

# Health Disparities in the Medicare Population

## Osteoporosis

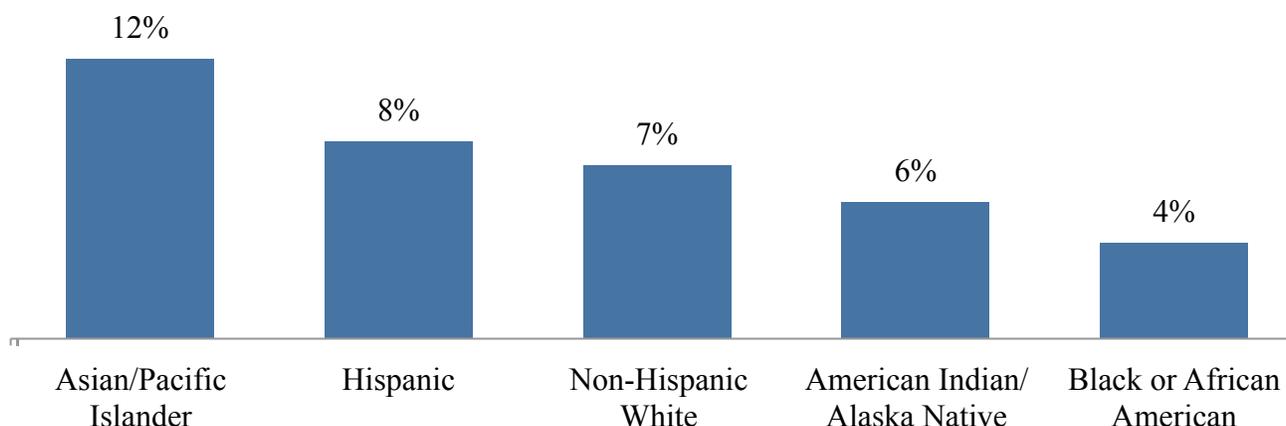


Osteoporosis is a chronic condition that weakens bones, especially those in the neck, back, and hips. It is considered a silent disease because an individual frequently does not know he or she has it until they break a bone. The early stage of osteoporosis is marked by low bone density which can be identified by bone mass measurements and managed with lifestyle changes. The National Institute on Aging reports that 40 million Americans were living with low bone density in 2012.<sup>1</sup> Although 10 million individuals from this at-risk population were under the age of 50, the likelihood of developing osteoporosis rapidly increases with age, especially in women.<sup>2</sup>

In 2012, among all beneficiaries receiving Medicare covered services, 6% of all Fee-For-Service Medicare beneficiaries and 7% of those over the age of 65 had a diagnosis of osteoporosis. Among beneficiaries over age 65, 11% of women were diagnosed with osteoporosis.<sup>3</sup> Asian/Pacific Islander beneficiaries had a higher prevalence of osteoporosis-related claims than other racial groups while the rate for African American beneficiaries was lower, as shown on the chart below.

Medicare Part B covers bone mass measurements for people at risk of developing osteoporosis yet only 7% of beneficiaries had this test in 2012. [Your Guide to Medicare's Preventive Services](#) describes screening benefits that can help beneficiaries stay healthy. Watch [Medicare & You: High Blood Pressure and Osteoporosis](#) to learn more.

### Medicare Beneficiaries over Age 65 with Claims Related to Osteoporosis, 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. NIH Senior Health. Osteoporosis. <http://nihseniorhealth.gov/osteoporosis/whatisosteoporosis/01.html>
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Osteoporosis Among Adults in the United States: National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 2011-2012. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db133.pdf>
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>