Hepatitis C in the African American Community

African Americans are disproportionately affected by hepatitis C.

- African Americans comprise about 11 percent of the U.S. population, but account for 25 percent of all hepatitis C cases.1
- Between 2011 and 2015, the rate of hepatitis C-related deaths for African Americans was roughly double that for whites.2
- From 1990 to 2014, the liver cancer death rate increased by 57 percent for African Americans.3
- In 2014, chronic liver disease and cirrhosis were among the top 10 leading causes of death among African Americans 45 to 64 years of age.4

African Americans face discriminatory barriers to care and treatment for hepatitis C.

- African Americans are more likely to be deemed ineligible for lifesaving hepatitis C treatment than other racial groups, even when controlling for other medical factors.5
- Compared to other racial groups, African Americans are less likely to be tested for hepatitis C and less likely to be linked to care after a diagnosis.6

Although African Americans have experienced larger gains in health coverage than whites under the Affordable Care Act, significant racial disparities in access to coverage remain.

- African Americans are nearly twice as likely as whites to be uninsured.7
- Nearly half of uninsured nonelderly African Americans are eligible for coverage under the Medicaid expansion.8
- Uninsured nonelderly African Americans are twice as likely as uninsured whites to not qualify for coverage under Medicaid because their state did not expand Medicaid.9

African Americans are far more likely than whites to be incarcerated in jails and prisons, where hepatitis C is especially widespread.

- In 2014, about one third of the incarcerated population was African American.10
- African Americans are incarcerated at more than five times the rate of whites.11
- In 2014, approximately 3 percent of all African American men were in prison with a sentence of at least one year.12
- Approximately one in three individuals in U.S. jails and prisons have hepatitis C.13
- In state prisons, which incarcerate about 90 percent of all prisoners in the U.S., fewer than 1 percent of prisoners with hepatitis C are receiving treatment.14

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