

Health Equity Policy Agenda

CVS HEALTH BELIEVES THAT EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE A FAIR AND JUST OPPORTUNITY TO BE AS HEALTHY AS POSSIBLE.

That's why we are committed to advancing health equity for our colleagues, consumers and members by improving trust, access and quality of health for historically marginalized communities.

Public policy plays an important role in improving health equity. Governmental support for these policies can accelerate the work of the health care sector in addressing the health disparities that exist today.



Increase access to affordable health care. Our Project Health program has brought no-cost health screenings and health care resources to historically marginalized communities for nearly 20 years. In 2022, Project Health provided \$5.5M in free medical services, including free health screenings, wellness information and consultations in underserved communities nationwide. Since the program's inception, it has delivered more than \$139 million in free medical services to more than 1.1 million participants with nearly 4 million biometric screenings performed. Our COVID-19 vaccine strategy specifically focused on equity distribution. We worked with our network of community-based leaders and nonprofit organizations to provide COVID-19 vaccine access and education in vulnerable communities, with a focus on Black and Hispanic populations. Policies are needed to increase access to affordable health care that will:

- **Simplify enrollment and renewal processes in Medicaid.** We support the CMS proposed regulation focused on simplifying the enrollment process for Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program.
- **Address inequities in women's health:** We're addressing period poverty and equity pricing for women's health products as part of our cross-enterprise efforts to advance health equity.
- **Support coverage expansions.** We support all states expanding Medicaid as authorized by the Affordable Care Act, including supporting recent states that have adopted expansion. We also support all states adopting the state option to provide 12 months postpartum Medicaid coverage and supported recent state policy decisions to do so.
- **Expand access to pharmacy-based services.** We support H.R. 7213, which would secure funding for testing, assessment and treatment services at eligible pharmacies for Medicare beneficiaries. We also support state legislation aimed at increasing pharmacy-based hormonal contraceptive, nicotine cessation, HIV prevention and point-of-care testing and treatment services.
- **Increase access to affordable behavioral health care.** We support policies that allow additional types of behavioral health providers to be covered by insurance. Additionally, we support cross-state licensure of mental health professionals and policies that expand access to high quality mental health services for youth, integrate behavioral health needs into pediatric primary care settings and improve access to youth suicide prevention programs and crisis services.



Incentivize culturally responsive health care delivery. Patients should feel safe, understood and accepted by their health care providers. We are working to build culturally responsive health care delivery systems to improve health equity. We recently launched the CVS Health® Community Equity Alliance to expand the community health workforce and enhance connections between health care institutions and communities to address disparities in heart health and mental health. Our Medicare multicultural care initiative helps Black and Latino members manage their diabetes and hypertension using culturally responsive approaches to care management. Additionally, our clinical trials team is taking a thoughtful approach to engaging underrepresented populations in clinical trial studies. These efforts can be furthered through government policies that **increase training on implicit and explicit bias, racism and discrimination for employees in provider settings.** Many of these policies are included in the Federal Omnibus and Advancing Maternal Health Equity Under Medicaid Act legislation and should be supported by Congress.



Address the social barriers to health care. We are committed to combatting social factors within the communities we serve. Through community-centered investments, our Health Zones initiative aims to shape a more equitable and healthy future in communities, meeting residents' most pressing needs across workforce training, nutrition, transportation and health care. Additionally, since 1997, we have invested over \$1.2 billion in affordable housing developments that also work with community partners to connect residents to social, behavioral health and addiction recovery services. Government can further combat social barriers to health care by supporting policies that:

- **Expand access to non-clinical health workers, including community health workers, doulas and peer support specialists.** Policy should focus on simplifying training and standardizing credentialing and reimbursement policies for these providers.

- **Expand access to telemedicine services, where clinically appropriate**, such as within Medicare and pre- and post-natal care.
- **Expand Medicare supplemental benefits (SSBCI)** to allow Medicare Advantage plans to provide benefits to beneficiaries based on income status.
- **Support community-based Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) solutions**, such as those described in the Social Determinants Accelerator Act, the CARING for Social Determinants Act and the LINC to Address Social Needs Act.



Patient demographic data collection and reporting. Twenty years ago, we led the way as one of the first health insurers to collect race and ethnicity data. We knew we couldn't begin to address health disparities without stratifying our health data by demographic factors. We use member demographic data to help identify members most in need of additional services to achieve their best health outcome. Our members are made aware of our data practices, and we keep their data and information confidential. We have internal data governance practices to keep members' data secure. More robust data collection and reporting efforts are needed across the health care sector and should include the collection of patient race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, language, gender identity, disability status, income and geography. These efforts can be accelerated through government policies that **standardize the types of demographic information collected across federal programs.**