT & INNOVATION GROUP*



# Health Equity Updates



## The Latest in Health Equity News, Events, and Resources

**August 2021**

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# HEALTH EQUITY UPDATES



*The latest health equity news, events and resources to support the IPRO QIN-QIO efforts to eliminate health care disparities for Medicare beneficiaries.*

## America’s Health Rankings Inaugural Health Disparities Report

The inaugural [America’s Health Rankings Health Disparities Report](#) released by United Health Foundation documents widespread and constant health disparities in the U.S. through comprehensive analysis of 30 measures of health from four publically available data sources:

- [American Community Survey](#) (Census Bureau)
- [Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System](#) (CDC)
- [Current Population Survey’s Food Security Supplement](#)
- [National Vital Statistics System](#)

The report includes national findings, as well as summaries for each state and the District of Columbia that highlight both progress made and continued challenges, allowing local health officials to better focus their equity efforts. The unique, data-driven analysis identifies disparities according to race and ethnicity, gender, geography and education level. Depending on the data source, three to five years of data were pooled across three time-periods between 2003 and 2019 to produce reliable estimates.

Despite some progress in addressing health inequities, findings from the report underscore the depth and breadth of health disparities. For example, it found growing disparities in maternal mortality for Black and Hispanic mothers, persistent disparities in mental and behavioral health by gender, educational attainment, and race and ethnicity, and widespread food insecurity. The report reveals important health trends that, if addressed, can lead to improved health outcomes and equity.

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## **CMS Proposes Changes to Reduce Disparities among Patients with CKD and ESRD**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) aims to close health equity gaps by providing Medicare patients with End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) greater access to care through the ESRD Prospective Payment System (PPS) annual rulemaking. The proposed changes to the ETC Model policies will encourage dialysis providers to decrease disparities in rates of home dialysis and kidney transplants among ESRD patients with lower socioeconomic status. According to the [CMS Office of Minority Health](#), disadvantaged Medicare patients suffer from [ESRD at higher rates](#), are more likely to experience [higher hospital readmissions](#) and costs, and receive in-center hemodialysis. Studies also indicate non-white ESRD patients are less likely to receive [pre-ESRD kidney care](#), become waitlisted for a transplant or receive a kidney transplant.

## **CMS Proposes Physician Payment Rule to Improve Health Equity and Patient Access**

CMS is proposing changes to the Physician Fee Schedule (PFS) to address gaps in health equity highlighted by COVID-19 and to expand access to services, especially for underserved populations. In the annual proposed rule, CMS is recommending expanding access to services furnished via telehealth and other telecommunications technologies for behavioral health care; expanding participation in diabetes prevention programs; updating vaccine payment rates; and further improving CMS's quality programs to ensure quality care for Medicare beneficiaries and create equal opportunities for physicians in small and large clinical practices.

## **Health Insurance Coverage and Access to Care for LGBTQ+ Individuals: Current Trends and Key Challenges**

This issue brief from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) analyzes national survey data to discuss demographic characteristics of the LGBTQ+ community, recent trends in insurance coverage, and various challenges and barriers to care faced by the broader LGBTQ+ community. The issue brief states that while the LGBTQ+ community shares the burden of often being stigmatized for their sexual orientation or gender identity and expression, their individual experiences vary by race/ethnicity, income, and other characteristics. Despite policies such as the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) that have expanded health insurance coverage to millions of Americans, disparities in access to care and health outcomes persist for the LGBTQ+ community.

## **Affordable Housing as a Key Piece of Long-Term Services and Supports for People with Disabilities and Older Adults**

A July report by the AARP Public Policy Institute highlights the efforts of some states to address the needs of people with disabilities and older adults by linking affordable housing to long-term services and supports (LTSS) so the individuals can live more successfully in the community and mitigate the risk of moving to an institutional setting. An [AP-NORC poll](#) shows that people generally think their communities offer the services needed to age at home. The exceptions are people of color and those with lower incomes who are less likely to report that their area does a good job providing health care, transportation, and in-home supports.

## **Racial Inequality in Prescription Opioid Receipt — Role of Individual Health Systems**

A recent study published in the New England Journal of Medicine finds that common opioids such as codeine and morphine are prescribed to white patients more often than Black patients treated within the same health system. In about 90% of the 310 health systems studied, the opioid dose prescribed to white patients was higher than the one prescribed to Black patients. On average, white patients received 36% more pain medication by dosage than Black patients, even though both groups received prescriptions at similar rates. The findings confirm at least [20 years of data](#) showing disparities in pain management.

## August is National Immunization Awareness Month

**National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM)** is an annual observance held in August to highlight the importance of vaccination for people of all ages.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has [resources](#) to assist in communicating about immunization, including the COVID vaccines.



**National Immunization  
Awareness Month**

**#ivax2protect**

## Health Equity Webinar/Event Materials

### American Nurses Association

#### ***Boosting Vaccine Confidence in Minority Populations: Specific Strategies to Encourage and Educate Your Patients***

This 90-minute on-demand webinar explores the current data on COVID-19 vaccination rates among communities of color and illuminates the sources of vaccination reluctance in minority populations. Most importantly, the content identifies key elements of the conversation needed to address vaccine reluctance and boost confidence. Available to all nurses at no cost.

- [Recording](#)

### American Public Health Association

#### ***Advancing Social Justice Through Logic Models***

This webinar demonstrated the creation of an evidence-informed logic model for advancing social change. The logic model visually reflects the resources, inputs, outputs, and expected outcomes of a hypothetical project, in addition to the underlying values, beliefs, and assumptions associated with the design and approach of a project.

- [Recording](#)

### County Health Rankings & Roadmaps

#### ***Exploring Asian American & Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander Identity and Health Equity***

In this final webinar of the Advancing Racial Equity series, presenters examined the complexity of Asian American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders as a group. The presenters explain ways to better understand how to break down data and the multiple ethnicities within the group to achieve health and racial equity.

- [Recording, Slides & Resource Guide](#)

### National Institute of Health Care Management (NIHCM)

#### ***Achieving Health Equity for People with Disabilities During the Pandemic and Beyond***

In the United States, one in four adults has a disability and the pandemic has disproportionately impacted this community and made it more difficult to [access care](#). [Some people](#) with disabilities were more likely to become infected with or have a severe illness from COVID-19 due to underlying medical conditions or living situations. This webinar explored these challenges and showcased strategies to address the diverse needs of people living with disabilities and work toward health equity.

- [Transcript](#)
- [Recording](#)

## IPRO Upcoming Events

### ***Bi-Weekly Vaccine Open Office Hours for Nursing Homes***

#### ***Are you ready for Influenza and COVID?***

Join the IPRO experts, ready to answer questions related to employee vaccine campaigns and resident vaccine programs in nursing homes.

**Date:** August 10, 2021

**Time:** 11:00 – 11:30 AM

[REGISTER HERE](#)

#### ***How to get to a 70% COVID vaccine rate***

Join IPRO experts who will discuss best practices to achieving a 70% COVID vaccine rate and answer participant questions.

**Date:** August 24, 2021

**Time:** 11:00 – 11:30 AM

[REGISTER HERE](#)

### ***Opioid and Pain Management Best Practices***

An important focus of IPRO's work is spreading strategies for implementing opioid and pain management best practices. Both naloxone and medications for opioid use disorder, such as buprenorphine, are proven to save the lives of opioid users. This webinar will share an overview of the Opioid and Pain Management Best Practices Assessment and how the results are used to identify improvement opportunities.

**Date:** September 22, 2021

**Time:** 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM EDT

[REGISTER HERE](#)

## Upcoming Events

### **Diversifying the Nursing Workforce to Advance Health Equity**

*National Academy of Medicine*

**Dates:** August 11, 2021

**Time:** 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM ET

[REGISTER HERE](#)

### **Channeling the Potential of AI to Advance Health Equity**

*National Academy of Medicine*

**Date:** August 18, 2021

**Time:** 12:00 PM – 4:00 PM

[REGISTER HERE](#)

### **Using Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) to Enhance Treatment: Orientation to Z Codes and Food Insecurity**

*AETNA, SAMHSA, Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network, Mid-America MHTTC*

**Date:** August 19, 2021

**Time:** 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM

[REGISTER HERE](#)

### **Community Health Workers' Role in Advancing Health Equity**

*County Health Rankings & Roads*

**Date:** August 24, 2021

**Time:** 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM

[REGISTER HERE](#)

### **2021 National Hispanic Latino Behavioral Health Conference**

*National Hispanic & Latino Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network*

**Dates:** September 16 – 17, 2021

[MORE INFORMATION](#)

## Monthly Observances

August, 2021

[Children's Eye Health and Safety Month](#)

[Gastroparesis Awareness Month](#)

[Immunization Awareness Month](#)

[Medic Alert Awareness Month](#)

[Minority Donor Awareness Month](#)

[National Night Out](#) (August 3)

[National Health Center Week](#) (August 8 - 14)

[International Overdose Awareness Day](#) (August 31)

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September, 2021

[Sepsis Awareness Month](#)

[Blood Cancer Awareness Month](#)

[Healthy Aging® Month](#)

[National Atrial Fibrillation Awareness Month](#)

[National Cholesterol Education Month](#)

[National Recovery Month](#)

[National Sickle Cell Month](#)

[National Suicide Prevention Month](#)

[Gynecologic Cancer Awareness Month](#)

[Pain Awareness Month](#)

[Prostate Cancer Awareness Month](#)

[World Alzheimer's Month](#)

[Falls Prevention Awareness Week](#) (September 20 – 24)

[World Heart Day](#) (September 29)

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