



Healthcentric  
Advisors

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



# HEALTH EQUITY UPDATES

April 2024



## CMS Accomplishments 2023

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released a report last month outlining key accomplishments that align with the [Six Pillars](#) that drive CMS programmatic goals, as defined in the CMS Strategic Plan. Accomplishments related to advancing health equity, one of the Pillars, include

- Release of the Transforming Maternal Health Model to reduce disparities in access and treatment and improve outcomes.
- Release of the CMS Sickle Cell Disease Action Plan to expand coverage and access, and advance equity.
- Strengthening behavioral health network adequacy for Medicare Advantage and Part D plans that provide excellent coverage for underserved populations.
- Launch of the Oral Health Cross-Cutting Initiative that expands access to oral healthcare coverage.

More information is available in the full [CMS report](#).

## Best of CLAS

*A tip for implementing culturally and linguistically appropriate services*

### HHS National CLAS Standards – [Standard 10](#)

Conduct ongoing assessments of the organization’s CLAS-related activities and integrate CLAS-related measures into measurement and continuous quality improvement activities.

As a key initial step in the continuous quality improvement process, organizational self-assessment is often used to examine factors that might enable or impede a service delivery system’s effectiveness and performance. This is essential for planning, implementing, and evaluating the quality of any kind of service, including CLAS.

## This Month

### National Minority Health Month

#NMHM2024

Each April, we celebrate National Minority Health Month to raise awareness and drive action to improve the health of racial and ethnic minorities. These populations are disproportionately impacted by persistent health disparities that negatively affect their health outcomes and quality of life. This year’s theme is “Be the Source for Better Health: Improving Health Outcomes Through Our Cultures, Communities, and Connections.”

The CMS Office of Minority Health (CMS OMH) has a [Resource Center](#) to help healthcare professionals, researchers, consumers, and community partners improve health outcomes and identify and address health disparities. The CMS OMH resource [Health Equity Challenges and CMS Resources to Help Address Them](#) includes several CMS OMH resources categorized to address eight barriers and their known challenges. Check out the CMS OMH [Health Observances](#) webpage for information and resources in support of National Minority Health Month.

SAVE THE DATE

## CMS Health Equity Conference

*Sustaining Health Equity Through Action*

May 29-30, 2024

Hyatt Regency, Bethesda, MD

## In the News

### [CDC: Racial and Ethnic Differences in Social Determinants of Health and Health-Related Social Needs](#)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released a report last month that assessed measures of adverse social determinants of health (SDOH) and health-related social needs (HRSN) among the U.S. adult population, using 2022 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) data. The measures included life satisfaction, social and emotional support, social isolation or loneliness, employment stability, food stability/security, housing stability/security, utility stability/security, transportation access, mental well-being, and healthcare access. Social isolation/loneliness and lack of social and emotional support were the most commonly reported measures. Adverse SDOH and HRSNs were found to be significantly higher across all racial and ethnic groups except non-Hispanic Asian adults, when compared to non-Hispanic White adults.

### [New CMS ACO Model Will Expand Access to High-Quality Primary Care](#)

On March 19, the CMS Innovation Center announced the Accountable Care Organization (ACO) Primary Care Flex Model. Scheduled to begin January 1, 2025, the model will test a new payment model to address primary care challenges for ACOs that participate in the Medicare Shared Savings Program and meet eligibility requirements.

The model aims to reduce disparities in healthcare outcomes by increasing the number of low-revenue ACOs (typically physicians that serve rural areas or physicians working with a small hospital) in the Shared Savings Program. It is expected to incentivize the development of new ACOs, specifically those that will provide care in underserved communities. CMS anticipates that approximately 130 ACOs will be selected to participate in the model.

### [CMS Office of Minority Health Announces New Coverage-to-Care Resources](#)

The CMS Office of Minority Health (CMS OMH) announced new Coverage-to-Care (C2C) resources in March. C2C is intended to help people understand their health coverage and connect to the primary care and preventive services that are right for them. Two of the resources announced are:

- [Tips for Understanding your Drug Coverage & Prescriptions.](#) Available in English and Spanish, this resource helps individuals understand drug lists, costs, and labels.
- [Chronic Care Management \(CCM\) Resources.](#) Resources for care partners designed to support patients living with chronic conditions and their providers.

Read more about C2C resources at the CMS [OMH C2C webpage.](#)

For more health equity news:

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



Visit the IPRO Resource Library: <https://qi-library.ipro.org>

## Upcoming Events

### [Cardiovascular Disease Disparities in Rural America: Can This House of Cards Be Saved?](#)

NIH Office of Intramural Research  
April 17, 2024  
2:00-3:00 PM ET

### [CMS Health Equity Conferences Sustaining Health Equity Through Action](#)

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services  
May 29–30, 2024  
(in-person and virtual)

### [Hospitals in Action: Promising Workplace Violence Prevention Strategies for Safer Care](#)

IPRO  
Date: April 25, 2024  
1:00 – 2:00 PM ET