

Equitable Access to Health Services



Penn Medicine
Center for Health Equity Advancement

What is it?

Tuesday, April 5th, 2022

Equitable access to health services means that people have access to high-quality care they can afford. It also means that people have access to care at a physical location and time that works for them, and with a health care provider that respects their culture and background, or practices cultural humility. Our current systems of care leave out many because they were not designed with and for them. For example, the study that gave us co-pays, was done in a White population. They found that co-pays stopped the use of services White people didn't need, which is a good thing. But studies since have shown that co-pays stop BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) populations from getting care, medications, and treatments that they need. This is seen even among BIPOC populations with the same income as White populations. So, co-pays cause unequal access.

Why is it important?

Inequities in access to health care impacts health. Where someone lives determines their access to high quality schools and jobs. Because policies and structural racism controls where one lives, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) have less opportunities to have health insurance and to face cost-related barriers to healthcare and increases the chance to get in medical debt. BIPOC and other historically marginalized communities face racism and discrimination while navigating a healthcare system that was not designed with them in mind.

What you can do

- Understand how healthcare systems and providers impact access to healthcare services
- Learn about the impact of implicit bias on care and how to apply cultural humility
- Don't make assumptions about patients. Be aware that social factors may impact health. Ask your patients if they have barriers to care and offer resources.
 - [Resource Connects](#)
 - [Penn Medicine Social Needs Response Team](#)

Learn more

- [Health Equity at Penn Medicine: Applying Cultural Humility](#)
- [Achieving Racial and Ethnic Equity in U.S. Health Care: A Scorecard of State Performance](#)
- [Healthy People 2020: Access to Health Services](#)
- [Care Affordability chartbook](#)
- Hear a [story](#) from Penn Medicine faculty, staff or students related to this topic (begin listening at 12:37).

[Click here to learn more and see the full schedule of HEW events!](#)