



Social Work HEALS
A JOINT INITIATIVE OF NASW & CSWE

**Social justice in health care systems:
A call to action for social workers**

Presented By

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Key takeaways.

- Recognize the impact of historical trauma that marginalized groups have faced in our healthcare system.
- Acknowledge the disparities that still exist today in the healthcare system.
- Develop strategies that social workers and other healthcare professionals can utilize to dismantle oppressive biases in the healthcare system.
- Recognize the impact of COVID-19 on the existing disparities in the healthcare system.

Health Disparities for Major Marginalized Groups

African Americans

**LGBTQ+
Community**

Hispanic and Latinx

Facts and Statistics

African Americans

- African Americans ages 18-49 are **2 times** as likely to die from heart disease than whites.
- African Americans ages 35-64 years are **50%** more likely to have high blood pressure than whites.
- African-American women are **3 times** more likely to die during childbirth than their non-Hispanic, white counterparts.

Hispanic and Latinx

- Nearly half of Latinx individuals in the United States are unaware that they have high cholesterol, which can lead to high blood pressure.
- Less than a third receive any kind of treatment or take the necessary medications compared to other groups.
- Compared to Caucasians/whites, Latinx individuals are more than twice as likely to go to the Emergency Room for Asthma issues.
- Latinx/Hispanic individuals are 50% more likely than non-hispanic/white individuals to succumb to liver disease and complications from diabetes.

LGBTQ+ Community

- LGBTQ people experience **social-structural stressors** that affect health.
- LGBTQ people at increased risk for **physical health issues including cancer, HIV, myocardial infarction.**
- LGBTQ people at increased risk for **mental health issues including depression, anxiety, suicide, substance abuse.**
- **LGBTQ people of color** at exponentially greater health risk overall.

Historical Impacts

African Americans

- Tuskegee Study of Untreated Syphilis in the African American Male and sterilization without people's permission.
- In the Antebellum period, black people were forced to participate in dissections and medical examinations.
- In the Civil Rights era, psychiatrists used the concept of schizophrenia to portray black activists as violent, hostile, and paranoid because they threatened the racist status quo.

Hispanic and Latinx

- Limited proficiency in English affects Latinx and hispanic individuals' ability to seek and obtain health care and reduces access to health information in the media.
- Foreign-born, undocumented status and citizenship status.
- Disproportionately affected by poor conditions of daily life. Structural and social factors such as occupation, social support systems, etc.

LGBTQ+ Community

- Most healthcare research does not include gender identity or sexual orientation data (Inclusion of LGBTQ+ data in research is a DHHS 2020 priority.)
- Physicians receive only 5 hours of medical school instruction on LGBTQ+ issues.
- 50% first year medical students have expressed explicit bias against gay and lesbian people.

Social Determinants

- Healthcare access and utilization
 - 13.6% of black people did not have health insurance in 2019.
 - The uninsured rate for working-age Latinx/Hispanic adults had improved between 2010 and 2016. However, under the Trump Administration that number has risen again and now over 22 million still lack health insurance coverage.
 - Latinx/Hispanic individuals are less likely to see a doctor at least once per year compared to other groups.
 - LGBTQ+ people of color are more than twice as likely to avoid doctors' offices than white LGBTQ+ individuals.
 - More than 50% LGBTQ+ individuals experience discrimination in healthcare.
 - 20% of transgender individuals are denied health care due to their trans

Women and Access to Healthcare

- Many women, especially those in rural or underserved areas, lack physical proximity to doctors or hospital maternity wards to receive pregnancy care or deliver a baby
- Access to additional services, such as specialists, reproductive health care, and mental health care, can also be of concern.
- Even when physical access to needed providers and facilities is available, cost can often stand in the way for many women to receive necessary care.
- Recent forced sterilization of Latinx/hispanic women in ICE detention centers.
- Women from marginalized groups are 30 times more likely to die during childbirth than white women.

Impacts of COVID-19



COVID-19 Statistics

- According to the CDC, as of October 17th, 2020 there are over 8 million people have been infected in the United States.
- Latinx and hispanic people makeup 28.1% of COVID19 cases.
- Black/African American people makeup 17.4% of COVID19 cases.
- Native American/Alaskan Natives makeup 1.2 % COVID19 cases.
- Asian American makeup 3.3% of COVID19 cases.
- Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander makeup .4% of COVID19 cases.
- Others makeup 4.6% of COVID19 cases.

Hospitalization & Death by Race/Ethnicity

Rate ratios compared to White, Non-Hispanic Persons	American Indian or Alaska Native, Non-Hispanic persons	Asian, Non-Hispanic persons	Black or African American, Non-Hispanic persons	Hispanic or Latino persons
Cases ¹	2.8x higher	1.1x higher	2.6x higher	2.8x higher
Hospitalization ²	5.3x higher	1.3x higher	4.7x higher	4.6x higher
Death ³	1.4x higher	No Increase	2.1x higher	1.1x higher

COVID 19 Risk Factors for Low Income Communities

- Due to preexisting health conditions, individuals in low income communities are at higher risk for exacerbated symptoms if infected with COVID-19.
 - Diabetes, Asthma, Hypertension, Obesity.
 - Stress due to discrimination, violence and institutional racism.
 - Stress has a physiological effect on the functionality of the immune system.
- People of color are often employed as essential workers (restaurant employees, retail workers, hospitality, etc.) and/or in lower income jobs which lack flexibility to accommodate safety measures to protect workers from COVID.
 - Often positions that are unable to offer telework options.
- Housing situation (Difficult to social distance)
 - Multigenerational families.
 - Public housing and other shared living spaces.
- Public transportation
 - Risk to exposure of Covid-19.

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