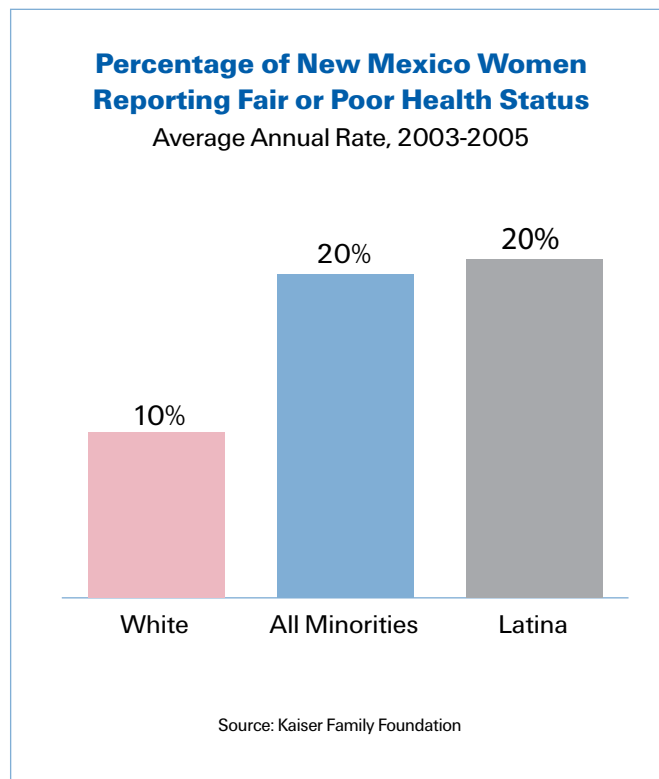


Health Care Discrimination Harms Communities of Color in New Mexico

Rapidly escalating medical costs and insurance premiums, rising numbers of people without coverage, and rip-offs by monopolistic private insurers have dominated the New Mexico 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 1,145,000 in New Mexico.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 New Mexico 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 New Mexico with narrower opportunities for regular health services, fewer treatment options and lower-quality care.

Life expectancy for African Americans in New Mexico is 6 to 10 years shorter than that of whites.³ About 28 percent of Latinos in New Mexico are uninsured, compared with 18 percent of whites.⁴ Despite growing evidence of racial disparities in health status and medical services, no system exists in state for collecting comprehensive state and local data on disparities. As a result, many questions about the health of minorities in state 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.



New Mexico Disparities

- In New Mexico, about 10 percent of Latino adults have been diagnosed with diabetes, almost 50 percent higher than the rate for Whites.⁵
- In New Mexico, 41 percent of babies born to Native American women received no prenatal care.⁶
- At the same time 26 percent of Latina women received no early prenatal care, compared with 24 percent for African Americans and 19 percent for whites.⁷
- The infant mortality rate for Native Americans in New Mexico is 30 percent higher than that of Latinos, and 10 percent higher than that of whites.⁸
- The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that 6.5 percent of New Mexico's labor force is unemployed.⁹
- In New Mexico, 441,351 people were uninsured in 2007.¹⁰
- About 28 percent of Latinos in New Mexico are uninsured, more than 50 percent higher than the rate for whites.¹¹
- Health insurance premiums for New Mexico working families have skyrocketed, increasing 92 percent from 2000 to 2007.¹²
- The full cost of employer-sponsored health insurance in state is projected to grow at an annual rate of 9.7 percent, compared to a 1.9 percent increase in income.¹³
- About 230,000 working non-elderly adults in New Mexico lack health insurance. That comprises 63 percent of the total non-elderly uninsured population.¹⁴

New Mexico Racial and Ethnic Disparities by Health Indicator					
Health Indicator	African American	American Indian	Asian/Pacific Islander	Latino	White
Infant Mortality Rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	13.5	7.3	1.8	5.6	4.6
Diabetes Mortality Rate (deaths per 100,000 population)	42.4	60.4	36.6	40.4	19.5
Annual AIDS Case Rate (per 100,000 population)	18.2	6.8	5.9	8.7	5.7

Source: New Mexico Department of Health, "Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities Report Card," 2008.

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 Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Public Health and Science, Office of Women's Health. Quick Health Data Online, 2008.

⁶ National Center for Health Statistics, "Health, United States, 2008 With Chartbook" Hyattsville, MD: 2009.

⁷ 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>.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Local Area Unemployment Statistics." Accessed at <http://www.bls.gov/web/lauhsthl.htm>.

¹⁰ 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>.

¹¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, "Key Health Indicators by Race/Ethnicity and State," 2009 update.

¹² Families USA, "Premiums versus Paychecks," September 2008. Accessed at <http://www.familiesusa.org/resources/publications/reports/premiums-vs-paychecks-2008.html>.

¹³ New America Foundation, "The State of State Health: The Cost of Failure (2007)" Accessed at <http://statehealth.newamerica.net/>.

¹⁴ 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.