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COVID-19 and the Impact on Communities of Color: Our Nation's Inequities Exposed

May 20, 2020

Barbara Ferrer, PhD, MPH, MEd
LA County COVID-19 Testing by Area Poverty (ELR only)
Age-Adjusted Rate as of May 19, 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area Poverty</th>
<th>Rate per 100,000 persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;10% area poverty</td>
<td>2230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10% to &lt;20% area poverty</td>
<td>2138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20% to &lt;30% area poverty</td>
<td>2064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30% to 100% area poverty</td>
<td>2194</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LA County COVID-19 Cases by Race/Ethnicity, Age-Adjusted Rate as of May 19, 2020

- American Indian/Alaska Native: 85
- Asian: 128
- White: 134
- Black: 168
- Latino/x: 247
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: 1275

Rate per 100,000 persons
LA County COVID-19 Cases by Area Poverty, Age-Adjusted Rate as of May 19, 2020

- <10% area poverty: 224 cases per 100,000 persons
- 10% to <20% area poverty: 293 cases per 100,000 persons
- 20% to <30% area poverty: 379 cases per 100,000 persons
- 30% to 100% area poverty: 504 cases per 100,000 persons
LA County COVID-19 Deaths by Race/Ethnicity, Age-Adjusted Rate as of May 19, 2020

- American Indian/Alaska Native: 3
- White: 10
- Asian: 14
- Latino/x: 18
- Black: 21
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: 104
LA County COVID-19 Deaths by Area Poverty, Age-Adjusted Rate as of May 19, 2020

- <10% area poverty: 9
- 10% to <20% area poverty: 14
- 20% to <30% area poverty: 20
- 30% to 100% area poverty: 34
People of color and lower wage earners, may experience higher rates of COVID-19 because....

• Their risk of **exposure is higher** since they are more likely to...
  • Be essential service workers
  • Work in sectors that have fewer protections in place
    • Use of PPE
    • Paid Leave
  • Live in smaller spaces, sometimes with more people
• They may have **underlying health conditions** that weaken their immune system
People of color and lower wage earners, may experience higher rates of COVID-19 because....

• Despite acknowledging their susceptibility to and severity of COVID-19, more pressing needs (e.g., food, housing, childcare) affect their ability to respond to pandemic threats
  • May be caregivers to children or older adults
  • Know that a positive COVID-19 test leads to quarantine which impacts their ability to work and provide for their family

• Do not have needed supports to get diagnosed or treated
  • May be uninsured
  • May be undocumented and be unclear or afraid to access benefits
  • May not have the support necessary to follow Public Health directives
  • May not have access to information in their language
The Problem—Disproportionate Burden

- Poor land use planning
- Disparate Enforcement of Regulations
- Infrastructure Disinvestment
- Degraded environmental conditions
- Health Inequities
Community Stress

Definition: Exposure to multiple physical and social stresses at the community level such as disinvestment, marginalization, discrimination, and social exclusion

Manifestations: Deteriorated environment, housing instability, weak social networks, false narratives, institutional dysfunction/systemic fraudulence
Impact of Racism

- **Discrimination** →
  Limits resources and opportunities to thrive

- **Toxic stress** →
  Biologic impact on health

- **Victim blaming** →
  Places onus to change on individuals rather than systems (resilience)

Inequities in COVID-19 health outcomes are NOT due to individual behavior
Nine Strategies to Address COVID-19 Inequities in LA County

Testing
Care Coordination
Treatment
Supportive Resources
Protections for Workers
Community Engagement
Data
Contact Tracing
Communication
Thank You!