



**Action Plan to Reduce Racial
and Ethnic Health Disparities
and
National Stakeholder Strategy
for Achieving Health Equity**

Definition

A **health disparity** is a particular type of health difference that is closely linked with social, economic, and/or environmental disadvantage. Health disparities adversely affect groups of people who have systematically experienced greater obstacles to health based on their racial or ethnic group; religion; socioeconomic status; gender; age; mental health; cognitive, sensory, or physical disability; sexual orientation or gender identity; geographic location; or other characteristics historically linked to discrimination or exclusion.

Definition

Health equity is attainment of the highest level of health for all people. Achieving health equity requires valuing everyone equally with focused and ongoing societal efforts to address avoidable inequalities, historical and contemporary injustices, and the elimination of health and healthcare disparities.





NPA Mission

Increase the *effectiveness* of programs that target the elimination of health disparities through the coordination of *partners*, leaders, and stakeholders committed to *action*.

NPA Goals

- ❖ **Awareness:** Increase the awareness of disparities, the impact on the nation, and actions needed to combat the problem
- ❖ **Leadership:** Strengthen and broaden leadership to address disparities
- ❖ **Health System and Life Experience:** Improve health outcomes for racial, ethnic, and underserved populations
- ❖ **Cultural and Linguistic Competency:** Improve cultural, linguistic competency and diversifying the health workforce; and
- ❖ **Data, Research and Evaluation:** Improve the availability and diffusion of data and research on disparities





The National Launch of HHS Action Plan to Reduce Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities and National Stakeholder Strategy for Achieving Health Equity

The HHS Action Plan To Reduce Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities

Objective: Outlines goals, strategies and actions HHS will take to reduce health disparities among racial and ethnic minorities. It builds on provisions of the Affordable Care Act which will help address the needs of racial and ethnic minority populations by bringing down health care costs, investing in prevention and wellness, supporting improvements in primary care, and creating linkages between the traditional realms of health and social services.

Issue: A *health disparity* is a particular type of health difference that is closely linked with social, economic, and/or environmental disadvantage. Racial and ethnic minorities still lag behind in many health outcome measures. They are less likely to get the preventive care they need to stay healthy, more likely to suffer from serious illnesses, such as diabetes or heart disease, and when they do get sick, are less likely to have access to quality health care. Disparities are documented in many conditions, including: cardiovascular disease, asthma, diabetes, flu, infant mortality, cancer, HIV/AIDS, chronic lower respiratory diseases, viral hepatitis, chronic liver disease and cirrhosis, kidney disease, injury deaths, violence, behavioral health, and oral health.

Highlights: Within the framework of the HHS Action Plan, the five overall goals for reducing disparities and associated action steps include:

1. Transform Health Care: Action steps include expanding insurance coverage, increasing access to care through development of new service delivery sites and introducing quality initiatives such as increased utilization of medical homes.
2. Strengthen the Nation's Health and Human Services Workforce: Action steps include a new pipeline program for recruiting undergraduates from underserved communities for public health and



biomedical sciences careers, expanding and improving health care interpreting and translation, and supporting more training of community health workers, such as promotoras.

3. **Advance the Health, Safety and Well-Being of the American People:** Action steps include implementing the CDC's new Community Transformation Grants, and additional targeted efforts to achieve improvements in cardiovascular disease, childhood obesity, tobacco-related diseases, maternal and child health, flu and asthma.
4. **Advance Scientific Knowledge and Innovation:** Action steps include implementing a new health data collection and analysis strategy authorized by the Affordable Care Act, and increasing patient-centered outcomes research.
5. **Increase the Efficiency, Transparency and Accountability of HHS Programs:** Actions steps include ensuring that assessments of policies and programs on health disparities will become part of all HHS decision-making. Evaluations will measure progress toward reducing health disparities.

The Affordable Care Act offers the potential to meet these goals and address the needs of racial and ethnic minority populations.

Developed by: The Plan was developed in response to the National Stakeholder Strategy by senior HHS officials, through a process chaired by the HHS Assistant Secretary for Health and the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation.

Intended Use: To be used by HHS agencies to assess the impact of policies and programs on racial and ethnic health disparities, and to promote integrated approaches, evidence-based programs and best practices to reduce these disparities. Progress will be reviewed twice a year. The plan is operational immediately.

More information: www.minorityhealth.hhs.gov/npa



The National Launch of HHS Action Plan to Reduce Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities and National Stakeholder Strategy for Achieving Health Equity

National Stakeholders Strategy for Achieving Health Equity

Objective: Provide a common set of goals and strategies for initiatives and partnerships that can help racial and ethnic minority populations and other underserved groups reach their health potential.

Issue: A *health disparity* is a particular type of health difference that is closely linked with social, economic, and/or environmental disadvantage. Racial and ethnic minorities still lag behind in many health outcome measures. They are less likely to get the preventive care they need to stay healthy, more likely to suffer from serious illnesses, such as diabetes or heart disease, and when they do get sick, are less likely to have access to quality health care. Disparities are documented in many conditions, including: cardiovascular disease, asthma, diabetes, flu, infant mortality, cancer, HIV/AIDS, chronic lower respiratory diseases, viral hepatitis, chronic liver disease and cirrhosis, kidney disease, injury deaths, violence, behavioral health, and oral health.

Highlights: The five overall goals and associated strategies include:

1. **Awareness:** Increase public understanding of health disparities by developing partnerships, communications strategies, and new approaches to putting the issues prominently on organizational agendas.
2. **Leadership:** Build the capacity to create community solutions, improve the coordination of funding, and set priorities. Invest in youth, preparing them to be future leaders.
3. **Health System and Life Experience:** Improve access to quality care, including: children's services for mental health, oral health, vision, hearing, nutrition, and physical activity; and services for older adults. Address social determinants of health through work on issues such as improved high school graduation rates and policies intended to create social, physical, and economic environments in which children can succeed.



4. **Cultural and Linguistic Competency:** Improve diversity in the work force, increasing opportunities to recruit minorities into the health professions. Also, improve cultural competency by supporting better interpreting and translation services and training more community health workers to serve as liaisons between patients and clinicians.
5. **Data, Evaluation and Research:** Acquire and analyze data to enhance decisions through better research coordination, and promote the translation of evidence-based research into practice.

The Affordable Care Act offers the potential to meet these goals and address the needs of racial and ethnic minority populations, by bringing down health care costs, investing in prevention and wellness, supporting improvements in primary care, and creating linkages between the traditional realms of health and social services.

Developed by: The strategy incorporates ideas and comments from thousands of individuals and organizations that were solicited through focused stakeholder meetings and a call for public comments.

Intended Use: The strategy is the product of the National Partnership for Action to End Health Disparities (NPA), which was organized by the HHS Office of Minority Health (OMH). Eleven other federal cabinet-level departments collaborated and provided guidance. The strategy is intended to stimulate a comprehensive, community-driven approach to achieve health equity through new collaborations within the health sector and with others, such as agriculture, commerce, defense, education, environment, housing, justice, labor, transportation and veteran's affairs. Local stakeholders can identify which goals are most important for their communities and adopt the most effective strategies to help reach them.

More Information: www.minorityhealth.hhs.gov/npa



**Office of Minority
and Multicultural Health**
www.nj.gov/health/omh