

Health Equity Challenges and CMS Resources to Help Address Them



Barrier: Data availability to identify and address disparities

Known Challenges

- Limited data from enrollees and providers, specifically social determinants of health and social needs data
- Incorrect data field responses offered
- Lack of publicly available data
- Incorrect use of data

CMS Resources to Help

- [Stratified reports](#)
 - [Chronic conditions](#)
- [Research and data](#)
- [Medicare COVID-19 data snapshot](#)
- [Mapping Medicare Disparities Tool](#)



Barrier: Lack of health equity considerations within policies and regulations

Known Challenges

- Lack of equity lens applied when developing new policies
- Lack of public feedback during open comment periods
- Unintentional inclusion of policies that could lead to or worsen health disparities

CMS Resources to Help

- [CMS Framework for Health Equity 2022-2032](#)
- [CMS Disparities Impact Statement](#)
- [CMS Health Equity Award](#)
- [Minority Research Grant Program](#)
- [Health Equity Data Access Program](#)
- [Achieving Health Equity Medicare Learning Network \(MLN\) Training](#)
- [No Surprises Act health equity regulations](#)
- Required “health equity impact” section in CMCS A-19s
- Health equity considerations in Conditions of Participation
- Inventory of resources for standardized demographic and language data collection



Barrier: Access to health care

Known Challenges

- Proximity to health care facilities
- Lack of transportation
- Lack of accessible medical offices
- Lack of accessible medical technology
- Wait times
- Cost
- Lack of health insurance or comprehensive coverage
- Lack of sick leave or childcare assistance

CMS Resources to Help

- [Education about rights of people with disabilities](#)
- [Telehealth flexibilities](#)
- [Rural flexibilities to fight COVID-19](#)
- [Modernizing Health Care to Improve Physical Accessibility Medicare MLN Training](#)



Barrier: Quality of care

Known Challenges

- Implicit bias in health care
- Algorithmic bias in artificial intelligence
- Lack of investment on quality initiatives for underserved populations

CMS Resources to Help

- [Education for health care providers](#)
- [Investigation of algorithmic biases](#)
- [Information on health services and outcomes for minority populations](#)
- [MLN training hub for health care providers](#)
- [Modernizing Health Care to Improve Physical Accessibility MLN Training](#)
- [Improving Health Care Quality for LGBTQ People MLN Training](#)
- [Achieving Health Equity MLN Training](#)



Barrier: Distrust of medical system

Known Challenges

- Past abuses
- Microaggressions
- Discrimination
- Racism
- Lack of culturally competent care
- Ableism
- Transphobia

CMS Resources to Help

- [Support of culturally competent outreach and care](#)
- [Technical assistance for trusted community partners](#)
- [Education for health care providers](#)



Barrier: Language access

Known Challenges

- Cultural issues including:
 - Lack of culturally competent messaging
 - Lack of cultural sensitivity from providers
 - Overly complex translations
- Unfamiliar words or phrases

CMS Resources to Help

- [Coverage to Care resources](#)
- [Materials in multiple languages](#)
- [Education about right to translators](#)



Barrier: Technology access

Known Challenges

- Lack of broadband access
- Unaffordable broadband
- Computer literacy issues
- Lack of accessible technology

CMS Resources to Help

- [Coverage to Care telehealth resources](#)
- [Print materials for community worker use](#)
- [Rural flexibilities to fight COVID-19](#)



Barrier: Health literacy

Known Challenges

- Confusing terms used in health coverage
- Changes to plans, provider directories, formularies
- Being new to health care services or not a regular consumer of health care
- Language or cultural differences
- Hard to understand materials for patient populations

CMS Resources to Help

- [Coverage to Care resources](#)
- [Connected Care resources](#)
- [Your Medicare Coverage](#)