

# Medicaid's Role in Addressing Racial Health Disparities

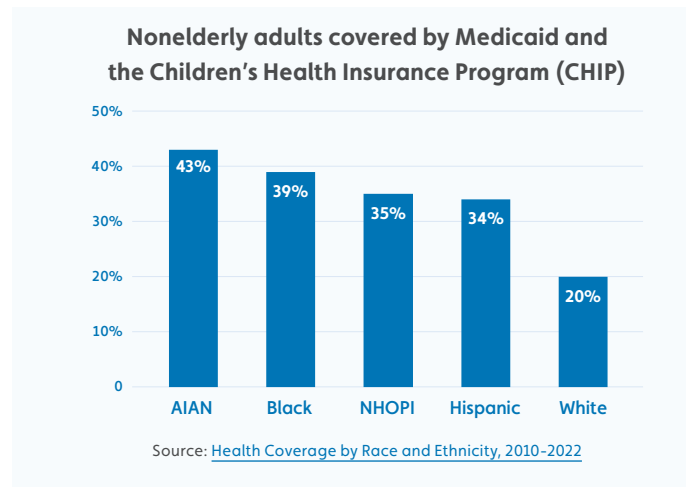
Medicaid is an essential source of health care coverage for American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN), Black, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (NHOPI), and Hispanic people. By supporting access to preventive and essential health care services, Medicaid promotes health equity and reduces racial disparities in health outcomes.

## By the Numbers

**43%** of AIAN, **39%** of Black, **35%** of NHOPI, and **34%** of Hispanic nonelderly adults are covered by Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) compared to **20%** of white nonelderly adults.

AIAN, Black, NHOPI, and Hispanic people made up almost two-thirds of the **6.4 million** uninsured individuals that were eligible for Medicaid but not enrolled as of 2022.

Medicaid covers nearly half of all births in the U.S., including over two-thirds of births among Black and AIAN individuals, who experience higher rates of pregnancy-related mortality and morbidity than white individuals.



## How Medicaid Drives Health Equity and Reduces Racial Health Disparities

Medicaid and managed care organizations (MCOs) play an important role in reducing racial health disparities by expanding access to health coverage and offering innovative health equity initiatives.

**Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act has been shown to improve health outcomes and reduce racial disparities.**

### Expanding health coverage

- **Expanding targeted benefits within Medicaid**, such as enhancing pregnancy and postpartum services, providing coverage of community health workers, and expanding mental health services, have been shown to **reduce health disparities**.
- **Section 1115 waivers** offer states **additional opportunities to expand eligibility** and test new equity-related initiatives within Medicaid, including supporting populations with unmet social needs or community reentry for individuals who have been incarcerated.

### Strengthening health equity initiatives

- MCOs **provide services to address health related social needs**, such as screening enrollees for behavioral and social conditions, providing referrals to social services, and partnering with community-based organizations.
- MCOs are **working towards more equitable coverage and care** by achieving national standards for culturally competent care, conducting staff training on health equity and implicit bias, and reporting data on racial and ethnic bias.



## Opportunities to Improve Health Equity Through Medicaid

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Expanding Medicaid coverage and improving education and outreach efforts can help address challenges associated with the Medicaid coverage gap and redeterminations process.

### Challenge

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Almost **two-thirds** of the uninsured population that are eligible for Medicaid but not enrolled are **AIAN, Black, NHOPI, or Hispanic**.

In states that have not expanded Medicaid, over **6 in 10** non-elderly people in the coverage gap are **AIAN, Black, NHOPI, or Hispanic**.

AIAN, Black, NHOPI, and Hispanic people are more likely to **lose coverage during the Medicaid unwinding process**.

### Opportunity

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**Education and informed outreach** to communities where people are eligible for Medicaid but not enrolled can help reduce coverage and health disparities. MCOs can work with trusted community leaders to help **build trust and encourage individuals to enroll in Medicaid**.

By adopting Medicaid expansion, states can help close the coverage gap and **reduce health disparities** for AIAN, Black, NHOPI, and Hispanic people.

Ongoing education and outreach about **renewals and the opportunity to re-apply to Medicaid at any time** will help protect AIAN, Black, NHOPI, and Hispanic people from losing coverage.

**The Modern Medicaid Alliance and our partners support a strong, sustainable Medicaid program that provides high-quality health care to individuals who need it most and helps reduce racial health disparities in coverage and health outcomes.**

**For more information on the Modern Medicaid Alliance, visit [ModernMedicaid.org](https://ModernMedicaid.org).**