



Health Disparities in Multnomah County

Multnomah County Health Department has examined 17 health status indicators over time for four populations of color: African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans. In the 1991-1995 time period, 29 health disparities were identified. Seven health indicators have improved over time. The most recent report identifies 22 health disparities that persist across the four populations.

African Americans

African Americans experienced significant health disparities on 11 of the 17 health indicators during the most recent time period examined, 2001-2005.

Overall age adjusted death rates were 13% higher for African Americans than for White non-Hispanics during the 2001-2005 period. Death rates were 1,213 deaths per 100,000 African Americans compared to 962 per 100,000 White non-Hispanics.

- The homicide death rate for African Americans was six times that of White non-Hispanics (17.0 deaths per 100,000 African Americans vs. 2.8 deaths per 100,000 White non-Hispanics).
- The diabetes death rate for African Americans was more than twice that for White non-Hispanics (70.8 deaths per 100,000 African Americans vs. 29.5 per 100,000 White non-Hispanics).
- The stroke death rate for African Americans was 57% higher than the rate for White non-Hispanics (110.0 vs. 70.1 per 100,000).

African Americans experienced health disparities relative to White non-Hispanics on all four of the birth-related health indicators examined:

- Twenty-five percent of African American women did not receive prenatal care in the first trimester of pregnancy, compared with fifteen percent of White non-Hispanic women.
- African American women were nearly twice as likely to have low birthweight babies than were White non-Hispanic women.
- The infant mortality rate for African Americans was 1.8 times higher than the infant mortality rate for White non-Hispanics (8.6 deaths per 1,000 births vs. 4.9 deaths per 1,000 births).
- The teen birth rate for African Americans was nearly three times that of White non-Hispanics (31.5 per 1,000 African American girls aged 15-17 years vs. 11.7 per 1,000 White non-Hispanic girls aged 15-17).



African-Americans experienced from 3.2 to 6.5 times more new infections of gonorrhea, chlamydia, and syphilis (sexually transmitted diseases) than White non-Hispanics.

African Americans (continued)

Two additional studies indicate health disparities for African Americans relative to White non-Hispanics the number of new cases and deaths due to prostate cancer, and in asthma rates:

- African American men had a 40% higher prostate cancer incidence rate than White non-Hispanics (209 cases vs. 150 cases per 100,000 population) during the 2000–2002 time period. African American men are twice as likely to die from the disease, and African Americans in their later 70's are dying at three times the rate (*Community Health Assessment Quarterly*, Multnomah County Health Department, Fall 2006).
- Non-Hispanic Blacks had the highest prevalence of all groups for asthma in Oregon for 2004-2005 (16.5%); this compared to 10.1% for White non-Hispanics. (*Oregon Asthma Surveillance Report*, Oregon Department of Human Services, June 2007)

Hispanics

Hispanics experienced significant health disparities relative to White non-Hispanics on 5 of the 17 health indicators examined for the 2001-2005 time period.

- The death rate from homicide was over twice as high for Hispanics as for White non-Hispanics. The death rate for Hispanics was 6.3 per 100,000 Hispanics compared to 2.8 per 100,000 White non-Hispanics.
- Thirty-three percent of Hispanic women did not receive prenatal care in the first trimester of pregnancy, compared with fifteen percent of White non-Hispanic women.
- The teen birth rate for Hispanics was six times higher than for White non-Hispanics (71.5 for Hispanic girls aged 15-17 vs. 11.7 per 1,000 White non-Hispanic girls aged 15-17).
- Hispanics experienced between 1.2 and 2.5 times more new infections of gonorrhea, chlamydia and syphilis (sexually transmitted diseases) than White non-Hispanics.

Although not showing statistically significant health disparities, death rates for lung cancer and diabetes were up sharply among Hispanics.

- The lung cancer death rate for Hispanics was 68% higher in 2001-2005 than it was in 1991-1995; over the same time period, the rates declined for both White non-Hispanics and African Americans.
- The diabetes death rate was up 53% among Hispanics, which was a larger increase than for any other racial group.



Native Americans

Native Americans experienced significant health disparities relative to White non-Hispanics on 4 of the 17 indicators examined for the 2001-2005 time period.

- HIV disease mortality was three times higher for Native Americans than for White non-Hispanics. The death rate for HIV disease was 15.9 per 100,000 Native Americans compared to 4.9 per 100,000 White non-Hispanics.
- Thirty percent of Native American women did not receive prenatal care in the first trimester of pregnancy, compared with fifteen percent of White non-Hispanic women.
- The percent of low birthweight babies born to Native American mothers was 42% higher than the percent of low birthweight babies born to White non-Hispanic mothers (8.4% vs. 5.9%).
- The teen birth rate for Natives Americans was 1.8 times higher than for White non-Hispanics (20.6 per 1,000 Native American girls aged 15-17 vs. 11.7 per 1,000 White non-Hispanic girls aged 15-17).

Asian/Pacific Islanders

Asian/Pacific Islanders experienced significant health disparities relative to White non-Hispanics on 3 of the 17 indicators examined for the 2001-2005 time period.

- The death rate from homicide was nearly twice as high for Asian/Pacific Islanders as for White non-Hispanics. The death rate for Asian/Pacific Islanders was 5.2 per 100,000 compared to 2.8 for White non-Hispanics.
- Twenty-two percent of Asian/Pacific Islander women lack prenatal care in the first trimester of pregnancy, compared with fifteen percent of White non-Hispanic women.
- The percent of low birthweight babies born to Asian Pacific/Island mothers was 17% higher than the percent of low birthweight babies born to White non-Hispanic mothers (6.9% vs. 5.9%).

Although not showing statistically significant disparities relative to White non-Hispanics, rates of death due to breast cancer and lung cancer are up for Asian/Pacific Islanders.

- Breast cancer mortality for Asian/Pacific Islanders has more than doubled since the 1991-1995 time period
- The lung cancer mortality rate for Asian/Pacific Islanders is 34% higher compared to a decade ago; during the same time period the rates decreased for both White non-Hispanics and African Americans.

Note: Except where noted, data is for the 2001 to 2005 time period, and is from ***Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities in Multnomah County: 1991-2005***. Rates are age-adjusted to 2000 Standard U.S. Population.

