## Highlights from the CMS Health Equity Conference

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) hosted its second annual health equity conference, "Sustaining Health Equity through Action," in Bethesda, MD on May 29 and 30. More than 600 people attended in-person and 5,000 attended virtually. Attendees participated in sessions discussing topics including outreach and engagement strategies to reduce disparities; maternal health, oral health access, and coverage; and the role of generative artificial intelligence to enhance health equity. Posters, plenary, and session presentation slides and recordings are available on the conference website.

### Best of CLAS

*A tip for implementing culturally and linguistically appropriate services*

**HHS National CLAS Standards – Standard 13**

*Partner with the Community*

Community partnerships are essential to the delivery of care that is culturally and linguistically appropriate. Health and healthcare organizations should consider gathering input from the community for planning, implementing, and improving services. Community input gives organizations the opportunity to learn about and understand their reputation in the community. Designing, implementing, and evaluating services that are informed by community input is particularly useful in improving an organization's reach and services, and organizations will be more effective and will experience cost savings when community input is considered.



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### This Month

#### Minority Mental Health Awareness Month

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) website explains the history of this observance, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) offers a variety of resources for suicide prevention, finding treatment, and practitioner training.

#### Disability Pride Month and American with Disabilities Act Anniversary (July 26)

#### Equity in Public Health Emergency Management

Meaningful community engagement plays a crucial role in advancing health equity in emergency preparedness. Actively involving community members from diverse backgrounds helps ensure that racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic considerations are integrated into response plans.[1] Here are some key steps to achieve this:

1. **Inclusivity:** Engage with all segments of the community, including historically underserved populations. Consider the needs of people with disabilities, the elderly, and minority groups when planning for emergencies.[2]

2. **Collaboration:** Work closely with community organizations, local leaders, and residents. Co-create expectations and actions that are appropriate and achievable during a response.[3]

3. **Data-Informed Decision Making:** Collect, share, and use data to inform equity-driven decisions. Invest in community-led solutions based on science and evidence.[4]

## In the News

### FAQs on CMS 2024 Physician Fee Schedule Health-Related Social Needs Services

CMS recently published frequently asked questions (FAQs) about services covered in the 2024 Physician Fee Schedule Final Rule that help screen for and address unmet health-related social needs. These services include caregiver training, social determinants of health risk assessments, community health integration, and principal illness navigation. The FAQs document aims to clarify questions about delivery, billing, documentation requirements, and reimbursement for these services.

### 2024 CMS Quality Conference

CMS hosted its annual Quality Conference April 8 - 10, in Baltimore, MD. This year's theme was "Resilient and Ready Together." Presentations and video recordings of the hybrid conference sessions are now available with closed captions under the past conferences tab of the CMS Quality Conference's website.

### NCQA Releases Community Partnership Resources

The National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) released two new resources that provide insights on establishing effective cross-sector partnerships to address unmet social needs and advance health equity. The resources "offer recommendations for navigating the partnership journey, with consideration of motivations, agreements, funding, accountability and sustainability." The resources are available at no cost with completion of the online form.

- For health systems: "Co-developing Cross-Sector Partnerships to Address Health-Related Social Needs: A Toolkit for Health Care Organizations Collaborating with Community-Based Organizations"
- For community-based organizations: "Navigating Cross-Sector Partnerships: A Reference Guide for Community-Based Organizations Collaborating with Health Care Organizations"

### Food Insecurity Increased in 2023

According to a report published by the Urban Institute, food insecurity increased in 2023 for the second year in a row, due to U.S. households facing higher food costs and expiration of COVID-era safety net support. Underserved communities, including low-income households, Black, Hispanic, and LGBT households, and households with children are dealing with challenges in obtaining nutritious food. The report notes the lack of awareness of available community supports and reluctance to seek assistance on the part of many adults in food insecure households.

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

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

## Upcoming Events

### Maternal Health Summer 2024 Informational Webinar: Overview of Maternal Health Affinity Groups and the Expression-of-Interest Process

**Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services**

**August 6, 2024**

**2:00 - 3:00 PM ET**

### PRAPARE® Tiger Team

Does your organization use the Protocol for Responding to and Assessing Patients' Assets, Risks & Experiences (PRAPARE®) Screening Tool? You may be interested in the PRAPARE® Tiger Team sessions featuring electronic health record (EHR) systems that have successfully integrated the PRAPARE® tool into their platform. The sessions are led by expert guest speakers from the respective EHR companies. The next session:

**July 29, 2024**

**2:00 PM ET**