



# Resources

*Health Disparities and  
Inequities*

The Health Policy Institute of Ohio has released a new data brief, "[Connections between Racism and Health: Taking Action to Eliminate Racism and Advance Equity](#)" and an accompanying resource page to support state and local efforts to eliminate racism.

Data and research evidence are clear that racism is a systemic and ongoing crisis with serious consequences for the health and wellbeing of Ohioans.

As state and local leaders commit to address racism as a public health crisis, this publication outlines action steps that can be taken to eliminate racism and advance equity. This brief provides:

- A definition and explanation of racism
- A brief summary of research on the connections between racism and health
- Action steps that individuals, groups, public and private organizations and state and local government leaders can take to eliminate racism and advance equity

To access more specific resources, such as policy or practice examples and educational tools that correspond with each action step, visit HPIO's [Action Steps to Eliminate Racism resource page](#).

Nick Wiselogel, Vice President, Strategic Communications  
Health Policy Institute of Ohio  
614-545-0758

140 East Town Street, Suite 1000  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

# Health Policy Brief

## Connections between racism and health

Taking action to eliminate racism and advance equity

### Overview

Data and research evidence are clear that racism is a systemic and ongoing crisis with serious consequences for the health and wellbeing of Ohioans.

In recent months, the link between racism and health has come to the forefront of public discussion as COVID-19 infections, hospitalizations and deaths have disproportionately affected Ohioans of color. At the same time, Ohio and the rest of the nation are grappling with weeks of protests and public calls to address racism in light of the disparate and excessive use of police force against communities of color. These issues have exposed the many obstacles communities of color face, including higher rates of poverty, exposure to environmental hazards and overall poor health outcomes.

As state and local leaders commit to address racism as a public health crisis, this publication outlines action steps that can be taken to eliminate racism and advance equity. This brief provides:

- A definition and explanation of racism
- A brief summary of research on the connections between racism and health
- Action steps that individuals, groups, public and private organizations and state and local government leaders can take to eliminate racism and advance equity

### Why should we focus on racism?

Ohio consistently ranks among the bottom half of states on measures of health and wellbeing. For example, Ohio ranks 38 out of 50 states on *America's Health Rankings* 2019 report. In the Health Policy Institute of Ohio's *2019 Health Value Dashboard*, Ohio ranks 46 out of 50 states and D.C. on health value, a composite measure of population health and healthcare spending, landing in the bottom quartile. This means that Ohioans are less healthy and spend more on health care than people in most other states.

## 3

### key findings for policymakers

- **Racism is a health crisis.** The research is clear that racism is an ongoing crisis resulting in inequities and disparities that have led to serious consequences for the health and wellbeing of Ohioans of color.
- **Racism manifests directly and indirectly across all levels of society.** Most conversations on racism focus on the individual level (internalized or interpersonal racism). However, systemic racism (institutional or structural) is an even more pervasive driver of the poor outcomes faced by communities of color.
- **Many opportunities to dismantle racism exist.** While addressing the impact of hundreds of years of racism in our country is daunting, progress is possible and there are multiple opportunities for action.

A key reason for Ohio's poor performance is that many Ohioans, particularly communities of color, face barriers to health. Ohio is in the bottom quartile (42 out of 50 states) for African-American child wellbeing based on the Annie E. Casey Foundation *2017 Race for Results Report*, indicating that Black/African-American children in Ohio do not have adequate supports to achieve optimal health.

Equally concerning, the *2019 Health Value Dashboard's* equity profiles show that Ohioans of color face large gaps in outcomes across socio-economic factors, community conditions and health care. This, in turn, drives poorer health outcomes among Ohioans of color, such as higher rates of infant mortality and premature death.

# Books

- *The Fears of the Rich, the Needs of the Poor: My Years at the CDC*
  - Written in the perspective of Dr. Foege, former director of the CDC, this autobiography recounts the experiences with tackling infectious diseases particularly among low-income populations. Great public health read!
- *Medical Bondage: Race, Gender, and the Origins of American Gynecology*
  - Recounts nineteenth century unethical experimentation conducted on enslaved women impacted American gynecology as well as how these seemingly outdated studies continue to influence patient-provider relationships in the present.



# Books

- *Poverty and the Myths of Health Care Reform*
  - In this novel, Dr. Cooper argues how the astronomical costs of the healthcare system should be attributed to increasing poverty and wealth gaps, rather than political or cultural factors.
- *The Health Gap: The Challenge of an Unequal World*
  - Dr. Marmot examines healthcare disparities in light of the 2015 riots in Baltimore. This novel argues the underlying causes of disparities in life expectancy to be social determinants of health, and compares healthcare status among cities and countries and within racial/ethnic groups.



# Books

- *Health Disparities in the United States: Social Class, Race, Ethnicity, and the Social Determinants of Health*
  - In this 2008 book, Dr. Barr discusses how poverty, status, race/ethnicity, and other social factors determine overarching health outcomes for patients as well as how to adequately address them.
- *Communities in Action: Pathways to Health Equity*
  - This book examines how communities can collaborate in order to effectively improve health outcomes for community members, and how to promote health equity overall.



# Articles

- Braveman P. (2014). **What are health disparities and health equity? We need to be clear.** *Public health reports (Washington, D.C. : 1974)*, 129 Suppl 2(Suppl 2), 5–8. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00333549141291S203>
- Keating D. P. (2016). **Social Inequality in Population Developmental Health: An Equity and Justice Issue.** *Advances in child development and behavior*, 50, 75–104. <https://doi.org/10.1016/bs.acdb.2015.12.002>
- Benfer E. A. (2015). **Health Justice: A Framework (and Call to Action) for the Elimination of Health Inequity and Social Injustice.** *The American University law review*, 65(2), 275–351.
- McGowan, A. K., Lee, M. M., Meneses, C. M., Perkins, J., & Youdelman, M. (2016). **Civil Rights Laws as Tools to Advance Health in the Twenty-First Century.** *Annual review of public health*, 37, 185–204. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-publhealth-032315-021926>



# Articles

- Farrer, L., Marinetti, C., Cavaco, Y. K., & Costongs, C. (2015). **Advocacy for health equity: a synthesis review**. *The Milbank quarterly*, 93(2), 392–437. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0009.12112>
- Carr, D., Adler, S., Winig, B. D., & Montez, J. K. (2020). **Equity First: Conceptualizing a Normative Framework to Assess the Role of Preemption in Public Health**. *The Milbank quarterly*, 98(1), 131–149. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0009.12444>
- Baker, P., Friel, S., Kay, A., Baum, F., Strazdins, L., & Mackean, T. (2018). **What Enables and Constrains the Inclusion of the Social Determinants of Health Inequities in Government Policy Agendas? A Narrative Review**. *International journal of health policy and management*, 7(2), 101–111. <https://doi.org/10.15171/ijhpm.2017.130>





# Videos

- The myth of race, debunked in 3 minutes
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VnfKgffCZ7U>
- The Social Construction of Race: Aliya Saperstein
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jiwieME2tis>
- Office of Health Disparities Research – Mayo Clinic
  - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0GdvE5\\_iEY4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0GdvE5_iEY4)
- A Tale of Two Zip Codes
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eu7d0BMRt0o>
- Social Determinants of Health - an introduction
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8PH4JYfF4Ns>
- Health Equity Animated: Equity vs. Equality
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZd4no4gZnc>



# Additional Resources

Local, regional and national health policy and equity data from Health Policy Institute of Ohio, Center for Closing the Health Gap, and Kaiser Family Foundation and the National Academy of Medicine

- <https://www.healthpolicyohio.org/health-equity/>
- <https://covid19communityresources.com/>
- <https://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/>
- <https://www.nationalacademies.org/our-work/roundtable-on-the-promotion-of-health-equity>

