



EQUITABLE ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

LEARNING GOALS

- To think critically about the factors that limit an individual's access to health care.
- To consider the widespread benefits of a population with equitable access to health care.
- To practice drawing connections between local challenges and global contexts and best practices.

ASSIGNMENT

Estimated Time: ~24 min

- Watch: "[Health Equity Animated: Equity vs. Equality](#)" (1:19)
- Read: "[Mirror, Mirror 2017: International Comparison Reflects Flaws and Opportunities for Better US Health Care](#)" - read section 2 ("Performance Varies Among Health Systems") and explore the data in Exhibit 2, especially the sections relating to Access and Equity (~ 8 min.)
 - See the terminology section for definitions specific to the study and see section 5 of the study for exact definitions of the terms.
- Watch: "[The US medical system is still haunted by slavery](#)" (8:50)
- Read: "[Study: Chuukese Patients In Hawaii Often Face Discrimination](#)" (~ 7 min.)

TERMINOLOGY

- **Health Equity** - ensuring that all patients have the tools and support they need to have equal access to health care, regardless of their race or socioeconomic background.
- **U.S. Medicare** - a government-run service providing health care to elderly people and younger people with certain disabilities.
- **U.S. Medicaid** - a public assistance program, funded by both the state and federal governments, providing health insurance to low-income Americans.
- **U.S. Affordable Care Act** - Also known as Obamacare, the Affordable Care Act expands healthcare coverage by providing consumer discounts on insurance plans and expanding Medicaid (in certain states) to cover adults with incomes significantly below the federal poverty level.
- **Private insurance** - refers to health insurance not provided by the government; more common in the U.S. than in other countries. Private insurance companies individually bargain with healthcare providers for the prices patients will pay.
- **Compacts of Free Association** - a set of treaties that allow citizens of the Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, and Palau to legally migrate to the United States without visas. People often migrate to find better opportunities for work, education, and health care.



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TERMINOLOGY (continued)

- Terminology specific to the “Mirror, Mirror 2017” study (taken from section 5 of the study):
 - **Care Process** - refers to the preventive care measures, patient safety, efficient sharing of medical information, and patient-centered care of each country used in the study.
 - **Access** - refers to the affordability and timeliness of patient care and procedures in each country.
 - **Administrative Efficiency** - refers to the amount of time consumed by completing paperwork within the healthcare system; also refers to patients’ access to their primary doctor, medical results, and medical records.
 - **Equity** - refers to the gap between high and low-income individuals with regard to their access to quality healthcare.
 - **Healthcare Outcomes** - refers to the chronic disease and mortality rates of each country’s overall population.

KAHOOT QUIZ

- Go to Kahoot.it or use the Kahoot mobile app and enter the pin 07220672
- Or, use [this link](#)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- The Equity versus Equality video uses a grocery store as an example. What is the difference between equity and equality in the context of health care?
- In the “Mirror, Mirror” article, what specific measures are used to evaluate whether or not a country’s health care system is Accessible and Equitable?
- What are some key differences between the American health care system and that of other countries?
- How did the institution of slavery impact the medical field, and how does systemic racism continue to impact African-Americans’ access to healthcare today?
- What are some factors contributing to the high cost of American health care, and how might these factors limit access to health care for certain demographic groups?
- Why might people find the American health insurance system confusing and challenging to navigate, and how might this impact their ability to attain health care? In particular, consider Micronesian migrants’ struggle with understanding health insurance in the state of Hawaii.
- What are some examples of racial prejudice patients may face when seeking health care? Why are members of minority groups, such as the Chuukese in Hawaii, particularly nervous about going to the doctor?
- Are there any other groups (other than COFA residents) who face barriers to equitable access to health care in Hawaii or the US?
- What are some ways that Hawaii might make its health care system more equitable and accessible?



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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [We Are Oceania](#)
Sponsored by the Partners in Development Foundation, We Are Oceania empowers Micronesian communities in Hawaii by providing resources and support related to healthcare, employment, education, and housing. We Are Oceania also creates and promotes culturally-responsive programs for COFA citizens in areas such as education and health.
- [What is being done to reduce disparities?](#)
An article by The Commonwealth Fund explaining the policy approaches and goals of 20 different countries with regard to reducing disparities in healthcare access and outcomes.
- [Why the U.S. pays more for health care than the rest of the world](#) (9:24)
A video by PBS NewsHour explaining the causes for high prices in American healthcare, and what the United States can do to lower its costs based on the health care systems of other countries.
- [US Health Care from a Global Perspective, 2019: Higher Spending, Worse Outcomes?](#)
A set of data and policy recommendations from The Commonwealth Fund comparing the United States' spending and outcomes in healthcare to that of other countries in the OECD.
- [Health Equity Animated: Race](#)
A short video by the Center for Prevention Minnesota focusing on the barriers and prejudice African-Americans face when seeking health care.

IDEAS FOR ACTION

Easier

- Educate yourself: talk to your parents about any challenges they may have faced in obtaining insurance, or if they have experienced any discrimination when receiving health care.
- Visit the We Are Oceania website (linked in Additional Resources) to learn more about the center's work in supporting Micronesian communities and helping families secure health care.
- If possible, set up an interview with a local interpreter to learn more about his/her work and the importance of overcoming language barriers in health care in Hawaii. Organizations include [Helping Hands Hawaii Bilingual Access Line](#) and [Albors and Alnet](#).

Medium

- Spread awareness: give a class presentation on the struggles of Micronesian migrants and other minority groups in accessing health care.
- Create a short video, poem, or piece of art, similar in style to the "Health Equity Animated" series, on health care in Hawaii and individuals' experiences. Share it with your classmates. Watch the "Health Equity Animated: Race" in the Additional Resources section for more inspiration.
- Volunteer at a We Are Oceania event, or other similar events, and help educate and register local families for health insurance.



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IDEAS FOR ACTION (continued)

Hard

- Policy advocacy: research bills in the city council and state legislature on measures to more health care more accessible and equitable for minority groups. Write and submit testimony.

HAWAII DOE SUBJECT STANDARDS LINKS

Hawaii Core Standards for Social Studies

- Content Standard [SS.WH.8.12.1](#)
- Content Standard [SS.US.12.8.1](#)
- Content Standard [SS.US.12.16.2](#)
- Content Standard [SS.MHH.4.9.1](#)
- Content Standard [SS.PID.4.7.1](#)
- Content Standard [SS.PID.4.10.2](#)
- Content Standard [SS.PID.4.16.3](#)
- Action Projects link to [SS.PID.5.7.1](#)

- Content Standard [SS.7PI.3.17.2](#)
- Content Standard [SS.7PI.2.7.4](#)
- Action Projects could link to [SS.7PI.3.8.3](#)

[National Health Education Standards](#)

- NHES.2.12.10
- NHES.3.12.3
- Action Projects could link to NHES.8.12.1-4

This lesson was created by Megan Tagami.