

Medicare for All: Healing Racial Health Inequities

“Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health is the most shocking and inhuman.”

- Dr. Martin Luther King



The U.S. health system is plagued with inequity: Compared to whites, people of color are more likely to be uninsured, face barriers to care, and suffer from preventable health conditions.

Costs and access to care

- People of color account for over half of America’s uninsured. Hispanic and Black Americans have significantly higher [uninsured](#) rates (19% and 11%) than whites (8%).
- Insured Black families spend nearly [20%](#) of household income on premiums.
- Nearly [one-third](#) of Black Americans aged 18 to 64 have past-due medical bills.
- Majority Black communities are [67%](#) more likely to have a shortage of primary care providers. Hospitals are more likely to [close](#) in communities with high levels of segregation and low-income residents.

Health outcomes

- Among today’s 40-year-olds, whites will live nearly six years [longer](#) than Blacks.
- Compared to white Americans, Blacks are [twice](#) as likely to die from diabetes, [seven](#) times more likely to die from HIV/AIDS, [22%](#) more likely to die from heart disease, and [71%](#) more likely to die from cervical cancer, with [higher](#) death rates for all cancers combined.
- Black mothers are [twice](#) as likely as white mothers to lack prenatal care and [320%](#) more likely to die from pregnancy-related complications. Black babies are more than [twice](#) as likely to die than white babies. Most of these deaths are preventable.

Universal comprehensive coverage is proven to reduce or even eliminate health disparities

- In the Veteran’s Health system, Black men are [37%](#) *less likely* than white men to develop heart disease, and have a [24%](#) *lower* death rate — a significant improvement compared to the general population.
- Patients with end-stage kidney disease qualify for Medicare coverage. And once on Medicare, Black patients with kidney disease survive [longer](#) than whites.
- For women with breast cancer, high-quality health coverage has been proven to erase nearly [half](#) the racial disparities in detection, treatment, and survival.

We have a long way to go to eliminate the racial inequities in health care. But a necessary first step is comprehensive coverage for everybody in the U.S., regardless of income, employment, or age. The only way to achieve that is with single-payer Medicare for All, which provides lifelong coverage for all medically necessary care, free choice of doctor and hospital, and funding of hospitals based on community needs, not profit.