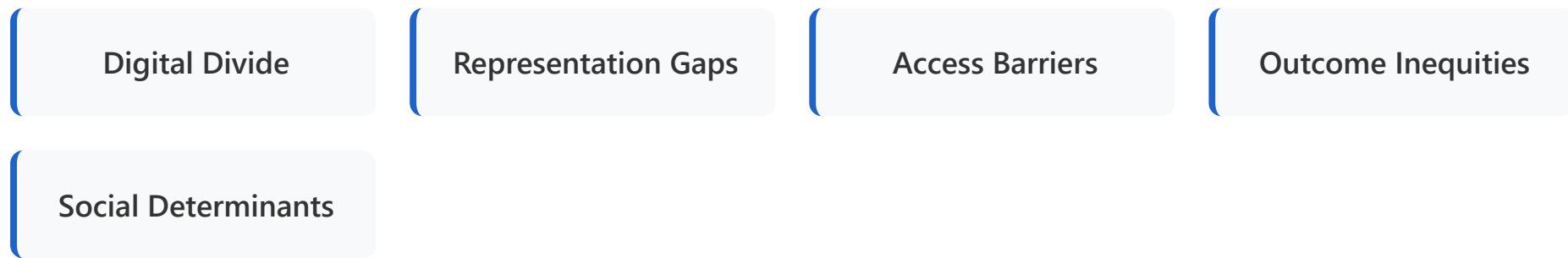


Health Disparities

Understanding Inequities in Healthcare Access and Outcomes

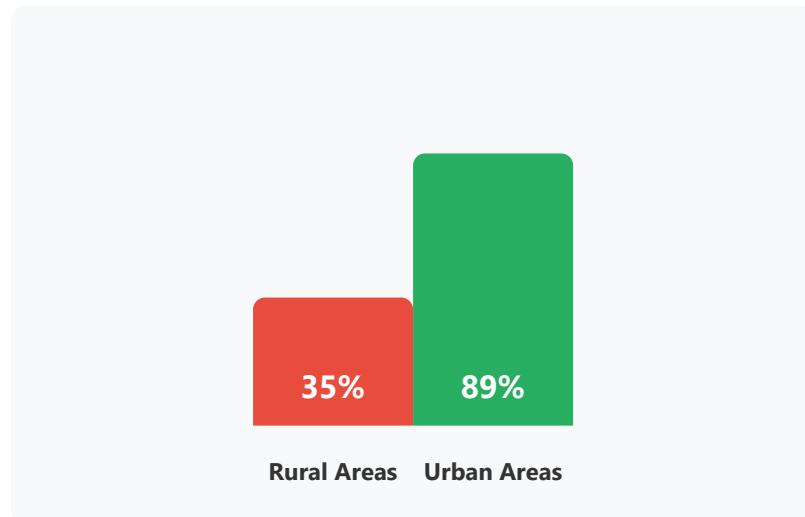
Key Categories



Category 1

Digital Divide

Unequal access to technology and digital health resources



Overview

The digital divide refers to the gap between those who have access to digital technologies and those who do not. In healthcare, this creates significant disparities in accessing telehealth services, health information, and digital health tools.

Key Challenges

- **Internet Access:** Limited broadband availability in rural and low-income communities
- **Device Ownership:** Lack of smartphones, computers, or tablets needed for telehealth
- **Digital Literacy:** Difficulty navigating health apps and online portals
- **Language Barriers:** Limited availability of digital health resources in multiple languages

Impact: Studies show that patients without internet access are 30% less likely to engage with preventive

Category 2

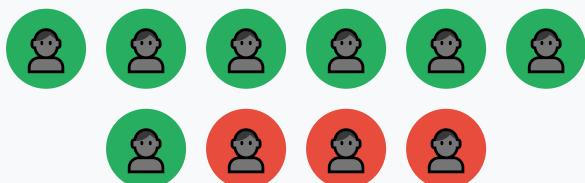
Representation Gaps

Underrepresentation in healthcare workforce and research

Overview

Representation gaps occur when certain demographic groups are underrepresented in healthcare providers, clinical trials, and medical research. This leads to care that may not adequately address the needs of diverse populations.

Key Issues



- **Healthcare Workforce:** Minority groups are underrepresented among physicians and specialists
- **Clinical Trials:** Historical exclusion of women, minorities, and elderly patients from research

- **Data Collection:** Insufficient demographic data leading to invisible disparities
- **Cultural Competency:** Lack of culturally sensitive care practices

Impact: Only 5% of physicians in the U.S. are Black, while Black Americans comprise 13% of the population, contributing to cultural mismatches in care.

Category 3

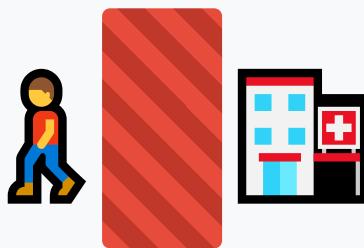
Access Barriers

Obstacles preventing individuals from receiving healthcare services

Overview

Access barriers are the structural, financial, and logistical obstacles that prevent individuals from obtaining necessary healthcare services. These barriers disproportionately affect vulnerable populations.

Common Barriers



- **Financial:** Lack of insurance, high deductibles, and out-of-pocket costs
- **Geographic:** Distance to healthcare facilities, especially in rural areas
- **Transportation:** Limited public transit and lack of personal vehicles
- **Time Constraints:** Inflexible work schedules and long wait times
- **Administrative:** Complex paperwork and insurance requirements

Impact: Approximately 46 million Americans live in primary care shortage areas, resulting in delayed diagnoses and preventable complications.

Outcome Inequities

Differences in health outcomes across population groups

Overview

Outcome inequities refer to the measurable differences in health outcomes between different population groups. These disparities persist even when controlling for access to care, highlighting systemic issues in healthcare delivery.

Documented Disparities



- **Mortality Rates:** Higher death rates from preventable diseases in minority communities
- **Chronic Conditions:** Increased prevalence of diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease
- **Maternal Health:** Black women face 3-4x higher maternal mortality rates
- **Cancer Survival:** Lower survival rates for certain cancers in underserved populations
- **Mental Health:** Higher rates of untreated mental illness in marginalized groups

Impact: Life expectancy can vary by up to 20 years between different neighborhoods in the same city, reflecting cumulative health inequities.

Category 5

Social Determinants of Health

Non-medical factors that influence health outcomes

Overview

Social determinants of health (SDOH) are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age. These factors have a profound impact on health outcomes and account for an estimated 80% of health status.

Key Determinants

- **Economic Stability:** Employment, income, poverty, and housing stability



Housing Quality





Education Level



Income



Food Access

- **Education:** Literacy, language, and educational attainment
- **Healthcare Access:** Insurance coverage, provider availability, and health literacy
- **Neighborhood Environment:** Housing quality, safety, environmental conditions
- **Social Context:** Discrimination, social cohesion, and community support

Impact: Individuals living in poverty are 5x more likely to report poor health status compared to those with higher incomes, demonstrating the powerful influence of social factors.