

Health Disparities in the Medicare Population: Autism Spectrum Disorders

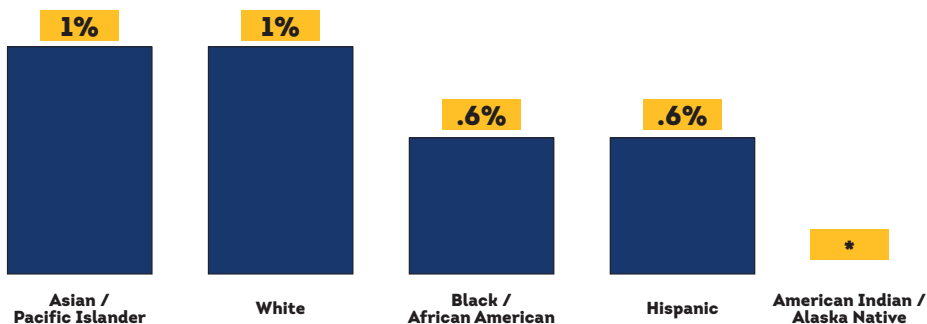
Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) includes multiple developmental disabilities. This chronic condition consists of a wide range of symptoms, skills, and levels of impairment resulting in social, communication, and behavioral challenges. Early intervention and behavioral treatment can optimize health and developmental outcomes for children diagnosed with ASD. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 1 in 68 children are living with ASD. ASD occurs in all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups, but is nearly five times more prevalent among males than females.¹ Adults with autism are at higher risk of developing other chronic conditions such as diabetes, coronary heart disease, seizure disorder and cancer.²



In 2014, 0.2% of all Medicare Fee-For-Service (FFS) beneficiaries and 0.9% of those less than 65 years of age had claims with a diagnosis of ASD.³ Among dual beneficiaries, those with both Medicare and Medicaid, who were less than 65 years old, 1.5% had claims with ASD. Within that population, ASD prevalence is higher among males (2.2%) than among females (0.7%). The figure below shows the prevalence of ASD among beneficiaries less than 65 years of age. Asian/Pacific Islander (1.0%) and White (1.0%) beneficiaries had a higher prevalence of ASD compared to Black/African American (0.6%) and Hispanic (0.6%) beneficiaries.

Medicare FFS Part B provides **Chronic Care Management Services** to beneficiaries with multiple chronic conditions. April is **National Autism Awareness Month**. The goal is promoting the awareness and inclusion of individuals with ASD to achieve the highest quality of life possible.

Prevalence of Autism Spectrum Disorders among Medicare Beneficiaries Less than 65 Years of Age by Race/Ethnicity, 2014



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.

** indicates that the data have been suppressed because there are fewer than 11 Medicare beneficiaries in the cell.

1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/facts.html>

2 National Institutes of Health, National Library of Medicine. National Center for Biotechnology Information. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21905805>

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>