

Leading and Lagging: Health Disparities and the Differences in Minnesota's Quality of Care

According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, "Achieving health equity requires improving access to the conditions and resources that strongly influence health—for those who lack access and have worse health." In many cases, Minnesota has work to do to achieve that goal.

"Minnesota has long been a leader in providing high quality care, with among the best overall health and health care ratings in the country," said Jennifer Lundblad, president and CEO of Stratis Health, the health care quality improvement nonprofit and developer of Culture Care Connection. "At the same time, data show significant and long-standing differences in health and health care between the White population and our communities of color."

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) 2016 [National Healthcare Quality* and Disparities Report](#) provides a telling snapshot

in the graphic below. Two maps, the first showing that Minnesota is one of the 12 *best* states in the U.S. for overall quality of care, the second showing Minnesota is one of the 13 *worst* performing states when it comes to the average difference in quality of care for Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians

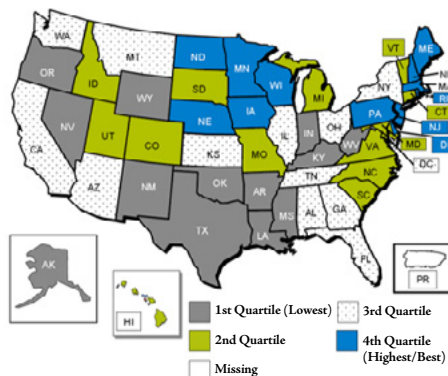


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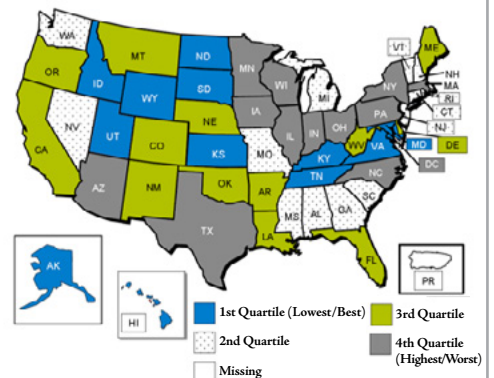
[of Care Report](#), while White patients generally had better health care

Overall quality of care, by state, 2014-2015



Source: 2016 AHRQ National Healthcare Quality and Disparities Report

Average differences in quality of care for Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians compared with Whites, by state, 2014-2015



compared with Whites.

According to MN Community Measurement's 2016 [Health Equity](#)

outcomes across most measures and most geographic areas, American Indian or Alaska Native and Black or African American patients generally

*Quality is described in terms of the National Quality Strategy priorities, which include patient safety, person centered care, care coordination, effective treatment, healthy living, and care affordability.

had the lowest health outcomes both statewide and regionally.

While elements like increased access to health care and better coordination of care delivery are important, achieving health equity also will require broader approaches that address social, economic, and environmental factors that influence health. Social determinants of health—conditions in the places where people live, learn, work, and play—are a key factors this broader approach.

However, in Minnesota, social determinants of health (rates of poverty, employment, home ownership) also show disparities.

As described in a 2016 [Report](#) by the Twins Cities Metropolitan Council,

compared with White residents, Black residents of the Twin Cities metro showed the largest gaps in employment, poverty, and homeownership in 2015. American Indian residents also showed the same lower outcomes.

In the coming year, Culture Care Connection and Stratis Health will be examining Minnesota's health care disparities, and offering insights and [tools for change](#). "Stratis Health has had a long standing commitment to improving the health and care of vulnerable and underserved populations, and supporting culturally sensitive care and health equity," Lundblad said. "We are currently reframing and planning for the next iteration of our health equity work,

especially in light of the persistent inequities in Minnesota."

Health Equity Action Steps

1. Make health equity a strategic priority.
2. Know your population.
3. Engage your community.
4. Change policies, systems, environments, and practices to promote equity.
5. Measure and report progress.
6. Assess and strategize next steps.
7. Develop a structure and processes to support health equity work.
8. Deploy specific strategies to address multiple determinants of health.
9. Decrease institutional racism within the organization.
10. Begin improvement work by considering the needs and issues faced by populations experiencing worse health outcomes.

CLINICAL CORNER

Free, One-Day, In-Person Motivational Interviewing Workshops — Five Regional Locations



You work with patients to address their depression, alcohol misuse, or other behavioral health concerns. You counsel patients to quit smoking, eat better, exercise more, adhere to the medication

that's been prescribed, or make other changes to their health behaviors. Helping patients make positive changes in their health behaviors can feel like the most challenging part of health care. It can feel like you are doing all the work, your priorities aren't aligned, and goals are set but never achieved. [Motivational Interviewing](#) offers an evidence-based model for effective conversations about change.

Stratis Health, as part of the Lake Superior Quality Innovation Network, is offering this highly participatory workshop, where participants will explore the foundational spirit of the Motivational Interviewing approach and learn and practice the skills and techniques. Attendees will have opportunities to observe and practice the skills, practical strategies, and tools in real-play and role-play situations.

Facilitator Mia Croyle, MA, is an experienced mental

health counselor who specializes in behavior change and is a trainer and coach for Motivational Interviewing. Her research and publications focus on behavioral screenings and interventions. She is a member of the Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers (MINT) and has facilitated learning workshops for diverse groups of professionals across the country.

Note: This educational offering consists of a one-hour on-demand video lesson to be viewed in advance, followed by one full-day workshop. The workshop is offered on five dates in five locations:

- October 17, 2017 – Stratis Health, Bloomington - Due to the overwhelming interest, this event is now full. If you are interested in being put on the wait list, please email avergara@stratishealth.org.
- October 18, 2017 – Verizon Center, Mankato - [Register](#).
- October 25, 2017 – St. Cloud Holiday Inn & Suites, St. Cloud - [Register](#).
- November 2, 2017 – Dakota Medical Foundation, Fargo - [Register](#).
- November 3, 2017 – Essentia Health St. Joseph Medical Center, Brainerd - [Register](#).

NEWS AND RESOURCES

MHLP Plain Language Campaign

The Minnesota Health Literacy Partnership's (MHLP) Plain Language Campaign is intended to serve as a tool for a wide range of health organizations to increase the use of plain language and improve health literacy in Minnesota.

The campaign includes several promotional and awareness building pieces, including:

- Key messages and talking points
- Business case for plain language
- Promotional messaging
- Social media messaging, including partnering on the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences [#PlainPledge 2017](#) social media event.
- Plain Language infographic
- Jargon Alerts: health and insurance terms that may be confusing or misunderstood that have plain language alternatives

Plain Language Campaign also developed a variety of free-to-use training and presentation materials to help educate individuals and health care professionals about the importance of health literacy.

[More >>](#)



Antidepressant Medication & Depression Management Focused on Reducing Ethnic and Racial Disparities



Five health plans—Blue Plus, Health Partners, Medica, Metropolitan Health Plan/Hennepin Health, and UCare—launched the Antidepressant Medication and Depression Management project to work with providers and partners to support efforts to improve adherence to antidepressant medication, and to better diagnose and treat depression in the senior/Medicare population, with a particular focus on reducing ethnic and racial disparities. Project resources include a [toolkit for providers and care coordinators](#) working with culturally diverse and senior/Medicare patients experiencing depression that includes best practices for depression care, mental health resources for providers and patients, cultural competency, and shared decision making, and webinars like [Trauma in Communities of Color](#), in which Dr. Kate Uchechi Onyeneho discusses delivering quality mental health services in a culturally appropriate way, and how to understand the barriers and solutions in serving this population.

[More >>](#)

CDC Tool Helps You Increase the Readability of Your Patient Communications



The CDC Clear Communication Index is a research-based tool to help you develop and assess public communication materials for your intended audience.

- The Index has four introductory questions and 20 scored items drawn from scientific literature in communication and related disciplines.
- The items represent the most important characteristics that enhance and aid people's understanding of information.

[More >>](#)

Report: Gap in Minnesota's Black-White Breast Cancer Death Rates May Have Closed

Source: *MinnPost*

Minnesota is one of a handful of states in which the breast cancer death rates for black and white women have become statistically equivalent, according to a new [report](#) from the American Cancer Society. But researchers are unsure whether that finding means this particular health disparity has been eliminated, or is due to a lack of statistical power caused by small numbers of breast cancer deaths among black women in the state.

[More >>](#)

EVENTS



Many Faces of Community Health Conference October 26-27, 2017 Hyatt Regency Bloomington

This annual two-day conference looks at the role of the safety net under health reform with a focus on meeting the needs of underserved people. We examine community care innovations and health care delivery models that promote health equity, prevent and manage chronic diseases, and assure access for all. [More >>](#)

[Register >>](#)

Webinar | Tobacco is Sacred: Native American Ceremonial vs. Commercial Tobacco Use

Tobacco has a dual role among many American Indian tribal people. It is first a spiritual connection and a medicine still used today; it also is a harmful, addictive substance. Of course, this dual role can make it difficult to address commercial tobacco addiction among the Native population successfully. In this presentation, you will learn about promising approaches for community driven solutions and tools for health care providers to address tobacco addiction among American Indian patients. [More >>](#)

October is Health Literacy Month



The theme for Health Literacy Month is “Be a Health Literacy Hero.” You can help by recognizing and cheering on those you consider as Health Literacy Heroes. [More >>](#)

November is American Diabetes Month



American Diabetes Month is an important part of efforts to focus our nation’s attention on the disease and the tens of millions of people it affects. The American Diabetes Association’s monthlong campaign can help spread the word. [More >>](#)

Host a diabetes self-management workshop in Minnesota! [More >>](#)

STRATIS HEALTH CONTACTS

Sue Severson, CPHIT,
CPEHR, Program Lead
Health Disparities
sseverson@stratishealth.org
952-853-8538

Nicole Gackstetter
Executive Assistant
ngackstetter@stratishealth.org
952-853-8512

Mark Benjamin
Editor
mbenjamin@stratishealth.org
952-853-8578

President and CEO
Jennifer P. Lundblad, PhD, MBA

Chief Medical Quality Officer
Jane Pederson, MD, MS

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Stratis Health is a nonprofit organization that leads collaboration and innovation in health care quality and safety, and serves as a trusted expert in facilitating improvement for people and communities.

Stratis Health works toward its mission through initiatives funded by federal and state government contracts, and community and foundation grants, including serving as Minnesota’s Medicare Quality Improvement Organization.

Stratis Health

2901 Metro Drive, Suite 400
Bloomington, MN 55425-1525
952-854-3306 +952-853-8503 (fax)

Email: info@stratishealth.org
www.stratishealth.org

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