

HEALTH EQUITY UPDATES

October 2022



This Month

Health Literacy Month



The Institute for Healthcare Advancement's mission is to elevate health literacy to achieve health equity. The organization has a [website](#) dedicated to Health Literacy Month 2022.

Check out the [IPRO Health Literacy Toolbox](#) for a variety of resources and information to improve health literacy for patients and organizations to advance health equity.

Hispanic Heritage Month

Sept. 15 – Oct. 15



The CMS Office of Minority Health has a [webpage](#) with information and resources in recognition of the observance. The HHS Office of Minority Health has a [website](#) with bilingual resources, information and a media toolkit to promote the observance.

The Role of Geographic Disparities in Health Equity

[Research](#) confirms that where people live, work, learn, and play has a significant impact on health outcomes and quality of life. A [study](#) recently published in The Lancet by National Institutes of Health (NIH) scientists and other collaborators provides a better understanding of the role geographic location plays in health disparities.

The study provides the first comprehensive county-level life expectancy estimates in the U.S. and underscores the significant gaps that persist for certain racial and ethnic groups.

The researchers developed an [interactive data visualization tool](#) that shows life expectancy and all-cause mortality by race and ethnicity for 3,110 U.S. counties from 2010 – 2019. These data can help inform the development and implementation of targeted health equity interventions in geographic areas where the disparities are most prominent.

Some key findings from the study:

- Black populations experienced shorter life expectancy than their White counterparts despite overall life expectancy gains of 2.3 years during the 20-year study period.
- American Indian and Alaska Native populations experienced no gains in life expectancy during this time period, and actually saw decreases in most counties.
- There were life expectancy advantages for Hispanic/Latino (3 years) and Asian/Pacific Islander (7 years) populations compared to their White counterparts. However, there were notable exceptions for both groups in certain counties.
- An alarming finding is that from 2010-2019, life expectancy growth remained stagnant for all racial and ethnic groups.

In the News

[CMS Issues RFI Seeks Input on Advancing Health Equity](#)

CMS released a Request for Information (RFI) on September 6th titled *Make Your Voice Heard*, seeking public input on advancing health equity and other topics. CMS wants to gather feedback related to embedding health equity across the Agency's efforts and better understand "individual and community-level burdens, health related social needs, and opportunities for improvement that can reduce disparities and promote efficiency and innovation across our programs." Comments are due November 4th.

[Disparities in Drug Overdose Deaths During Pandemic](#)

A study recently published in JAMA Network states that drug overdose deaths increased 37.2% from February 2020 to August 2021, the height of the COVID pandemic. American Indian/Alaska Native men had the highest rate involving any drug. American Indian/Alaska Native women and White men had highest rates for methamphetamine with fentanyl.

[CDC: 80% of Maternal Deaths Preventable](#)

A CDC analysis of pregnancy-related deaths, which disproportionately effect racial and ethnic minority women, shows that over 80% were from preventable causes. A majority of the deaths occurred in the year following birth and were related to mental health conditions. Mortality for Black women was three times as likely as White women and were mostly due to cardiac and coronary conditions.

[Improving REaL Data Collection & Disparities Interventions](#)

An article in Health Affairs presents a multi-stakeholder, state-based framework to improve the collection and sharing of race, ethnicity and language (REaL) data. The authors state that organizations such as payers, health systems and public health departments with more accurate REaL data are able to plan and implement equity interventions more effectively. Even though patient demographic data collection is foundational to identifying and addressing disparities, the quality of these data are still lacking across many organizations.

[HHS Launches Workgroup to Assess OMB Race and Ethnicity Standards](#)

A newly formed Office of Management and Budget (OMB) workgroup has begun the process of developing a set of recommendations for improving the quality and usefulness of Federal race and ethnicity data. The Agency conducted a listening session in September to gather public input, and will also send out a Federal Register Notice as another avenue for comments.

[CDC Plain Language Materials and Resources](#)

The CDC has a variety of plain language resources on their Health Literacy [website](#) that can help to make health information easier for patients to understand and use. The resources include plain language examples, plain language promotional materials, and Federal plain language guidelines.



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

Upcoming Events

[Empowering Health Literacy for All](#)

Institute for Healthcare Advancement

Date: October 5, 2022

Time: 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM ET

[The Coming Out Process for Latinx Queer Communities and Mental Health Considerations](#)

National Hispanic/Latino Mental Health Technology Transfer Center

Date: October 11, 2022

Time: 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM ET

[Informing Workplace Practices and Policies to Advance Equity](#)

Raising the Bar & RWJF

Date: October 24, 2022

Time: 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM ET