

Health Disparities in the Medicare Population

Diabetes



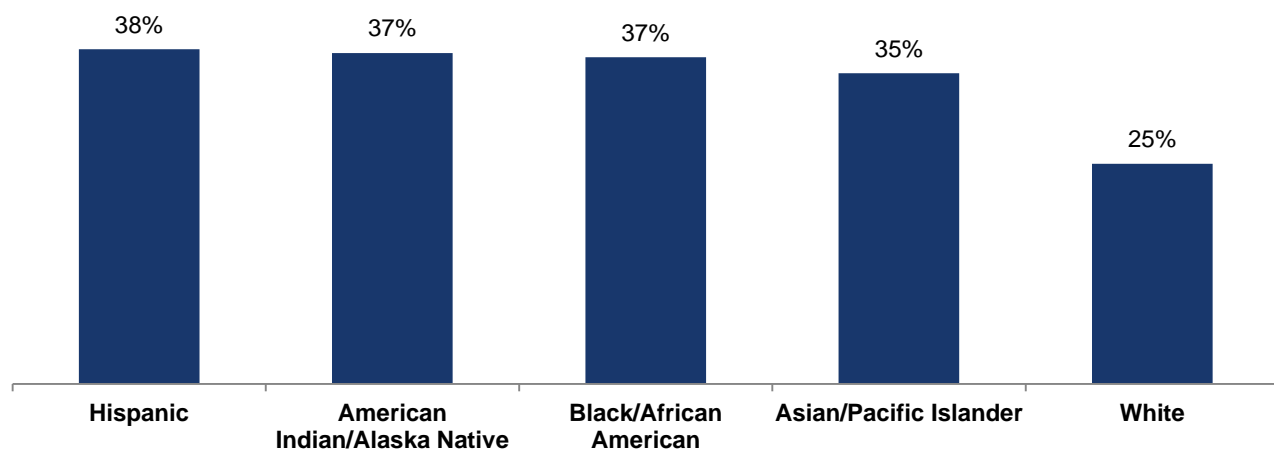
Diabetes is a chronic condition in which blood glucose (blood sugar) levels in the body are too high and can cause heart disease, blindness, kidney failure, and lower-extremity amputations.¹ The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) lists diabetes as the seventh leading cause of death in the United States.¹ According to the American Diabetes Association, 1.4 million Americans are diagnosed with diabetes every year.² Furthermore, 86 million Americans age 20 and older had pre-

diabetes in 2012, a condition where blood glucose levels are above the normal range but are not high enough for a diagnosis of diabetes.² People with pre-diabetes are also at increased risk for heart disease and stroke.²

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' Chronic Condition public-use data indicates that about 27% of all Medicare Fee-For-Service (FFS) beneficiaries had a diagnosis of diabetes in 2012.³ While the prevalence of diabetes is similar for both males (28%) and females (26%), racial and ethnic differences exist. As shown on the figure below, the prevalence of diabetes was higher among Medicare FFS beneficiaries who are Hispanic (38%), American Indian/Alaska Native (37%), Black/African American (37%), and Asian/Pacific Islander (35%) than their White (25%) counterparts.

Medicare Part B covers screenings to check for diabetes, however analysis of CMS claims data found that only 1.3% of Medicare beneficiaries took advantage of this benefit in 2013. [Medicare's Coverage of Diabetes Supplies & Services](#) explains coverage of diabetes screenings, supplies and services, as well as tips for staying healthy, and where to find more information.

Prevalence of Diabetes among Medicare Beneficiaries by Race/Ethnicity, 2012³



Source: Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Chronic Condition Data Warehouse (CCW)

Note: Population is limited to Medicare Fee-For-Service beneficiaries. RTI Race Code used for analysis. Racial categories of White, Black/African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Asian/Pacific Islander are classified as non-Hispanic. Hispanic ethnicity includes all race categories.

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/home/>
2. American Diabetes Association. <http://www.diabetes.org/diabetes-basics/statistics/>
3. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Chronic Conditions. <http://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Statistics-Trends-and-Reports/Chronic-Conditions/index.html>