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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

October 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.

An Equity Agenda for the Field of Health Care Quality Improvement

The National Academy of Medicine recently released a discussion paper identifying the most important priorities for health care quality improvement for the next 20 years. The authors, which included leaders of seven prominent U.S. health care quality organizations, identified equity as the area of most urgent concern. The paper summarizes the key barriers and strategies for advancing equity.

Key Barriers

- The Impact of Racism and Discrimination
- Inadequate Integration of Social Determinants of Health
- Lack of Reliable Health Care Data for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)
- Lack of Trust in the Health Care System

Strategies to Improve Racial Equity

- Increase Patient Trust and Involvement
- Increase Community Engagement and Truly Valuing the Health of Populations
- Rewarding Organizations for Equity
- Improving Data
- New Measurement Strategies
- Improving Leadership and Culture

The paper concludes with the 12 key elements of the authors' racial equity agenda. Click [HERE](#) to read the discussion paper.

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The Study to Promote Innovation in Rural Integrated Telepsychiatry (SPIRIT)

In an article published in JAMA Psychiatry, a five-year study found that telepsychiatry in rural, federally qualified health centers was beneficial for patients who screened positive for bipolar disorder and/or posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and lived in underserved rural areas. The aim of the study was to identify if an integrated or referral approach was best for delivering telemental health services to rural primary care clinics. Both approaches significantly and substantially improved outcomes. The integrated approach where telepsychiatrists provide consultation to primary care teams – called telepsychiatry collaborative care (TCC) – was deemed most effect because it required less of the psychiatrists' time.

Legislation Introduced for Medicare Pilot Program for Medically-Tailored Meals

Legislation was introduced in the House of Representatives in September to fund a Medicare pilot program to address the critical link between diet and chronic illness. The bill directs the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to conduct a three-year demonstration program to provide medically tailored meals to vulnerable Medicare beneficiaries to determine if the meals will reduce overall health care costs and improve health outcomes. According to the legislation, 62% of adults over the age of 65 live with one or more chronic conditions. Currently, Medicare Parts A and B provide no coverage for medically tailored meals. The pilot program might be a signal that HHS is considering adding Medicare coverage for social determinants of health such as food insecurity.

Social Engagement for Older Adults, People with Disabilities and Caregivers during COVID-19

The National Resource Center for Engaging Older Adults released a data brief to highlight key findings from a 2020 poll focusing on how the Aging Network and community partners responded to the COVID-19 pandemic to continue offering social engagement opportunities. The data brief highlights how older adults are at higher risk for social isolation and loneliness, which contribute to physical illness or impairment, depression and cognitive decline. The [engAGED](#) initiative identifies and disseminates information about emerging trends, and develops resource and tools that can be customized to expand social engagement in communities. The data brief concludes that the pandemic has shown that even more opportunities for collaboration lie ahead to promote social engagement programming to meet diverse population needs.

Housing, Health, and LGBTQIA+ Older Adults

The National LGBTQIA+ Health Education Center released a report in September that provides promising practices for health centers for supporting LGBTQIA+ older adults with their housing and related health care needs, including screening for homelessness and housing, supporting aging in place, providing affirming referrals for housing and supportive services, and offering inclusive health care environments. The report discusses health disparities experienced by LGBTQIA+ populations and how bias and stigma can result in harassment, violence, and discrimination. LGBTQIA+ adults experience disparities in several physical and behavioral health outcomes, leading to long-term consequences on health and well-being.

Morbidity among Transgender People

Using private insurance claims data from 2001 to 2019, the authors of this article in HealthAffairs report that transgender people are at a greater risk for morbidity than their cisgender counterparts and are also at significantly higher risk for nearly all chronic conditions compared with their cisgender counterparts. Transgender individuals are people whose personal and gender identity are different from the gender they were thought to be at birth.

Building Health Literacy Awareness Through Action

October is Health Literacy Month – a time when health organizations, literacy programs, libraries, social service agencies, businesses, professional associations, government agencies and other groups can work together to integrate and expand the mission of health literacy – to build a world where all individuals have access to quality health outcomes.



The graphic features a dark blue header with the text "Health Literacy Month is Here!". Below the header, there are five icons: a brain in a head, a certificate, a bandage, a stethoscope, and a medical folder. The IHA logo is on the left, and the text "HEALTH LITERACY MONTH Building Awareness Through Action" is in the center. To the left of the speech bubble, it says "How are you taking action to build awareness about health literacy? Share with the community today!". To the right is a colorful speech bubble with a plus sign. At the bottom, it displays the hashtag "#healthliteracymonth" and the website "healthliteracymonth.org" in a brown button.

Health Literacy Month is Here!



IHA | **HEALTH LITERACY MONTH**
Building Awareness Through Action

How are you taking action to build awareness about health literacy?
Share with the community today!

#healthliteracymonth

healthliteracymonth.org

Click on the image to go to the IHA website.

Trending Health Equity Resources

American Medical Association & Health Begins

[Racial and Health Equity: Concrete STEPS for Smaller Practices](#)

The AMA and Health Begins collaborated to develop a *Toolkit for Productive Conversations on Race*. The toolkit helps practices to identify ways to have constructive conversations about health equity, racial equity, racism, and anti-racism with colleagues, patients, and other practice stakeholders. It discusses the importance of data, SMART goals and quality improvement methods to further racial and health equity efforts.

CMS Office of Minority Health

[Disparities in Health Care in Medicare Advantage Associated with Dual Eligibility or Eligibility for a Low-Income Subsidy](#)

This report details the quality of care received by people enrolled in Medicare Advantage. The report looks at how differences based on dual eligibility or eligibility for Low-Income Subsidy (DE/LIS status) vary by race and ethnicity and between rural and urban areas. Findings demonstrate that DE/LIS beneficiaries often received worse clinical care than non-DE/LIS beneficiaries.

[Flu Vaccine Resources: Information for Partners](#)

Find the latest influenza (flu) vaccine resources from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) on the [CMS Flu Vaccine page](#) and [Flu Vaccine and Partner Toolkit page](#). There are resources for [providers](#), [beneficiaries](#), [state Medicaid plans](#), and [minority populations](#).

National Institute for Health Care Management (NIHCM)

[Disability, Health Equity & COVID-19](#)

People with disabilities have been uniquely impacted by the pandemic and face a greater risk of poor health outcomes, reduced access to routine services and care, and adverse social outcomes. This infographic highlights the challenges facing the disability community and offers clear steps that can be taken to support the health and well-being of this community.

National Alliance for Hispanic Health

[Nuestras Voces: Prevención y control del tabaquismo](#)

(Our Voices: Prevention and control of smoking)

The National Alliance for Hispanic Health released new commercial tobacco control tools in Spanish to support community education efforts in Hispanic/Latino communities. The tools are helpful for use by community health workers/promotores de salud to promote awareness of the harmful effects of using tobacco products among Hispanics.

State Health & Value Strategies

[Promoting Health Equity in Medicaid Managed Care: A Guide for States](#)

This guide describes recommended process steps for states to integrate health equity in their Medicaid managed care programs. The guides focuses on the internal agency commitments and changes necessary to address systemic barriers to accessing high quality health care and improving health outcomes, especially for those experiencing persistent health disparities.

Monthly Observances

October, 2021

[Hispanic Heritage Month](#) (September 15 – October 15)

[Health Literacy Month](#)

[Disability Employment Awareness Month](#)

[National \(Long-Term Care\) Residents' Rights Month](#)

[National Depression Screening Day](#) (October 7)

[World Mental Health Day](#) (October 10)

[National Latinx AIDS Awareness Day](#) (October 15)

[International Infection Prevention Week](#) (October 17 – 23)

[National Healthcare Quality Week](#) (October 17 – 23)

[National Health Education Week](#) (October 18 – 22)

[National Check Your Meds Day](#) (October 21)

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Upcoming Events

Addressing Cancer Disparities in the U.S. Latino LGBTQ+ Community

*FDA Oncology Center of Excellence
Conversations on Cancer*

Dates: October 6, 2021

Time: 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Amplifying All Voices in Aging

The SCAN Foundation

Dates: October 6, 13, 20, 27, 2021

Time: 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM ET each day

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Supporting Older LGBTQIA+ Adults during COVID-19

LGBTQIA+ Health Education Center

Dates: October 12, 2021

Time: 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM ET

[REGISTER HERE](#)

An Introduction to The National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care

Rural Communities Opioid Response Program

Dates: October 26, 2021

Time: 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM ET

[REGISTER HERE](#)

National Forum's 19th Annual Meeting

National Forum for Heart Disease & Stroke Prevention

Dates: October 28, 2021

Time: 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM ET

[REGISTER HERE](#)