

# A snapshot of current racial and ethnic health disparities in Utah



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Office of Health Equity

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In Utah Governor Spencer Cox's [One Utah Roadmap initiative](#), good health and health equity are prioritized in the vision for all Utahns to lead productive and prosperous lives. While Utah has made important commitments to advance health equity, improved outcomes will take dedicated effort and time. Currently, Utah faces numerous racial and ethnic health disparities, many of which have existed for a long time. Health disparities are differences in health outcomes closely linked to economic, socio-cultural, environmental, and geographic disadvantage.<sup>1</sup> Working to reduce health disparities and advance health equity is the mission of the Utah Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Office of Health Equity (OHE). DHHS OHE compiles and publishes data every five years on racial and ethnic health disparities in Utah in the Utah Health Status by Race and Ethnicity report. The [latest edition of the report](#), released in November 2021, showed racial and ethnic minority populations' health was worse than the Utah population in many health measures.

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1. Utah Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Health Equity. Health Equity in Utah. <https://healthequity.utah.gov/health-equity-in-utah/>

**Table 1: Summary of indicators comparing proportions of health disparities\* reported in Utah Health Status by Race Ethnicity 2005, 2010, 2015, and 2021**

Indicator category	Utah Health Status by Race/Ethnicity report year			
	2005	2010	2015	2021
Socio-demographics	3/3 (100%)	3/3 (100%)	3/3 (100%)	3/3 (100%)
Healthcare services and systems	9/11 (82%)	9/11 (82%)	10/11 (91%)	8/11 (73%)
Risk factors for illness or injury	5/5 (100%)	4/5 (80%)	4/5 (80%)	5/5 (100%)
Protective factors for health	2/3 (67%)	2/3 (67%)	2/3 (67%)	2/3 (67%)
Health of mothers and infants	4/7 (57%)	5/7 (71%)	4/7 (57%)	4/7 (57%)
Infectious diseases	3/3 (100%)	3/3 (100%)	3/3 (100%)	3/3 (100%)
Injury and violence	2/3 (67%)	3/3 (100%)	2/3 (67%)	2/3 (67%)
Chronic diseases and conditions	5/9 (56%)	6/9 (67%)	5/9 (56%)	7/9 (78%)
Cancer	1/8 (13%)	1/8 (13%)	2/8 (25%)	4/8 (50%)
<b>Overall</b>	<b>34/52 (65%)</b>	<b>36/52 (69%)</b>	<b>35/52 (67%)</b>	<b>38/52 (73%)</b>

\*Indicators where at least one racial/ethnic minority group experienced a statistically significant health disparity. Only includes indicators which appear in all 4 Utah Health Status by Race and Ethnicity reports.

Table 1 shows 52 indicators across multiple categories, comparing health disparities reported in the Utah Health Status by Race and Ethnicity 2005, 2010, 2015, and 2021 reports. The data show racial and ethnic health disparities\* in Utah increased overall during the past 20 years of reporting—particularly in chronic diseases and cancer. For example, racial and ethnic health disparities were present in 1 cancer indicator in the 2005 report. This increased to health disparities in 4 cancer indicators in the 2021 report. Health disparities were more concentrated in the areas of socio-demographics, healthcare services and systems, risk factors for illness or injury, infectious diseases, and chronic diseases and conditions.

The Utah Health Status by Race and Ethnicity 2021 report shows 1 or more racial and ethnic minority populations experienced statistically significant health disparities in 44 of 74 health indicators reported, which are detailed in Table 2. In the 2021 report, health disparities were concentrated in the areas of socio-demographics, healthcare services and systems, risk factors for illness or injury, health of mothers and infants, and infectious diseases. Hispanic/Latino populations experienced health disparities in 35 of 74 measures, while American Indian/Alaska Native populations experienced health disparities in 33 measures. Black/African American populations experienced health disparities in 25 measures, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander populations experienced health disparities in 23 measures. Asian populations experienced health disparities in 9 measures.

In the 2021 report, racial and ethnic minority populations are doing better in some areas of health compared with Utah overall. They have statistically significantly lower rates of cancer deaths, coronary heart disease deaths, major depression, suicide, and unintentional poisoning deaths. These are opportunities to build on existing strengths and successes within racial and ethnic minority communities to ensure health equity gains are enjoyed by all Utahns.

Table 2: Statistically significant health disparities in racial/ethnic minority populations in Utah, 2021 reporting (data collected between 2015 and 2019)

Health disparities in American Indian/Alaska Native populations	Health disparities in Asian populations	Health disparities in Black/African American populations	Health disparities in Hispanic/Latino populations	Health disparities in Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander populations
<b>Socio-demographics (3 total indicators)</b>				
<b>3 indicators with disparities</b>	<b>2 indicators with disparities</b>	<b>3 indicators with disparities</b>	<b>2 indicators with disparities</b>	<b>3 indicators with disparities</b>
● Life expectancy at birth		● Life expectancy at birth		● Life expectancy at birth
● Poverty	● Poverty	● Poverty	● Poverty	● Poverty
● Child poverty	● Child poverty	● Child poverty	● Child poverty	● Child poverty
<b>Healthcare services and systems (13 total indicators)</b>				
<b>7 indicators with disparities</b>	<b>0 indicators with disparities</b>	<b>5 indicators with disparities</b>	<b>10 indicators with disparities</b>	<b>4 indicators with disparities</b>
● Utahns without health insurance		● Utahns without health insurance	● Utahns without health insurance	● Utahns without health insurance
● Cost as barrier to care		● Cost as barrier to care	● Cost as barrier to care	● Cost as barrier to care
● No primary care provider		● No primary care provider	● No primary care provider	● No primary care provider
			● Routine medical checkup	
● Routine dental checkup			● Routine dental checkup	
● First trimester prenatal care		● First trimester prenatal care	● First trimester prenatal care	● First trimester prenatal care
● Colon cancer screening			● Colon cancer screening	
			● Prostate cancer screening	
● Influenza immunization		● Influenza immunization	● Influenza immunization	
			● Pneumonia immunization	

Health disparities in American Indian/Alaska Native populations	Health disparities in Asian populations	Health disparities in Black/African American populations	Health disparities in Hispanic/Latino populations	Health disparities in Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander populations
<b>Risk factors for illness or injury (11 total indicators)</b>				
<b>5</b> indicators with disparities	<b>1</b> indicator with disparity	<b>3</b> indicators with disparities	<b>7</b> indicators with disparities	<b>3</b> indicators with disparities
● Overweight or obesity		● Overweight or obesity	● Overweight or obesity	● Overweight or obesity
			● Adolescent obesity	● Adolescent obesity
● No physical activity			● No physical activity	
		● High blood pressure		
● Current cigarette smoking		● Current cigarette smoking	● Current cigarette smoking	
			● Youth e-cigarette use	
	● Adolescent suicide ideation		● Adolescent suicide ideation	● Adolescent suicide ideation
● Heavy drinking of alcohol				
● Binge drinking of alcohol			● Binge drinking of alcohol	
<b>Protective factors for health (3 total indicators)</b>				
<b>0</b> indicators with disparities	<b>0</b> indicators with disparities	<b>0</b> indicators with disparities	<b>2</b> indicators with disparities	<b>0</b> indicators with disparities
			● Daily vegetable consumption	
			● Recommended aerobic activity	

Health disparities in American Indian/Alaska Native populations	Health disparities in Asian populations	Health disparities in Black/African American populations	Health disparities in Hispanic/Latino populations	Health disparities in Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander populations
<b>Health of mothers and infants (16 total indicators)</b>				
<b>6 indicators with disparities</b>	<b>4 indicators with disparities</b>	<b>8 indicators with disparities</b>	<b>8 indicators with disparities</b>	<b>6 indicators with disparities</b>
				● Infant mortality
	● Low birth weight	● Low birth weight	● Low birth weight	● Low birth weight
	● Preterm birth	● Preterm birth	● Preterm birth	● Preterm birth
● Obesity in pregnancy		● Obesity in pregnancy	● Obesity in pregnancy	● Obesity in pregnancy
● Smoking in pregnancy		● Smoking in pregnancy		
● Gestational diabetes	● Gestational diabetes		● Gestational diabetes	● Gestational diabetes
			● Daily folic acid consumption	
● Births to adolescents		● Births to adolescents	● Births to adolescents	
	● Unintended pregnancy	● Unintended pregnancy	● Unintended pregnancy	
● Ever breastfed		● Ever breastfed	● Ever breastfed	
● Postpartum depression		● Postpartum depression		● Postpartum depression
<b>Infectious diseases (5 total indicators)</b>				
<b>2 indicators with disparities</b>	<b>1 indicator with disparity</b>	<b>3 indicators with disparities</b>	<b>4 indicators with disparities</b>	<b>2 indicators with disparities</b>
	● Tuberculosis incidence rate		● Tuberculosis incidence rate	
● Chlamydia incidence rate		● Chlamydia incidence rate	● Chlamydia incidence rate	● Chlamydia incidence rate
● Gonorrhea incidence rate		● Gonorrhea incidence rate	● Gonorrhea incidence rate	● Gonorrhea incidence rate
		● HIV incidence rate	● HIV incidence rate	

Health disparities in American Indian/Alaska Native populations	Health disparities in Asian populations	Health disparities in Black/African American populations	Health disparities in Hispanic/Latino populations	Health disparities in Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander populations
<b>Injury and violence (4 total indicators)</b>				
2 indicators with disparities	0 indicators with disparities	0 indicators with disparities	0 indicators with disparities	0 indicators with disparities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unintentional injury deaths</li> <li>Motor vehicle crash deaths</li> </ul>				
<b>Chronic diseases and conditions (11 total indicators)</b>				
7 indicators with disparities	0 indicators with disparities	1 indicator with disparity	2 indicators with disparities	2 indicators with disparities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fair or poor health</li> <li>Poor physical health status</li> <li>Arthritis prevalence</li> <li>Asthma prevalence</li> <li>COPD prevalence<sup>‡</sup></li> <li>Diabetes prevalence</li> <li>Diabetes deaths</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fair or poor health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fair or poor health</li> <li>Diabetes prevalence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diabetes deaths</li> <li>Stroke deaths</li> </ul>
<b>Cancer (8 total indicators)</b>				
1 indicator with disparities	1 indicator with disparity	2 indicators with disparities	1 indicator with disparity	2 indicators with disparities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Colorectal cancer incidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Colorectal cancer incidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lung cancer incidence</li> <li>Prostate cancer incidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Colorectal cancer incidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Colorectal cancer incidence</li> <li>Female breast cancer incidence</li> </ul>

<sup>‡</sup>COPD is chronic obstructive pulmonary disease