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



HEALTH EQUITY UPDATES

February 2024



CMS Announces New Behavioral Health Model

In January, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced a new model for increasing access to high-quality integrated care for Medicaid and Medicare populations with mental health conditions and/or substance use disorders. Designed to deliver person-centered, integrated care in outpatient settings, the Innovation in Behavioral Health (IBH) model tasks practice participants (community-based behavioral health practices) with forming interprofessional care teams comprising behavioral and physical health providers, as well as community-based supports. The goal for the IBH model is to connect these patients with the physical, behavioral, and social supports needed to manage their care. A state-based model, the IBH will be led by state Medicaid agencies to align payment between Medicaid and Medicare for integrated services. The model will launch in fall 2024 and is anticipated to run for eight years in up to eight states. To learn more, please visit the [IBH website](#).

Best of CLAS

A tip for implementing culturally and linguistically appropriate services

HHS National CLAS Standards – Standard 9

- Infuse CLAS Goals, Policies, and Management Accountability Throughout the Organization’s Planning and Operations
- Establish goals, policies, and management accountability that promote CLAS throughout an organization to help ensure that an organization is culturally and linguistically competent at every point of contact and ties CLAS to organizational priorities such as individuals’ experiences, satisfaction, safety, and outcomes.

This Month

American Heart Month and Black History Month

In observance of American Heart Month and Black History Month we are all encouraged to focus on the importance of prevention and care management of cardiovascular disease, and to combat health disparities leading to high rates of heart disease in Black communities. The leading cause of death for men, women, and most racial and ethnic groups in the U.S., heart disease accounts for one death every 33 seconds. Though heart disease-related deaths have declined over the years, research shows that disparities persist. In 2019, Black adults were 30 percent more likely to die from heart disease than White adults. Black people also have the highest prevalence of cardiovascular disease (CVD) out of all racial groups in the U.S., with 58.8 percent of Black women and 60.1 percent of Black men having some form of CVD during the period from 2015 to 2018.

The CMS Office of Minority Health is working to advance health equity for all Americans by promoting educational resources for providers and consumers on its [website](#). For additional information on Black/African American Health, visit the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services OMH web page](#).

SAVE THE DATE

CMS Health Equity Conference

Sustaining Health Equity Through Action

May 29-30, 2024

Hyatt Regency, Bethesda, MD

In the News

Satcher Health Leadership Institute Health Equity Tracker

The Health Equity Tracker (HET) tool is designed to address health disparities in the U.S. by identifying at-risk populations and highlighting data inequities to support informed decision making by policymakers, community leaders, and researchers. The HET was developed to aggregate up-to-date demographic data for the communities hardest hit by COVID-19. It currently aggregates data from 19 key data sources to provide county, state, territory, and nationwide rates on 215 variables including rates of hospitalizations, chronic disease conditions, HIV, opioid and other substance misuse, medication utilization in the Medicare population, social and political determinants of health and COVID-19 vaccinations. Data can be stratified by race/ethnicity, sex, or age.

Promoting Equity in Health Communications

In January, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Office of Health Equity (OHE) presented a webinar featuring best practices they and their partner organizations have identified for communicating about health equity and for creating culturally relevant, inclusive, and accessible health communications materials. The agency acknowledges that communication about health equity can be challenging because of the complexity of the topic, the fact that one size does not fit all, and potential barriers created by views related to health equity. The three major health equity communication principles are: Frame health equity as achievable; Meet your audience where they are; Communicate health equity as a "we" issue. Presentation slides are available in the health equity section of the CDC website.

FAQs: CMS Post-Acute Care (PAC) Health Equity Confidential Feedback Reports

In October 2023, CMS released stratified Health Equity Confidential Feedback Reports for post-acute providers, including skilled nursing facilities, to identify individuals in their patient populations who are at risk for poor health outcomes due to social risk factors, including low income status or race/ethnicity. The reports, which cover two measures: Discharge to Community and Medicare Spending Per Beneficiary, are intended to be used by providers to develop quality improvement strategies to reduce the impact of these social risk factors on their patients. CMS released the following documents which provide answers to frequently asked questions and detailed information about the key concepts and underlying analytical methodology in the reports.

CMS Health Equity Confidential Feedback Report Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Document (PDF)

CMS Health Equity Confidential Feedback Report Methodology Report (PDF)

CMS hosted a live Q&A session in November to give post-acute care providers an opportunity to ask about the report's methodologies and interpretations. The webinar's recording, slides, and transcript can be found at the CMS [Home Health, Inpatient Rehabilitation Facility, Long-Term Care Hospital, and Skilled Nursing Facility](#) Quality Reporting training webpages.

For more health equity news:

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



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

Upcoming Events

IPRO Short Sessions: Collaborating for Equity

IPRO

The fourth Wednesday of the month, starting February 28 through July 24, 2024

12:00 – 12:45 PM ET

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 Quality Conference 2024 Resilient and Ready Together

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

April 8 – 10, 2024

(in-person and virtual)

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