

# The health equity briefs

National Association of State Offices of Minority Health Newsletter

**WELLNESS MATTERS: CELEBRATING NATIONAL WELLNESS MONTH AUGUST 2024**



*Welcome to National Wellness Month! This August, we're focusing on prioritizing self-care, reducing stress, and creating healthier habits for all communities, with a special emphasis on minority health. Let's explore ways to feel our best and address health disparities together.*

## Why Wellness Matters for Minority Health

Recent studies have shown that health disparities disproportionately affect minority communities. The economic burden of racial and ethnic health disparities in the U.S. reached **\$451 billion in 2018**. This burden varies significantly by state and racial/ethnic group. By focusing on wellness, we can take steps to reduce these disparities and improve overall health outcomes for all.

## Wellness Tips for Everyone

There are many simple ways to improve your wellness. Practice mindfulness by taking 5 minutes each day for meditation or deep breathing exercises. Move your body by aiming for 30 minutes of physical activity daily, even if it's just a brisk walk. Eat nutritious foods by incorporating more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains into your diet. Prioritize sleep by aiming for 7-9 hours of quality rest each night. And don't forget to stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water throughout the day.

## Resources for Minority Health and Wellness

Several resources are available to support minority health and wellness. The **National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD)** website offers research updates and health information. Local community health centers often provide free or low-cost health services and wellness programs. Look for cultural-specific wellness programs tailored to your community's needs and traditions.

## Community Wellness Challenge

This month, we challenge you to try one new wellness activity each week. Share your experiences with friends and family, and encourage others in your community to prioritize their health. Remember, small steps can lead to big changes. By focusing on our wellness, we can work towards reducing health disparities and creating healthier communities for all. **Let's make this August a month of positive change and improved well-being!**

**AUGUST 2024**



## Our Mission:

Promote and protect the health of racial and ethnic minority communities, tribal organizations and nations, by preventing disease and injury and assuring optimal health and well-being.

## HIGHLIGHTS:

*Wellness Matters: Celebrating National Wellness Month August 2024*

*Economic Burden of Health Disparities in the U.S.*

*Upcoming Webinars:*  
>HHS Region 9: Labor Trafficking  
>CDC Women and Girls Health

*New ASTHO Report and Podcast on Health Equity Offices*

*SOUL Equity Summit 2024*

*Join the SITHE-COP August Meeting*

*PhenX Toolkit Introduces New Social Determinants of Health Collection*

*Medicaid Update: Addressing Racial Health Disparities*

*Rumination Following Discrimination Can Lead to Depression, Anxiety in Black Youth*

*Resources*

## August is . . .

- [National Health Center Week](#)
- [OSHA's Safe and Sound Week](#)
- [Contact Lens Health Week](#)
- [Children's Eye Health and Safety Month](#)
- [Digestive Tract Paralysis Awareness Month](#)
- [Gastroparesis Awareness Month](#)
- [National Breastfeeding Month](#)
- [National Immunization Awareness Month](#)
- [Psoriasis Action Month](#)

## ECONOMIC BURDEN OF HEALTH DISPARITIES IN THE U.S.

A recent study funded by the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) has revealed alarming figures about the economic impact of health disparities in the United States. The study examined disparities across five racial and ethnic minority groups and three education levels. The economic burden was calculated based on excess medical care costs, lost labor market productivity, and premature deaths.

### Key Findings:

- Racial and Ethnic Disparities:
  - Total economic burden: \$451 billion (2% of GDP)
  - Cost per person: \$1,377
- Educational Level Disparities:
  - Total economic burden: \$978 billion (5% of GDP)
  - Cost per person: \$2,988

### Key Takeaways:

- The burden of racial and ethnic health disparities increased by **41%** between 2014 and 2018.
- Black/African American populations bear the highest burden, (**69%**) among racial and ethnic groups.
- Adults with a high school diploma/GED bear the highest burden (**61%**) among educational levels.
- The economic impact varies significantly by state, with some states seeing a burden equivalent to **5%** or more of their GDP.

**Recommendations:** The researchers suggest that policymakers use these estimates to inform policies and programs aimed at addressing health disparities and promoting health equity.

For more information on this study and its implications, please visit the [NIMHD website](#).



## UNDERSTANDING AND RESPONDING TO LABOR TRAFFICKING

The Region 9 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Human Trafficking Workgroup, in collaboration with key partners, is hosting a two-part webinar series on labor trafficking. This initiative supports the Biden Administration's comprehensive approach to combating human trafficking, as outlined in the National Action Plan and the National Human Trafficking Prevention Framework.

### Webinar Details:

#### Session 1: "What We Know"

Thursday, August 22, 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM PDT

#### Session 2: "Emerging Data & Resources"

Thursday, August 29, 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM PDT

Registration is mandatory and can be completed at [Exciting News for health researchers!](#)

For more information about this event, please contact [emily.hughes@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:emily.hughes@acf.hhs.gov).

## CDC Office of Health Equity commemorates 30 Years with a Women's and Girls' Health Webinar

**Title:** *Women's and Girls' Health: Across Identities, Places, and Life Stages*

**Date:** August 14th, 2023

This webinar will explore various aspects of women's and girls' health. We encourage you to attend and to share this opportunity with your networks.

**REGISTER TODAY**

## NEW ASTHO REPORT AND PODCAST ON HEALTH EQUITY OFFICES

ASTHO has recently published a valuable report titled "**Establishing an Office of Health Equity or Minority Health**," along with a complementary podcast, "**A Blueprint for Establishing a Health Equity or Minority Health Office**."

These resources offer guidance on creating and maintaining offices dedicated to addressing health disparities and promoting equity in public health.

## JOIN THE SITHE-COP AUGUST MEETING DISCUSSING HEALTH EQUITY CORE COMPETENCIES IN THE WORKFORCE



### EQUITY SUMMIT 2024: A REVOLUTION OF THE SOUL

This Summit is your opportunity to engage in building a more equitable future. This three-day event will bring together leaders, activists, and visionaries committed to creating lasting change.

- **Dates:** August 26-28, 2024
- **Location:** Atlanta, GA
- **Limited seating available**
- **Waitlist opens if sold out**

[Click here](#) for more information and registration.

The **States, Islands, and Territories Health Equity – Community of Practice (SITHE-COP)** invites you to join the **Thursday, August 22nd, 2024, meeting, from 2:00–3:30 p.m. EST**. The August meeting will focus on discussion of “Health Equity Core Competencies in the Workforce and PHAB Accreditation.” We will examine frameworks for workforce health equity competencies, the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) domains, and topics such as equitable data practices, communicating about health equity, community engagement, and more that align with these domains.

**PLEASE SAVE THIS [ZOOM LINK](#) ON YOUR CALENDAR**

## PHENX TOOLKIT INTRODUCES NEW SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH COLLECTION

**Exciting news for health researchers!** The National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities has launched **The PhenX Toolkit** a new Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) Collection. This addition provides standard data collection protocols to help measure factors that shape health behaviors and outcomes.

### **The collection includes:**

1. A Core Collection with 16 measurement protocols
2. Two Specialty Collections:
  - Individual SDOH (23 protocols)
  - Structural SDOH (14 protocols)

These protocols cover a wide range of topics, from race and ethnicity to neighborhood environments and minimum wage policies. By using these standardized measures, researchers can more easily compare and combine data from different studies.

**The goal?** To improve the understanding of social factors affecting health and help design better interventions to reduce health disparities. Researchers are encouraged to use these protocols in their primary data collection.

**The PhenX SDOH Collection** offers many benefits, including:

- ★ Easier data harmonization across studies
- ★ Improved ability to validate findings
- ★ Increased statistical power through combined study samples

### **Want to learn more?**

Visit the **[PhenX Toolkit website](#)** to explore the full SDOH Collection and start incorporating these protocols into your research today!

## ADDRESSING RACIAL HEALTH DISPARITIES THROUGH MEDICAID

Medicaid, a key health coverage source for people of color, is being used to fight racial health disparities. Recent efforts include expanding coverage, with many states extending postpartum care to 12 months. Eligibility changes now require continuous coverage for children nationwide. States are working with health plans to address social factors affecting health. Special programs are being tested to meet health-related social needs and help people leaving prison. More states now cover services like doula and community health workers.

These changes aim to improve health for all, but especially for people of color who often face greater health challenges. While it's too early to know how well these efforts are working, they show a growing focus on fairness in health care. [Click here](#) to read more.



## RUMINATION FOLLOWING DISCRIMINATION CAN LEAD TO DEPRESSION, ANXIETY IN BLACK YOUTH, STUDY SHOWS

A recent study has revealed important findings about the impact of racial discrimination on Black children and teenagers. Here are the key points:

1. Racial discrimination affects Black youth significantly, with about 90% reporting such experiences yearly.
2. As Black children grow older, they're more likely to face discrimination in their communities, schools, and online.
3. Many Black youth cope with discrimination by ruminating - dwelling on negative feelings. This can lead to depression and anxiety.
4. The study found that both discrimination and rumination were linked to increased depression and anxiety.
5. Younger children reported more anxiety, while teenagers showed more depression.
6. Girls reported higher levels of rumination, depression, and anxiety compared to boys.

The researchers suggest that as children grow, they develop more complex thinking, which can increase rumination. They hope these findings will help develop better ways to support Black youth in coping with discrimination.

[Click here](#) to read more.



## RESOURCES

**Introduction to Health Equity Online Course:** This free, self-guided course enhances knowledge and skills related to health equity. It supports professional development, curriculum design, and public health initiatives. The course includes modules on the structural and social roots of health inequities and their impact on public health.

**Achieving Health Equity in Healthcare:** Offered by the University of Michigan, this free course covers interventions to address racial and ethnic inequities in healthcare. It includes modules on diversity training, quality improvement, community health workers, and anti-racism and reparations in healthcare.

**American Medical Association (AMA):** The AMA offers a range of resources, including strategic plans, reports, and educational materials aimed at embedding racial justice and advancing health equity in healthcare. Their resources are designed to guide physicians and healthcare professionals in addressing health disparities.

## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT:

**Join the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) for a Virtual Research Opportunity Session**

Are you interested in mental health research? NIMH is hosting a virtual information session on **August 30th**.

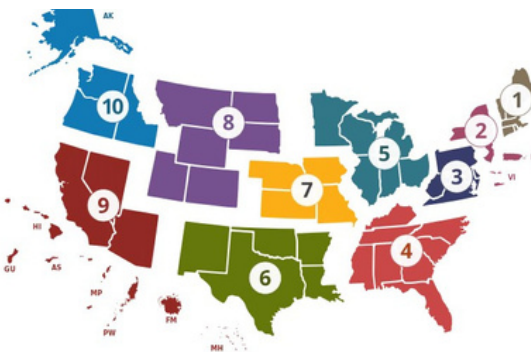
This event is perfect for students and postdocs who are curious about research careers. You'll learn about NIMH's Intramural Research Program and NIH training opportunities. Plus, you'll talk with current NIMH trainees about their experiences.

From undergrads to postdoctoral fellows, all are welcome to attend. It's a great chance to explore potential paths in mental health research. The session is free, but you need to register in advance. Don't miss this opportunity to connect with NIMH and discover exciting research possibilities.

[Register now](#) to secure your spot.

## HHS REGIONAL MINORITY HEALTH ANALYSTS

The Regional Minority Health Analysts work in the Office of Regional Health Operations to foster and strengthen relationships among federal, state, territory, tribal, and community stakeholders by working collectively to improve minority health, eliminate health disparities, and advance health equity.



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