



Closing the Gap in Health Disparities For Individuals with Chronic Kidney Disease

Health disparities continue to disproportionately affect minority populations in our country, especially chronic conditions such as kidney disease. The source of health disparities for individuals with chronic kidney disease is attributed to: risk factors (ethnicity and comorbidities), socioeconomic factors, cultural factors, physician-related issues, quality of healthcare delivered, and access to transplantation and dialysis treatments. To close the health disparity gap in our country for these individuals, the following measures must be implemented:

- ◆ Expansion of access to quality healthcare
 - Early evaluation and screening programs for chronic kidney disease.
 - Promoting prevention and health awareness efforts in high-risk populations.
- ◆ Patient education
 - Providing information to individuals about obtaining health coverage through private and public programs.
 - Offering programs that increase patients' knowledge about chronic kidney disease and treatment options.
- ◆ Physician education
 - Informing primary care physicians about advantages and methods of early screening, diagnosis and treatment of chronic kidney disease.
 - Recommend a cost-effective plan to primary care physicians for implementing the early screening, diagnosis and treatment programs.
 - Highlight the clinical significance of the glomerular filtration rate (GFR) estimates and indicate its limitations.
 - Increasing the cultural competence of physicians to promote accurate diagnosis of high-risk populations by incorporating their culture and social background.
- ◆ Increasing research efforts in order to identify better intervention and clinical disease prevention strategies.

Decreasing the health disparities for individuals with chronic kidney disease is essential in reducing its disease burden in our country and the four measures mentioned above would be effective in closing the health disparity gap.

Source: Legislative Summary of The "Closing the Health Care Gap Act of 2003."

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