

# Addressing Inequalities and Health Disparities in the African American Community

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Milwaukee is one of the most racially segregated large metropolitan areas for African Americans, Whites, and Latinos in the United States.<sup>2</sup> In Milwaukee, the percentage of adults without health insurance coverage is lower than in Wisconsin and the United States.<sup>2</sup> Life expectancy, premature death, and Infant mortality rates are all also worse in Milwaukee (Figure 2).<sup>2</sup> Health disparities in lower SES communities are correlated with an increase in rates of drinking, smoking, lead exposure, sexually transmitted diseases, and poor mental health.<sup>2</sup>

**Figure 2:** Low, middle, and high socioeconomic status and life expectancy in Milwaukee, WI, and the United States.<sup>2</sup>

Preexisting health conditions have been determined to be a co-morbidity factor for COVID-19, suggesting that those of lower SES have increased chances of COVID-19 mortality.<sup>3</sup> Many of the health disparities are due to the lack of ability to use healthcare services with ease and fear of disrespect in a healthcare setting. This results in people of lower SES reaching out for healthcare at later stages of illness.<sup>4</sup> Inadequate access to health care in lower SES populations leads to higher rates of hospitalization due to chronic conditions and illness.<sup>4</sup> The extent of these disparities needs to be analyzed and confronted to begin to repair the public health issues surrounding the African American community. Researchers and health professionals may begin to address these disparities by using remote monitoring devices and telehealth to minimize the barriers to healthcare access and promote inclusion in medical care.

## References

1. Lopez, L., Hart, L. H., & Katz, M. H. (2021). Racial and ethnic health disparities related to COVID-