

The health equity briefs

National Association of State Offices of Minority Health Newsletter

JUNE 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:

Men's Health Matters

National Black Family Cancer Awareness Week: Empowering Black Families Against Cancer

OMH Seeks Input on Educational Campaign for Community Health Worker Health Workers

The Public Health Review Morning Edition: Daily Podcast covering important public health topics

Bringing Sickle Cell Disease Into focus

Improving Asthma Care in Illinois Communities

New AUCD-ASTHO Disability & Health Data Grants Awarded



Men's Health Matters

June is Men's Health Month, and a time to encourage men and boys to be proactive about their health, and raise awareness that men face higher rates than women for many of the leading causes of death and disability in the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), men die at higher rates from heart disease, cancer, diabetes, suicide, and unintentional injuries.

Some sobering statistics on men's health from the CDC:

- Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men, killing 1 in 4 males
- Men have a 1 in 2 lifetime risk of developing cancer
- Men are 3.5 times more likely to die by suicide than women
- The average life expectancy for men is 5.8 years less than for women

Many states have launched initiatives to raise awareness around men's health issues. Here are examples of what States are doing:

- OMH's **Be the Source for Better Health** Men's Health Campaign
- New York's Men's Health Initiative provides resources and promotes annual checkups
- Nevada has a Men's Health Month webpage with facts and tips
- Michigan offers a Men's Health Toolkit for community organizations
- California's Department of Public Health has a Men's Health Initiative that provides resources on heart disease, cancer, mental health, and more
- Texas launched a Men's Health Awareness campaign with the Texas Male Aging Study to promote better health practices
- The Illinois Department of Public Health partners with the Men's Health Network on an annual Men's Health Week campaign

June is . . .

- Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness Month
- Men's Health Month
- PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) Awareness Month
- National Safety Month
- Myasthenia Gravis Awareness Month
- Scleroderma Awareness Month
- National HIV Testing Day (June 27)
- World Sickle Cell Day (June 19)

NATIONAL BLACK FAMILY CANCER AWARENESS WEEK: EMPOWERING BLACK FAMILIES AGAINST CANCER

June 13-19 marked the 4th annual **National Black Family Cancer Awareness Week (NBFCAW)**, a pivotal initiative spearheaded by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Oncology Center of Excellence. Since its inception in 2021, this week-long event has transcended mere commemoration, serving as a resounding call to action to combat the disproportionate cancer burden on Black families.

NBFCAW's mission is multifaceted; it:

- Raises cancer awareness
- Encourages an understanding of family cancer history
- Promotes participation in cancer clinical trials
- Encourages specimen donation

These goals are not just aspirational but essential steps in closing the alarming health disparities gap.

The Stark Reality: Cancer's Unequal Impact

According to the CDC, non-Hispanic Black people face a significantly higher risk of cancer compared to other racial and ethnic groups. The statistics are sobering:

- Highest mortality rates for all cancers combined
- Second-highest rate of new cancer diagnoses in 2022

These numbers aren't just data points; they represent families, communities, and lives profoundly affected by cancer.

Knowledge is Power: Family History Matters

One powerful tool in our fight against cancer is understanding family history. Knowing if cancer runs in your family can help you and your healthcare provider:

- Assess your risk
- Start screenings earlier
- Make informed lifestyle choices

A Family Affair: Prevention and Early Detection

Cancer prevention is a family endeavor:

- Adopt healthy behaviors together (diet, exercise, no smoking)
- Support each other in getting recommended screenings
- Share knowledge about risk factors

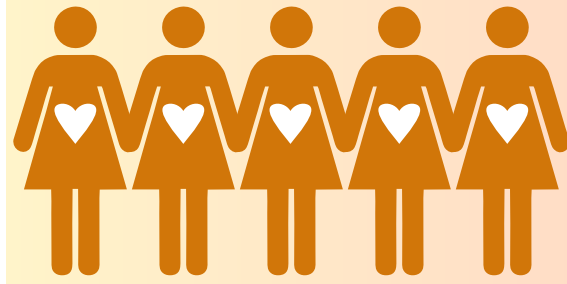
By taking these steps as a family, you are not just safeguarding your health, but also fostering a culture of wellness that can endure for generations.

Get Involved: Be Part of the Solution

Visit the [NBFCAW webpage](#) for:

- In-depth information
- Engagement opportunities
- Upcoming events
- Educational videos
- Customizable graphics

Most importantly, join the conversation on social media using #BlackFamCan. Your voice matters in spreading awareness and inspiring action. Let's stand united in our commitment to health, empowerment, and a future where cancer no longer disproportionately affects our communities.



OMH SEEKS INPUT ON EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER HEALTH WORKERS

The HHS Office of Minority Health (OMH) has recently released a Request for Information (RFI) that will help inform the development of an educational campaign focused on community health workers (CHWs) and increasing cultural competency on public health vaccines and prevention.

OMH aims to understand better the needs of CHWs and the diverse populations they serve through the RFI titled "Development of Public Health Vaccine and Prevention Educational Campaigns Involving Community Health Workers." The RFI was published on June 12, 2024, and the closing date for responses is July 11, 2024.

Through this RFI, OMH seeks information from CHWs, recipients of CHW services, and organizations representing and/or communities using CHWs. The information gathered will guide the development of an educational campaign focused on increasing cultural and linguistic competency efforts related to public health vaccines (e.g., influenza and COVID-19) and other prevention strategies.

[SUBMIT A FORMAL COMMENT](#)

THE PUBLIC HEALTH REVIEW MORNING EDITION:

Daily Podcast covering important public health topics

The Public Health Review Morning Edition podcast from the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) provides a quick daily five-minute newscast on the latest insights on ASTHO news, policy decisions, professional development opportunities, and events for public health leaders across the United States. Each episode features an interview with an expert covering the latest policies and programs impacting public health.

The latest episode of the [Public Health Review Morning Edition](#) podcast covers several important public health topics that may interest you.

Featured Interviews in this episode:

Disability Data Analysis Funding:

Dr. Elizabeth Wood, an assistant professor at Washington State University's Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine, is researching how the COVID-19 pandemic and related policies disproportionately affected marginalized groups with disabilities. Key findings reveal higher hospitalization rates for Hispanic individuals and those with low incomes. Dr. Wood's research aims to inform better policies and interventions to improve equitable healthcare access for diverse disability communities during public health crises.

Improving Healthcare Access in the Pacific: Julia Von Alexander, ASTHO's senior analyst for Island Support, highlights the Federated States of Micronesia Department of Health and Social Affairs' innovative approach to improving healthcare access for remote island communities.

National Minority Health Month Reflection: Veronica Halloway, executive director of the National Association of State Offices of Minority Health, reflects on the importance of National Minority Health Month in addressing racial/ethnic disparities.

Access the Full Episode: Listen to the full episode now, access resources, and subscribe to the daily [#PHRME newscast](#).

Share & Engage: Help spread the word by sharing this episode on social media using [#PHRME](#). Follow [@ASTHO](#) on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) for more public health insights.



Elizabeth Wood, PhD, MHPA
Assistant Professor at Washington State University, Spokane



Julia Von Alexander, MPA
Senior Analyst, Island Support, ASTHO



Veronica Halloway, MA, MAS
Executive Director, National Association of State Offices of Minority Health



BRINGING SICKLE CELL DISEASE INTO FOCUS

Sickle cell disease is an inherited blood disorder that affects an estimated 100,000 Americans. It is particularly common among African Americans, occurring in about 1 out of every 365 Black births.

Sickle cell causes red blood cells to become hard, sticky, and shaped like the sickle on a farmer's tool. These abnormal cells can get stuck in blood vessels, causing periodic episodes of extreme pain, serious infections, acute chest syndrome, and stroke.

While no cure is available, effective treatments can help prevent complications. However, many individuals with sickle cell disease do not receive appropriate care due to a lack of access to education and resources.

The [Office of Minority Health](#) is leading efforts to raise awareness of sickle cell disease and its impact on minority communities. Their resources guide managing sickle cell, understanding genetic counseling and testing, and improving the continuity of quality care. [Learn more](#) about sickle cell disease and educational material.

RESOURCES

IMPROVING ASTHMA CARE IN ILLINOIS COMMUNITIES

Illinois' Home Visiting Collaborative (HVC) comprises three asthma home-visiting programs that provide asthma care services to communities with high asthma prevalence and asthma-related adverse health outcomes. HVC uses community health workers, nurses, and health educators who are trained in asthma self-management education (AS-ME) and home visits to provide intensive AS-ME to patients.

In the United States, there are significant disparities in asthma prevalence, morbidity, and mortality among racial/ethnic minorities and those living in poverty or poor environmental conditions:

- Asthma prevalence is highest among Black children (15.7%) compared to white (7.1%), Asian (5.2%), and Hispanic (7.7%) children.
- Puerto Ricans have the highest asthma prevalence (16.9%) among Hispanics/Latinos.
- Blacks are 3 times more likely than whites to die from asthma.
- Those living below the poverty level have higher asthma prevalence than those at or above the poverty level.
- Inner-city children have higher asthma rates, likely due to increased exposure to environmental triggers like cockroach allergens, mold, and air pollution.

These disparities are driven by complex factors, including socioeconomic status, access to quality healthcare, genetic predisposition, exposure to environmental triggers, inadequate medication use, and lack of asthma education. Addressing these disparities requires a multifaceted public health approach that targets the systemic disadvantages faced by these communities.

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.



- REGION 1: [GEORGIA SIMPSON](#)
- REGION 2: [MARLINE VIGNIER](#)
- REGION 3: [JALISA SMITH](#)
- REGION 4: [ROSHUNDA IVORY](#)
- REGION 5: [MILDRED HUNTER](#)
- REGION 6: [ELLA EWERT-PIERCE](#)
- REGION 7: [CORSTELLA JOHNSON](#)
- REGION 8: [JUNE HOMDAYJANAKUL](#)
- REGION 9: VACANT
- REGION 10: VACANT

National Minority Quality Forum: The National Minority Quality Forum is a research and educational organization dedicated to ensuring high-risk racial and ethnic populations and communities receive optimal health care. This nonprofit, nonpartisan organization integrates data and expertise to support initiatives to eliminate health disparities.

AHRQ Minority Health Resources: The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality provides data, research findings, and initiatives to improve the equity of healthcare services for priority populations.

National Partnership for Action: This HHS website contains implementation guides, training materials, and other resources to help communities mobilize partners and take action to advance health equity.

Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH): This CDC program funds recipients across the U.S. to establish community-based programs and practices focused on reducing health disparities related to chronic diseases.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT:

New AUCD-ASTHO Disability & Health Data Grants Awarded

The Association of University Centers on Disability (AUCD) and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) have awarded grants for analyzing existing data related to disability and health.

The three grant recipients for 2024 are the Massachusetts Department of Health, Utah State University, and Washington State University.

These organizations will conduct timely data analyses to explore critical issues such as COVID-19 vaccination access for people with disabilities, factors associated with chronic conditions and mental health among disabled adults, and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the disabled community's health and healthcare access.

The grant projects aim to generate evidence to improve health policies, services, and outcomes for individuals with disabilities by tapping into existing data sources.

Congratulate the awardees on their innovative proposals. [Click here](#) for more information.