

Health Disparities in the Medicare Population

Depression

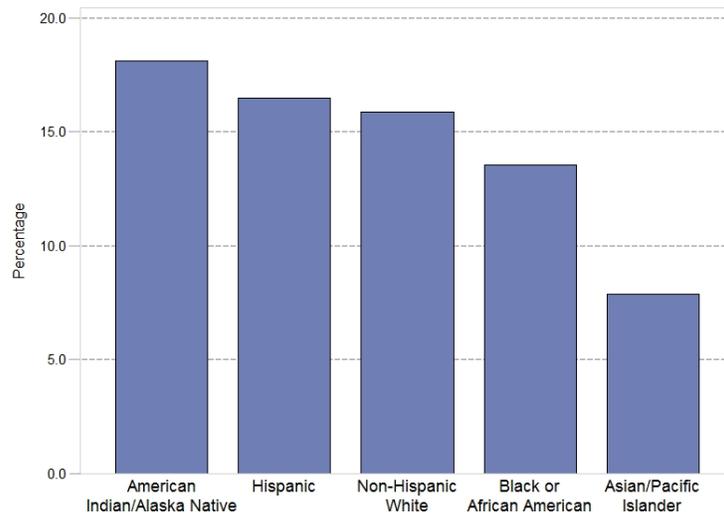


Depression is a serious medical condition that is treatable. A person who is depressed has feelings of sadness or anxiety that lasts for weeks at a time and may experience problems with working, sleeping, eating, and enjoying life. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 20% of people age 55 years or older experience some type of mental health concern, and that one in six adults over the age of 65 are affected by depression.¹

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' Chronic Condition public-use data indicates that 15% of all Medicare Fee-For-Service beneficiaries had a diagnosis of depression in 2012.² As indicated in the chart below, there are disparities associated with claims related to depression. American Indian/Alaska Native beneficiaries had a higher prevalence of depression-related claims than other racial groups while the rate for Asian/Pacific Islander beneficiaries was substantially lower.

Annual depression screenings are fully covered by Medicare Part B, however, an internal CMS claims' analysis found that less than 0.5% of Medicare beneficiaries took advantage of this benefit in 2012. Visit [Medicare & Your Mental Health Benefits](#) to learn more about covered services to diagnose and treat mental health conditions.

Medicare Beneficiaries with Claims Related to Depression, by Race/Ethnicity, 2012



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.

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Mental Health. http://www.cdc.gov/aging/pdf/mental_health.pdf
2. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Chronic Conditions. <http://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Statistics-Trends-and-Reports/Chronic-Conditions/index.html>