

HLB's Health Equity Essentials Blog

Insights

05.21.26

On behalf of the Hooper, Lundy & Bookman, PC Health Equity Task Force, here is our most recent HLB Health Equity Essentials.

Health Disparities Persist Across Racial and Ethnic Lines Throughout the Country

The most recent annual [report](#) by the Commonwealth Fund, which analyzes health disparities nationwide, found that American Indian/Alaska Native, Black, and Hispanic communities generally experienced worse access to, and affordability of, health care services in most states during 2023–24. The report anticipates that these disparities will only worsen due to major federal funding cuts and changes to Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act (ACA) marketplace, while also highlighting the potential for artificial intelligence to help close gaps in care. Notably, the report assigns each racial and ethnic group in every state an overall health system score based on the state's combined performance in health outcomes, access to care, quality of care, and individuals' use of health services.

Health Care for Hispanics Disproportionately Impacted by Latest Federal Health Care Funding Cuts

A [UnidosUS report](#) claims that the progress made in Latino health care during the past decade is threatened by Medicaid funding cuts in 2025 and the expiration in January 2026 of the enhanced tax credits under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The report estimates that more than 28% of the 14 million individuals projected to lose health insurance coverage during the next 10 years will be Hispanic. States with large Latino populations, such as California and Florida, will be most impacted.

MAHA Action Plan to Taper Overprescribing of Psychiatric Medications

On May 4, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), as part of Secretary Kennedy's Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) campaign, announced its [action plan](#) to curb overprescribing of psychiatric medications, particularly to children. HHS seeks to avoid the unnecessary initiation of psychiatric medications and supports their tapering and discontinuation when patients do not realize any clinical benefit. Various HHS agencies are aligning to evaluate prescription patterns for psychiatric medications, assess their benefits and potential harms, and emphasize the role of nonmedication treatment alternatives.

2026 Boston Globe Health Equity Summit

The Boston Globe sponsored the [Health Equity Summit](#), held on May 13 at Harvard University. The summit gathered health and life sciences ecosystem leaders, medical experts, community advocates, and journalists to engage in crucial conversations focused on resolving health disparities and fostering more inclusive health care. Replays of the day's events are available for viewing [here](#).

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Climate Change-Related Health Risks Disproportionately Afflict California Latinos

Although climate change negatively impacts all Californians, data show that Hispanic communities face disproportionately more serious outcomes regarding their health. A recent [analysis](#) published in *Health Affairs* highlights that current data systems fail to integrate health outcomes, climate exposure, and neighborhood-level vulnerability, which limits policymakers' ability to address the health care needs of California Latinos. The Analysis emphasizes the need to draw upon data from the publicly available [Latino Climate and Health Dashboard](#) to better understand the disparities between California's Latino and White non-Latino neighborhoods.

OCR Extends Deadline for Web and Mobility Access Compliance

On May 11, the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) published an Interim Final Rule that delayed the dates by which HHS funding recipients must conform their web content and mobile applications to HHS's accessibility standards under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 by one year. The specific compliance date depends upon the recipient's number of employees. HHS's Section 504 [rule](#), originally published on May 9, 2024, established, in part, standards for web content and mobile application accessibility to prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities.

OBBBA's Upcoming Changes to Medicaid and CHIP

[The One Big Beautiful Bill Act](#) (OBBBA), signed into law in July 2025, imposes significant eligibility, enrollment, and other policy changes for the Medicaid and CHIP programs. Notably, the 43 states that implemented Medicaid expansions/waivers under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) must implement work/community engagement requirements for those populations by Jan. 1, 2027. These states must also implement semi-annual (rather than annual) renewal periods for expansion enrollees. The most recent [annual survey](#) of state Medicaid/CHIP officials conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF) and Georgetown University opines that the OBBBA's policy changes will also lead to state budget constraints, which could mean further eligibility restrictions and reductions in benefits and provider reimbursement rates as they seek to cut back Medicaid spending.

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