Health Equity Challenges and CMS Resources to Help Address Them

Barrier: Distrust of medical system

Known Challenges
- Past abuses
- Microaggressions
- Discrimination
- Racism
- Lack of culturally competent care
- Ableism
- Transphobia

CMS Resources to Help
- Support of culturally competent outreach and care
- Technical assistance for trusted community partners
- Education for health care providers

Barrier: Quality of care

Known Challenges
- Implicit bias in health care
- Algorithmic bias in artificial intelligence
- Lack of investment on quality initiatives for underserved populations

CMS Resources to Help
- Education for health care providers
- Investigation of algorithmic biases
- Information on health services and outcomes for minority populations
- Modernizing Health Care to Improve Physical Accessibility Medicare MLN Training
- Improving Health Care Quality for LGBTQ People MLN Training
- Achieving Health Equity MLN Training

Barrier: Language access

Known Challenges
- Cultural issues including:
  - Lack of culturally competent messaging
  - Lack of cultural sensitivity from providers
  - Overly complex translations
- Unfamiliar words or phrases

CMS Resources to Help
- Coverage to Care resources
- Materials in multiple languages
- Education about right to translators

Barrier: Access to health care

Known Challenges
- Proximity to health care facilities
- Lack of transportation
- Lack of accessible medical offices
- Lack of accessible medical technology
- Wait times
- Cost
- Lack of health insurance or comprehensive coverage
- Lack of sick leave or childcare assistance

CMS Resources to Help
- Education about rights of people with disabilities
- Telehealth flexibilities
- Rural flexibilities to fight COVID-19
- Modernizing Health Care to Improve Physical Accessibility Medicare MLN Training

Barrier: Data availability to identify and address disparities

Known Challenges
- Limited data on race and providers, specifically isolation trends of health and health care
- Insufficient data on underserved populations
- Insufficient data for health disparities
- Insufficient data on older data

CMS Resources to Help
- CMS Equity Plan for Medicare
- CMS Disparities Impact Statement
- CMS Health Equity Award
- Minority Research Grant Program
- Achieving Health Equity Medicare Learning Network (MLN) Training
- Required “health equity impact” section in CMCS A-19s
- New CCIIO No Surprises Act health equity regulations
- Health equity considerations in Conditions of Participation
- Inventory of resources for standardized demographic and language data collection

Barrier: Lack of health equity considerations within policies and regulations

Known Challenges
- Lack of equity lens applied when developing new policies
- Lack of public feedback during open comment periods
- Unintentional inclusion of policies that could lead to or worsen health disparities

CMS Resources to Help
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Barrier: Technology access

Known Challenges
- Lack of broadband access
- Unaffordable broadband
- Print materials for community worker use
- Computer literacy issues
- Lack of accessible technology

CMS Resources to Help
- Coverage to Care telehealth resources
- Rural flexibilities to fight COVID-19
- Modernizing Health Care to Improve Physical Accessibility Medicare MLN Training

Barrier: Health literacy

Known Challenges
- Confusing terms used in health coverage
- Changes to plans, provider directories, formularies
- Being new to health care services or not a regular consumer of health care
- Language or cultural differences
- Hard to understand materials for patient populations

CMS Resources to Help
- Coverage to Care resources
- Connected Care resources
- Your Medicare Coverage
- Go.cms.gov/omh

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