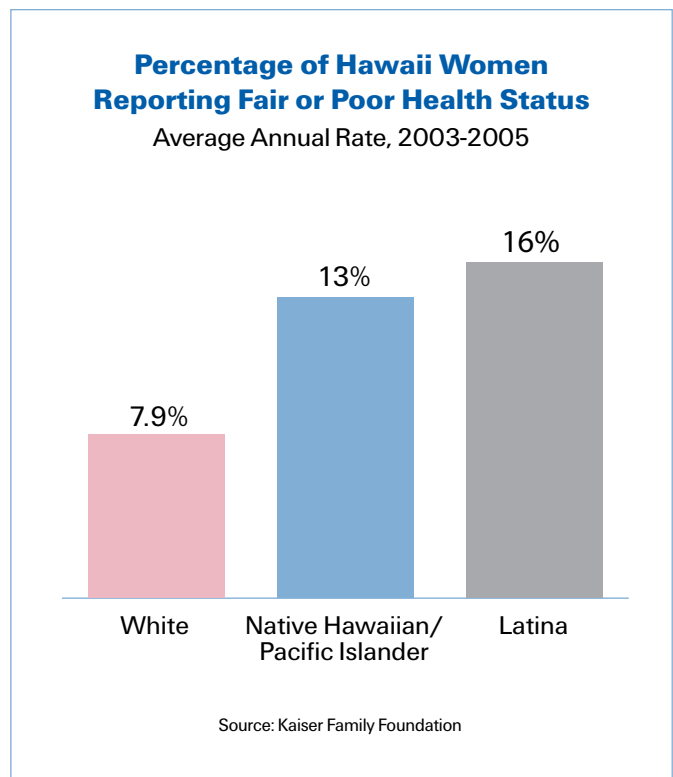
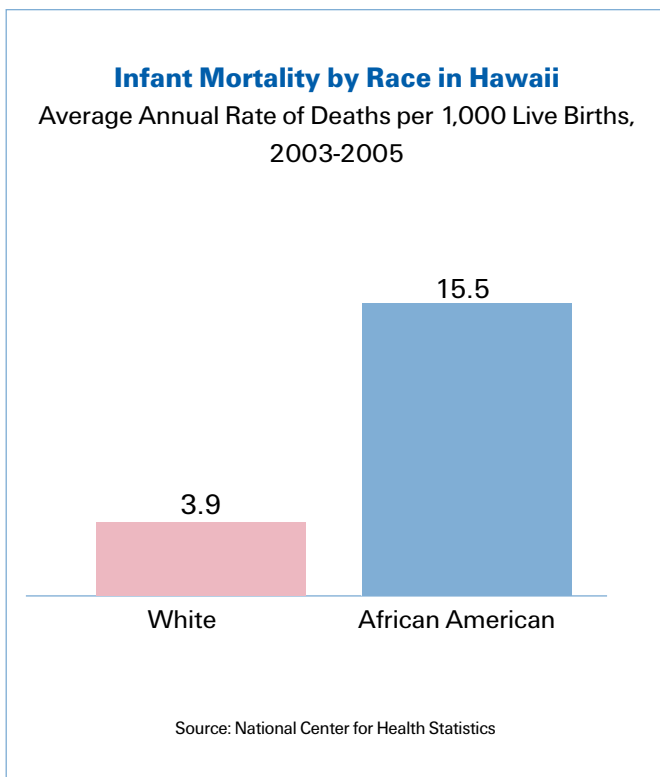


Health Care Discrimination Harms Communities of Color in Hawaii

Rapidly escalating medical costs and insurance premiums, rising numbers of people without coverage, and rip-offs by monopolistic private insurers have dominated the Hawaii 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 970,000 in Hawaii.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 Hawaii 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 Hawaii with narrower opportunities for regular health services, fewer treatment options and lower-quality care.

The infant mortality rate, a leading indicator of community health and well-being, illustrates the huge health disparities between whites and other racial and ethnic groups in Hawaii. The infant death rate for whites is 4 per 1,000 live births, compared with 15.5 for African Americans.³ Life expectancy for African Americans in Hawaii is 6 to 10 years shorter than that of whites.⁴ About 13 percent of Latinos are uninsured, compared with 10 percent of whites.⁵



Hawaii Data Points

- In Hawaii, about 7 percent of Latino adults have been diagnosed with diabetes, 35 percent higher than the rate for whites.⁶
- Among adult Latinos in Hawaii, 12 percent have asthma, compared to 6 percent of whites.⁷
- The infant mortality rate for African Americans in Hawaii is almost four times that of whites.⁸
- The mortality rate for Latinos in Hawaii is 85 percent higher than for whites.⁹
- Despite growing evidence of racial disparities in health status and medical services, no system exists in Hawaii for collecting comprehensive state and local data on disparities. As a result, many questions about the health of minorities in Hawaii 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.
- The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that 7.4 percent of Hawaii's labor force is unemployed.¹⁰
- In Hawaii, 103,025 people were uninsured in 2007.¹¹
- About 13 percent of Latinos in Hawaii are uninsured, more than 30 percent greater than the rate for whites.¹²
- Health insurance premiums for Hawaii working families have skyrocketed, increasing 65 percent from 2000 to 2007.¹³
- The full cost of employer-sponsored health insurance in Hawaii is projected to grow at an annual rate of 5.9 percent, compared to a 1.7 percent increase in income.¹⁴
- About 50,000 working non-elderly adults in Hawaii do not have health insurance. That comprises 68 percent of the total non-elderly uninsured population.¹⁵

Hawaii Racial and Ethnic Disparities by Health Indicator

Health Indicator	White	African American	Latino	Other
Infant Mortality Rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	4.0	15.5	7.9	-
Diabetes Mortality Rate (deaths per 100,000 population)	11.0	-	-	16.3
Annual AIDS Case Rate (per 100,000 population)	14.4	15.9	15.7	-
Living in Poverty	10%	-	16%	17%
Enrolled in Medicaid	8.5%	-	13%	12%
Uninsured	9.9%	-	13%	9.2%

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 Ibid.

⁵ Kaiser Family Foundation, "Key Health Indicators by Race/Ethnicity and State," 2009 update.

⁶ Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Public Health and Science, Office of Women's Health. Quick Health Data Online, 2008.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ National Center for Health Statistics, "Health, United States, 2008 With Chartbook" Hyattsville, MD: 2009.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Local Area Unemployment Statistics." Accessed at <http://www.bls.gov/web/lauhsthl.htm>.

¹¹ 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>.

¹² Kaiser Family Foundation, "Key Health Indicators by Race/Ethnicity and State," 2009 update.

¹³ Families USA, "Premiums versus Paychecks," September 2008. Accessed at <http://www.familiesusa.org/resources/publications/reports/premiums-vs-paychecks-2008.html>.

¹⁴ New America Foundation, "The State of State Health: The Cost of Failure (2007)" Accessed at <http://statehealth.newamerica.net/>.

¹⁵ 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.