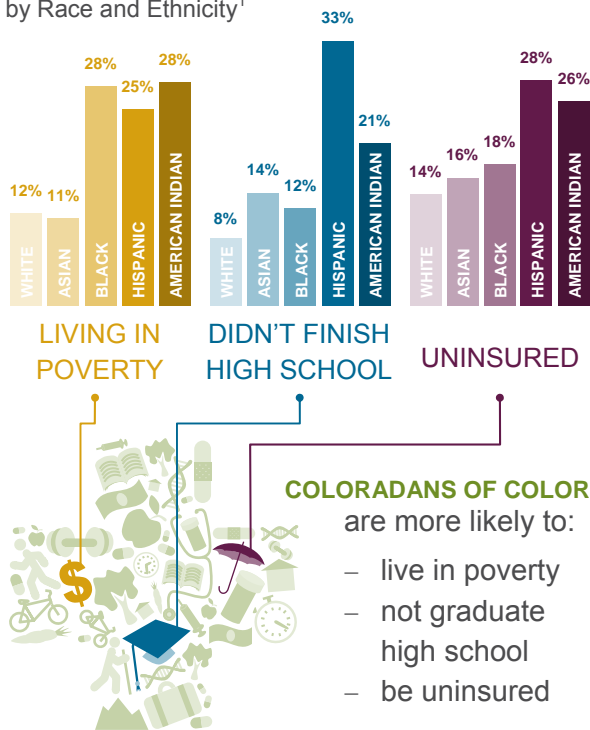




SOCIAL FACTORS AFFECTING HEALTH by Race and Ethnicity¹



To make Colorado the healthiest state in the nation, we need to recognize, understand, and address the health inequities experienced by racially and ethnically diverse Coloradans.

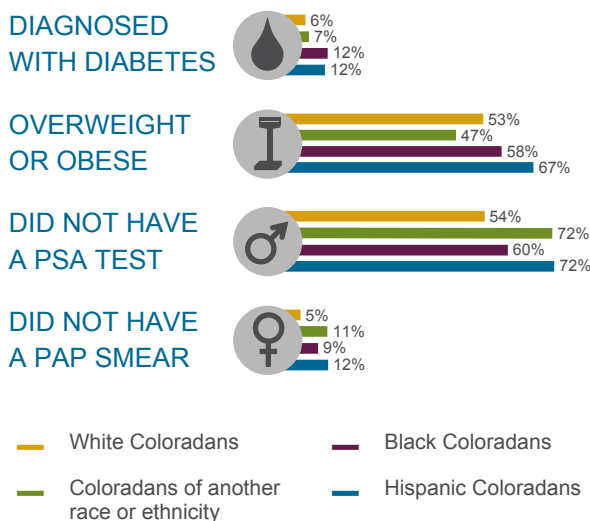
Factors that Impact Health

A person's health is influenced by powerful social factors such as income, educational attainment, and employment. Compared to all Coloradans, racially and ethnically diverse Coloradans experience living in poverty, lower educational attainment, and higher levels of unemployment. These life circumstances have a significant impact on the health of communities of color in Colorado.

“ *Issues concerning health, education, and economic opportunity are interconnected, and we can't talk about any of them without talking about the disparities that Latinos and other people of color in Colorado face. If all Coloradans had access to good, family-supporting jobs that allowed us to access good health care for ourselves and our families, we wouldn't see these same kinds of disparities.*

—Amanda Gonzalez, Colorado Latino Leadership, Advocacy & Research Organization

CHRONIC DISEASE & PREVENTION by Race and Ethnicity²



Illness and Chronic Disease

Cancer and cardiovascular disease are the leading causes of death for Colorado adults 45 years and older. Research shows that racially and ethnically diverse Coloradans are more likely to have risk factors that lead to these diseases, less likely to get recommended screenings, and less likely to have access to needed treatments.³

References

¹ 2012 American Community Survey, US Census.
² 2012 Colorado Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.
³ Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities in Colorado 2009, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

Health inequities are persistent differences in health because of social factors such as race, ethnicity, geography, education, and socioeconomic status. Research in Colorado clearly demonstrates that racially and ethnically diverse Coloradans experience a high burden of health inequities. For Colorado to become the healthiest state in the nation, we need to recognize, understand, and address the health inequities experienced by racially and ethnically diverse Coloradans.



ADVANCE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

A good education, adequate employment, and access to other economic securities such as homeownership and personal savings creates a foundation for short and long-term wellbeing. As Colorado pursues policies and programs to support economic growth, it is vital to engage racially and ethnically diverse Coloradans in development and implementation. All Coloradans benefit from a strong economy.



SECURE HEALTH INSURANCE

Health insurance provides security and peace of mind, but also creates access to needed primary and preventive care services. Many new opportunities for health insurance are now available in Colorado. Engaging communities of color as these new opportunities are available will be critical to reduce the number of racially and ethnically diverse Coloradans without adequate health insurance.



IMPROVE CARE EXPERIENCES

Colorado is a national leader in efforts to improve the health care experience and quality of care received in every health care setting. Racially and ethnically diverse Coloradans are at a higher risk for some chronic diseases and may not have access to all needed health services, so performance metrics for health initiatives should include the impacts on and experiences of communities of color.

“ Working together, we can make Colorado the healthiest state in the nation. But it’s critical that our efforts address the cultural and social determinants of negative health outcomes. In many ways, this is the low hanging fruit to achieving our goal of being number one.

—Grant Jones,
Center for African
American Health

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