

HEALTH EQUITY WEEK 2024

Health Equity Week 2024 Tip Sheet | Tuesday, April 2 Equitable Access to Health Services

What is it?

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 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. It was found that co-pays stopped the use of services White people didn't need, which is a good thing. However, studies have since shown that co-pays stop BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) populations from getting care, medications, and treatments 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 control where someone lives, BIPOC populations have fewer opportunities to get health insurance. They also face cost-related barriers to health care, which increases the chance for medical debt. BIPOC and other historically marginalized communities face racism and discrimination while navigating a health care system that was not designed with them in mind.

What can you do?

- Understand how health care systems and providers impact access to health care 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. Consider:
 - [Resource Connects](#)
 - [Penn Medicine Social Needs Response Team](#)

Learn more:

- *Complete the Knowledge Link Course:* [Health Equity at Penn Medicine: Applying Cultural Humility](#)
- *Read:* [Achieving Racial and Ethnic Equity in U.S. Health Care: A Scorecard of State Performance](#)
- *Read:* [Healthy People 2030: Access to Health Services](#)



Register for Events!

In celebration of Health Equity Week, visit the Health Equity Week website to view a [list of events](#) focused on advancing health equity through innovative solutions.