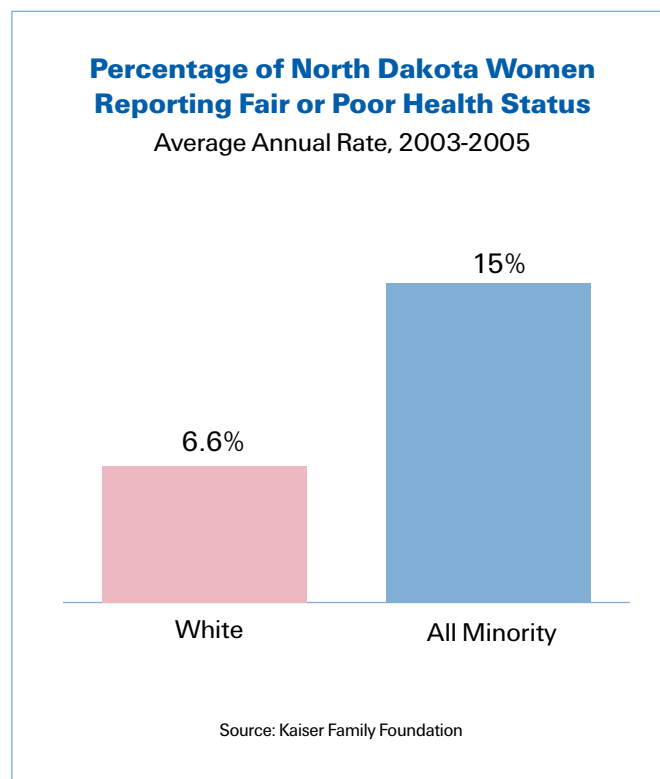


# Health Care Discrimination Harms Communities of Color in North Dakota

Rapidly escalating medical costs and insurance premiums, rising numbers of people without coverage, and rip-offs by monopolistic private insurers have dominated the North Dakota 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.,<sup>1</sup> including the 65,000 in North Dakota.<sup>2</sup> 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 North Dakota 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 North Dakota 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 state for collecting comprehensive state and local data on disparities. As a result, many questions about the health of people of color 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. Life expectancy for African Americans in North Dakota is 6 to 10 years shorter than that of whites.<sup>3</sup> About 31 percent of non-whites in North Dakota are uninsured, compared with 10 percent of whites.<sup>4</sup>



## North Dakota Disparities

- In North Dakota, 40 percent of Latina women received no early prenatal care, compared with 36 percent for African Americans and 21 percent for whites.<sup>5</sup>
- The infant mortality rate for Native Americans in North Dakota is more than 40 percent higher than for whites.<sup>6</sup>
- The mortality rate for Native Americans in North Dakota is almost double the rate for whites.<sup>7</sup>
- In North Dakota, 68,412 people were uninsured in 2007.<sup>8</sup>
- About 31 percent of non-whites in North Dakota are uninsured, more than three times the rate for whites.<sup>9</sup>
- Health insurance premiums for North Dakota working families have skyrocketed, increasing 74 percent from 2000 to 2007.<sup>10</sup>
- The full cost of employer-sponsored health insurance in North Dakota is projected to grow at an annual rate of 7.4 percent, compared to a 1.0 percent increase in income.<sup>11</sup>
- About 40,000 working non-elderly adults in state lack health insurance. That comprises 73 percent of the total non-elderly uninsured population.<sup>12</sup>

### North Dakota Racial Disparities by Health Indicator

Health Indicator	White	African American	Latino	Other
Annual AIDS Case Rate (per 100,000 population)	1	22.3	11.2	-
Living in Poverty	9.5%	-	-	34%
Enrolled in Medicaid	6.1%	-	-	28%
Uninsured	9.7%	-	-	31%

Note: - denotes insufficient data in state.

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

## Endnotes

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

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

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

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

<sup>5</sup> 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>.

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

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> 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>.

<sup>9</sup> Kaiser Family Foundation, "Key Health Indicators by Race/Ethnicity and State," 2009 update.

<sup>10</sup> Families USA, "Premiums versus Paychecks," September 2008. Accessed at <http://www.familiesusa.org/resources/publications/reports/premiums-vs-paychecks-2008.html>.

<sup>11</sup> New America Foundation, "The State of State Health: The Cost of Failure (2007)" Accessed at <http://statehealth.newamerica.net/>.

<sup>12</sup> 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](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/05/working_uninsured_map.html).