

## Insights

# Top Equity Resources for Pursuing Change in 2021

**A collection of NICHQ articles and resources on equity and social determinants of health**

Throughout this year, it has become clearer to many that the hard truth of the racism that shaped our nation requires us all—now, today—to acknowledge and address its impact in our health care systems and in ourselves.

"As a nation, we've erred deeply, both historically and in our inadequate efforts to counteract our history. As a result, mothers and babies of color are paying the ultimate price -- with their lives."  
Scott D. Berns, MD, MPH, FAAP, CEO of NICHQ, January 2020

Racism has long affected social determinants of health, underlying a breadth of negative health outcomes for children of color and their families in America. The COVID-19 pandemic has been ruthless in both exposing inequities across the country and simultaneously intensifying them. Communities of color continue to be disproportionately shortchanged due to the barriers of implicit and explicit bias and continued denial of access to resources. As the pandemic persisted, George Floyd's killing at the hand of police served as a catalyst for months of protest in nearly every U.S. city and around the world, with people of all races calling for an end to injustices that are woven into the fabric of our country.

Despite these threats to children's health, NICHQ is firmly committed to leveling the playing field so that every child and family is treated equitably and can achieve their optimal health. Outlined in [this statement](#) by NICHQ's CEO Scott D. Berns, NICHQ's vision and priorities for 2021 and beyond will focus on addressing racism as the public health crisis that it is.

As we begin a new year on our journey toward equity, we're sharing a collection of NICHQ articles and webinars that your community found most valuable in their equity journeys. Make sure you're [signed up for NICHQ News](#) so you stay informed of new resources, webinars, and innovations in children's health.

## Top Articles

[1. How 101 Communities Are Closing the Disparity Gap in Maternal and Child Health](#)

Persistent and unacceptable disparities in infant mortality and perinatal outcomes affect the health of families in every state in the nation. For the past 30 years, the federal Healthy Start program has provided integral maternal and child health services in communities disproportionately impacted by negative birth outcomes. Now, NICHQ is working with all 101 Healthy Start community sites to harness lessons learned, implement innovative approaches to improvement, and ultimately start to close the disparity gap in maternal and infant health. [Learn more here.](#)

## [2. Four Steps to Address Racism's Impact on Maternal and Child Health](#)

Racism has been baked into U.S. systems and structures since enslavement, and Black families and other people of color are still suffering its consequences. As health professionals, it's vital to acknowledge that all forms of racism—institutional, personally mediated, and internalized—are real, are present in health systems, and are adversely affecting the health of Black families. One person can't solve a systemic problem, but there are impactful steps everyone can take to help address it. [Learn more here.](#)

## [3. Addressing Black Maternal Mortality Rates Starts with Listening to Black Women?](#)

In New York State (NYS), Black women are more than three times as likely to die from pregnancy or giving birth as white women. This disparity has persisted alongside the U.S.'s rising maternal mortality rate, which has doubled in the past 15 years. Recognizing the urgent need for change both within their state and across the nation, NYS launched an initiative to engage women of color in identifying sustainable solutions for improvement. [Learn more here.](#)

## [4. Communities in Ohio Address Rising Inequalities in Response to COVID-19](#)

A serious compounding problem of COVID-19 is how it intensifies inequalities across the country, including in Ohio – where significant disparities in maternal and child health persist. [This article](#) details how Mahoning County is proactively identifying how the pandemic will affect at-risk populations and then developing a comprehensive plan that brings together partners from across the health system.



## [5. From Savior-Designed to Equity-Empowered Systems](#)

Institutional racism continues to plague the health of children and families across the country. How do we pursue sustainable change? The answer starts with intentionally confronting and deconstructing how health systems were designed. [In this article](#), we're summarizing advice from experts from the Global Infant Safe Sleep Center on opportunities to move towards equitable

systems.

## Webinars

### [1. LENS Care: Leading Equity Now in Systems of Care](#)

In the first webinar of our COVID-19 series, our faculty experts take an in-depth look at how implicit bias limits quality care for those who need it most during this national crisis, share resources and ideas focused on achieving health equity, and address the health disparities rooted in the structures of our systems. After [watching the webinar](#), viewers will be able to:

- Recognize the dual role COVID-19 plays for Black and Brown children with special healthcare needs by illuminating pre-existing inequities while also further exacerbating the inequities
- Recognize and identify bias within your system and yourself
- Learn ideas, tools, and resources to effect change on the individual and system level

### [2. From Awareness to Action: Strategies for Combating Racism in Health Systems](#)

This is the third webinar in [NICHQ's series on health equity](#), focused on providing strategies and guidance that health care professionals can use to identify and address racism and racial bias. After [watching the webinar](#), viewers will be able to:

- Understand and contextualize the three levels of racism: internalized, interpersonal, and institutionalized/structural racism
- Apply a racial equity lens to collective impact-based health improvement initiatives using six guiding questions
- Identify key strategies for designing intentional, action-oriented, and strengths-based approaches to start and sustain an equity-focused organizational culture shift

### [3. Social Determinants of Grief: The Impact of Black Infant Loss](#)

There is very little research about Black people's grief and its connection to systemic racism and the social injustices connected to it. Understanding the impact of racism and its influence on how a person reacts to loss sets the stage for addressing how best to support communities who are disproportionately affected by infant death.

This webinar offers insight on how some women of color deal with compounded loss and trauma. Participants will walk away with an opportunity to gain additional knowledge on how to best serve communities of color affected by infant loss. [View the recording here.](#)

*Looking for more resources on improving equity? Visit our [Resources](#) page, where you'll find social media toolkits, resource guides, interactive E-handouts, and much more that inspire and guide meaningful change for ALL children.*