COVID-19 AND COMMUNITIES OF COLOR: UNJUST AND PREDICTABLY DISPARATE IMPACTS

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**HISTORY**
Created in 2013 upon transfer of St. Luke’s Episcopal Health System

**MISSION**
To improve the health and well-being of the 11+ million residents of the 57 EDOT counties

**APPROACH**
Upstream, systems-oriented approach and root cause analyses

**OUTCOMES**
Health System Reform
Primary Care
Active Communities
Early Childhood Development
COVID-19 total cases and deaths: U.S., Texas, Harris County

Total Cases in U.S.: 6,087,403
Total Deaths in U.S.: 185,092

Total Cases in Texas: 625,347
Total Deaths in Texas: 13,091

Total Cases in Harris County: 108,085
Total Deaths in Harris County: 2,281

Source: CDC, CDC COVID Data Tracker, data retrieved 9/4/2020
Source: TX DSHS, Texas Case Counts COVID-19, data retrieved 9/4/2020
COVID-19 cases and deaths by race/ethnicity: U.S., Texas, Harris County

**Total Cases in U.S.**
- White: 41%
- Black: 19%
- Hispanic: 31%

**Total Deaths in U.S.**
- White: 51%
- Black: 22%
- Hispanic: 17%

**Total Cases in Texas**
- White: 29%
- Black: 16%
- Hispanic: 40%

**Total Deaths in Texas**
- White: 30%
- Black: 12%
- Hispanic: 18%

**Total Cases in Harris County**
- White: 13%
- Black: 11%
- Hispanic: 25%

**Total Deaths in Harris County**
- White: 14%
- Black: 12%
- Hispanic: 29%


Source: Harris County, [Harris County/Houston COVID-19 Cases](https://houstonhealth.epa.harriscounty.tx.us/covid-19), data retrieved 9/4/2020
These disparate health outcomes were predictable because social, economic, and behavioral factors—not healthcare—determine 80% of health outcomes.
Drivers of Health

Social and Economic Factors 40%

Health Behaviors 30%

Medical Care 20%

Physical Environment 10%
**Drivers**

- Social and Economic Factors: 40%
- Health Behaviors: 30%
- Medical Care: 20%
- Physical Environment: 10%

**Expenditures**

- Hospitals: 32.7%
- Providers: 26.4%
- Nursing Homes/Home Health: 12.7%
- Rx and Medical Equipment: 12.5%
- Insurance and Gov't Admin: 0.4%
- Research and Investment: 4.8%

**2018**

- Medical Services: $3.65 T (97.4%)
- Public Health: $93.5 B (2.6%)
Health care vs social services spending in OECD nations

U.S. life expectancy trails behind OECD nations


U.S. obesity rate higher among OECD nations


U.S. infant mortality highest among OECD nations


Social, economic, and behavioral factors exacerbate the effects of COVID-19
Life expectancy in Harris County

Source: PolicyMap, Life Expectancy at Birth
Median household income in Harris County

Source: PolicyMap, Median Household Income
Case vulnerability: Low-income workers face trade-off going to work or losing their livelihood

Low-income workers are far less likely to have **paid sick leave**

![Graph showing the share of workers earning poverty-level wages in 2017 by income quintile and race/ethnicity.]

Workers of color are more likely to earn **poverty-level wages**

*share of workers earning poverty-level wages in 2017*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Lowest 10%</th>
<th>Second 25%</th>
<th>Third 25%</th>
<th>Highest 25%</th>
<th>Highest 10%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>94</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black</td>
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<td>92</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. BLS, 2019 National Compensation Survey

Source: Economic Policy Institute, *Workers of Color are Far More Likely to be Paid Poverty-Level Wages than White Workers*
Case vulnerability: People of color face higher exposure as they represent a large share of frontline, essential workers

Hispanics account for a disproportionate number of frontline essential workers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% of Essential Workers</th>
<th>% of Total Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The pandemic’s hardest hit population consists of 12 million foreign-born workers

...yet many relief efforts exclude immigrants

Source: Economic Policy Institute, Who Are Essential Workers?

Source: Migration Policy Institute, Immigrant Workers: Vital to the U.S. COVID-19 Response, Disproportionately Vulnerable
Case vulnerability: Crowded living conditions interfere with social distancing and self-isolation efforts

People of color have larger households than their white counterparts

- **White**
  - Two-Person: 10%
  - Three or Four-Person: 37%
  - Five-Person or More: 53%

- **Black**
  - Two-Person: 14%
  - Three or Four-Person: 44%
  - Five-Person or More: 42%

- **Hispanic**
  - Two-Person: 25%
  - Three or Four-Person: 47%
  - Five-Person or More: 28%

41% of African Americans live in areas with multiunit residential buildings...

...compared to 23% of whites

Source: Statista, Race and Ethnicity of U.S. Households in 2015, by Size

Source: KFF, Communities of Color at Higher Risk for Health and Economic Challenges Due to COVID-19
Case vulnerability: Racism and racial discrimination are linked to adverse health outcomes

INSTITUTIONAL RACISM
- Denial of Goods

CULTURAL RACISM
- Psychological Stress

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION
- Assault

Mental Health Outcomes:
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Substance Use/Misuse

Physical Health Outcomes:
- Cardiovascular Disease
- Low Birth Weight
- High Blood Pressure
- Physical Injury

Outcome vulnerability: COVID-19 is more severe for those with underlying chronic conditions

94% of COVID-19 deaths had one or more underlying chronic conditions

Most reported underlying chronic conditions among deaths due to COVID-19

- Cardiovascular Disease: 24%
- Hypertension: 22%
- Diabetes: 16%
- Chronic Lung Disease: 9%
- Obesity: 4%

Source: CDC, Daily Updates of Totals by Week and State
Racial and ethnic minorities are disproportionately burdened with chronic disease

People of color are more likely to report being **overweight or obese** than their white counterparts.

**Diabetes prevalence** is higher among minority populations.

- **White**: 65% overweight or obese, 59% diabetes prevalence
- **Black**: 73% overweight or obese, 18% diabetes prevalence
- **Hispanic**: 72% overweight or obese, 10% diabetes prevalence

Source: KFF, *Adults Who Report They Are Overweight or Obese by Race/Ethnicity*

Source: CDC, *Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health*
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As we rebuild the system post-COVID, our strategy must be different.

We must move upstream.
The healthy system continuum
What will it take?
THANK YOU!

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