



**Reducing disparities in
care and outcomes**



Achieving health equity is a community-wide effort.

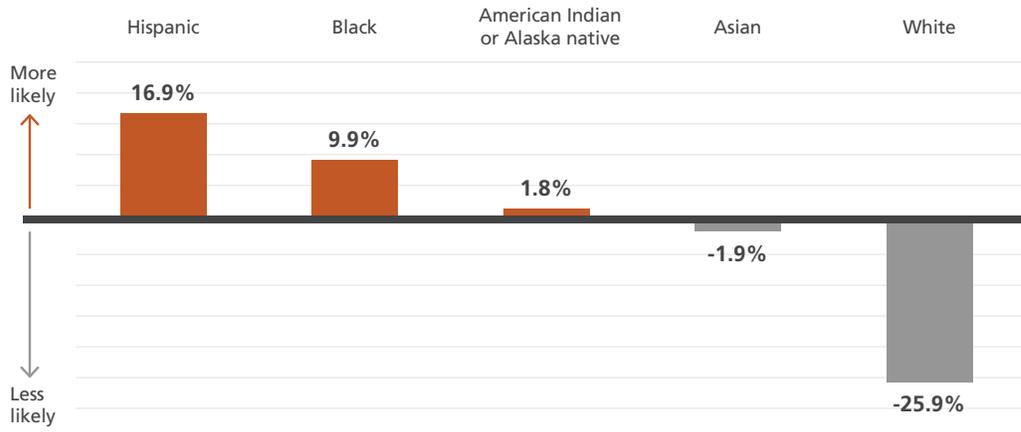
Ensuring equitable access to care is one of the most persistent challenges in health care.

The mission of OptumRx® is to help people live healthier lives and help make the health system work better for everyone. We work continuously to identify and address the challenges related to disparities in care.

Health care disparities can occur due to differences in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability status, socioeconomic status and geographic location. These disparities manifest in many ways. For example, Hispanic and Black people are more likely to be uninsured and delay treatment due to cost concerns.¹ As a result, they incur higher rates of chronic disease and premature death compared to whites.

While these disparities have existed for decades, COVID-19 further exposed the problem.

Difference in likelihood to die of COVID-19 by race²



At the level of pharmacy care services, OptumRx focuses on three key areas in its efforts to drive health equity:

- Increasing affordability
- Improving access
- Advocating for better practices

Increasing affordability

Pharmacy is a critical component of health care. To expand health equity, we must find ways to make prescription drugs more affordable to those in need.

The OptumRx[®] Critical Drug Affordability Program works to lower prices for five key classes of medications considered life-sustaining. These include insulins, anticoagulants and HIV treatments. For each class, we chose the lowest-cost option available and built it into a convenient plan. Clients can choose to bring the member cost-share down to as low as \$0, helping make sure these critical medications are affordable for members.

OptumRx helps make drugs more affordable with **MyScript Finder™**, a digital tool within the OptumRx member website and mobile app. This tool enables users to comparison shop for medications and look up prices at any time. It calculates the patient's coinsurance or copay amount and suggests cost-saving alternative medications when clinically appropriate.

Another tool for helping make medication affordable is discount cards. The pandemic and resulting rise in unemployment caused many to lose health benefits including prescription drug coverage. We designed the [Optum Perks Prescription Relief Program](#) to provide discounts for people during a loss of insurance or prescription coverage. This free program works automatically for OptumRx members who are termed and have lapsed coverage. It provides them with ongoing savings on prescriptions and continued access to mail order when their coverage ends.

Advocating for better practices.

To better serve all populations, OptumRx product teams use health equity criteria as part of the standard product development process. Likewise, as part of any drug review, we incorporate known health disparities and perform audits on existing solutions.

Moreover, we're working with our third-party pharmaceutical and therapeutics committees to make sure we're all considering equity at every stage of the product development process. We are also evaluating standard industry practices for bias. Our expertise in data and analytics helps us address disparities in care. We evaluate our clinical offerings for signals of health inequity to drive improvements.

Improving access.

Ensuring affordable access to medication is vital to reducing disparities in care and outcomes. Offering lower costs and greater convenience, OptumRx home delivery of medications can boost medication adherence, which

can contribute to improved outcomes. Genoa Healthcare is an Optum business that runs 600 pharmacies within community health clinics nationwide. They're improving the quality of life for individuals living with behavioral health and other complex health issues.

In addition to nationwide initiatives, we are also working to improve access at the state and local level. In Arizona, we're leveraging expertise in specialty pharmacy to administer the Drug Assistance Program. DAP is a federally funded program under the Ryan White Act. Designed to help vulnerable populations with unmet nonclinical needs, the program focuses on helping those with HIV/AIDS.

Compared to other races and ethnicities in the U.S., people of color account for a higher proportion of new HIV diagnoses and people living with HIV.³

In partnership with the state of Kansas, OptumRx is providing pro bono access to medication. Using our supply chain resources, legislative influence and community relationships, we helped develop the Kansas Drug Donation Program. In 2020, OptumRx donated \$30 million in unused medications.

As a leading provider of pharmacy care services, OptumRx has a key role to play in making health care more accessible and available to all.

While we have made measurable progress, we still have much to do. [Explore more of our ongoing efforts](#) to educate and engage the broader community of patients, providers and sponsors about how to address health inequities.

Sources:

1. Ndugga N. [Disparities in health and health care: 5 key questions and answers](#). Kaiser Family Foundation. May 11, 2021.
2. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. [Disparities in deaths from COVID-19](#). Updated Dec. 10, 2020.
3. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. HIV and African American people. Last reviewed Sept. 23, 2021



To learn more about how Optum is addressing health equity, visit optum.com/healthequity



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