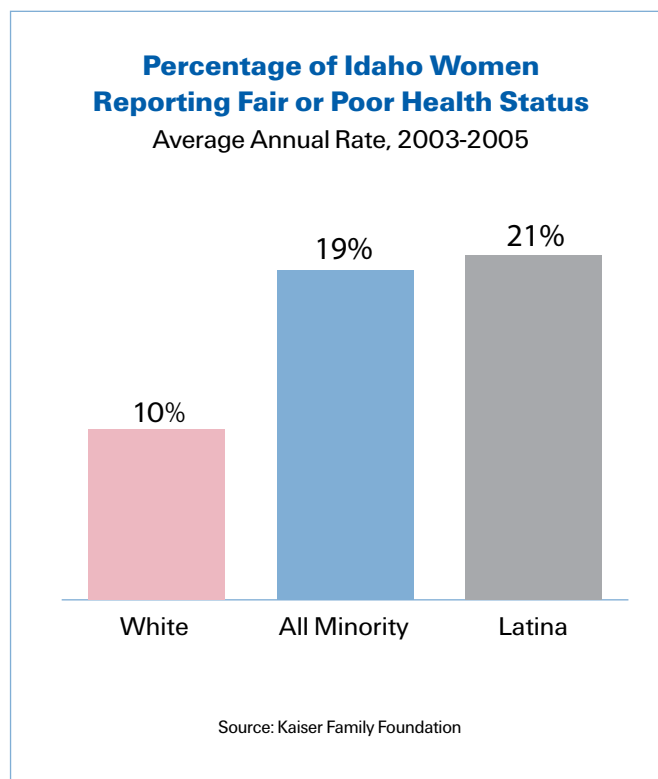


Health Care Discrimination Harms Communities of Color in Idaho

Rapidly escalating medical costs and insurance premiums, rising numbers of people without coverage, and rip-offs by monopolistic private insurers have dominated the Idaho political dialogue surrounding President Barack Obama's plans for comprehensive health reform. On Capitol Hill, the American public is witnessing an historic clash of Washington special interest groups fighting to protect their revenue streams. Yet no one has more at stake than the 103 million people of color in the U.S.,¹ including the 219,000 in Idaho.² Throughout the nation's history, communities of color have been forced to accept health care that bears little resemblance to what is experienced by members of more advantaged groups. For people of color in Idaho and nationwide, life is shorter, chronic illness more prevalent and disability more common. These are predictable

side-effects of a health care system that provides these communities in Idaho with narrower opportunities for regular health services, fewer treatment options and lower-quality care.

Despite growing evidence of racial disparities in health status and medical services, no system exists in Idaho for collecting comprehensive state and local data on disparities. As a result, many questions about the health of people of color in Idaho remain unanswered. For example, it is not known how many African Americans or Latinos (compared to whites) have forgone care because they can't afford it. Life expectancy for African Americans in Idaho is 6 to 10 years shorter than that of whites.³ About 34 percent of Latinos in Idaho are uninsured, compared with 15 percent of whites.⁴



Idaho Disparities

- In Idaho, 42 percent of Latina women received no early prenatal care, compared with 36 percent for African Americans and 26 percent for whites.⁵
- The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that 7.8 percent of Idaho's labor force is unemployed.⁶
- In Idaho, 217,759 people were uninsured in 2007.⁷
- About 34 percent of Latinos in Idaho are uninsured, almost two and a half times the rate for whites.⁸
- Health insurance premiums for Idaho working families have skyrocketed, increasing 122 percent from 2000 to 2007.⁹
- The full cost of employer-sponsored health insurance in Idaho is projected to grow at an annual rate of 8.6 percent, compared to a 1.1 percent increase in income.¹⁰
- About 120,000 working non-elderly adults in Idaho lack health insurance. That comprises 72 percent of the total non-elderly uninsured population.¹¹

Idaho Racial Disparities by Health Indicator			
Health Indicator	White	African American	Latino
Infant Mortality Rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	6.1	-	6.2
Annual AIDS Case Rate (per 100,000 population)	1.7	31.8	2.9
Living in Poverty	11%	-	29%
Enrolled in Medicaid	10%	-	21%
Uninsured	15%	-	34%

Note: - denotes insufficient data in state.

Source: The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. "Key Health Indicators by Race/Ethnicity and State," 2009 update.

Endnotes

¹ US Census Bureau, "USA QuickFacts," 2008. Accessed at <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/00000.html>.

² Ibid.

³ National Center for Health Statistics, "Health, United States, 2008 With Chartbook" Hyattsville, MD: 2009.

⁴ Kaiser Family Foundation, "Key Health Indicators by Race/Ethnicity and State," 2009 update.

⁵ Cara James, et al., "Putting Women's Health Care Disparities on the Map: Examining Racial and Ethnic Disparities at the State Level," Kaiser Family Foundation, June 2009. Accessed at <http://www.kff.org/minorityhealth/upload/7886.pdf>.

⁶ Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Local Area Unemployment Statistics." Accessed at <http://www.bls.gov/web/lauhsthl.htm>.

⁷ Kaiser Family Foundation, "Health Insurance Coverage of the Total Population, states (2006-2007), U.S. (2007)." Accessed at <http://www.statehealthfacts.org/comparebar.jsp?ind=125&cat=3>.

⁸ Kaiser Family Foundation, "Key Health Indicators by Race/Ethnicity and State," 2009 update.

⁹ Families USA, "Premiums versus Paychecks," September 2008. Accessed at <http://www.familiesusa.org/resources/publications/reports/premiums-vs-paychecks-2008.html>.

¹⁰ New America Foundation, "The State of State Health: The Cost of Failure (2007)" Accessed at <http://statehealth.newamerica.net/>.

¹¹ Peter Harbage, Ben Furnas, "Health Care in Crisis," Center for American Progress, May 4, 2009. Accessed at http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/05/working_uninsured_map.html.