

An Employer's Guide to Reducing Racial & Ethnic Health Disparities in the Workplace



National Business Group on Health



EMPLOYER BENCHMARK CHECKLIST

For each section of this guide, the employer goals are prioritized into three action levels.

- **Level 1: Act Now** reflects basic steps on securing workplace support and promoting diversity that employers must take to begin developing their health disparities initiatives.
- **Level 2: Plan Ahead** represents more complicated processes on fostering plan partnerships and disparities research.
- **Level 3: Think Forward** contains the most sophisticated actions on data collection, analysis and reporting for an employer's workforce.

I. Build Your Business Case

Priority Action Level	Employer Goals	Target Partner
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Secure senior management buy-in and ongoing support for closing health disparities gaps.	C-Suite
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Incorporate closing health disparities gaps as part of corporate health care strategy and HR diversity/inclusion strategy.	C-Suite / Employees
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Highlight the value of cultural diversity in the workplace and in the community.	All
2	<input type="checkbox"/> Close health disparities gaps through better plan design and employee engagement.	All
2	<input type="checkbox"/> Support research on racial and ethnic health status, treatment and outcome differences.	Health Plan / PBM / Behavioral Health Provider / Wellness Provider / EAP
3	<input type="checkbox"/> Use the Health Disparities Cost Impact Tool to identify, evaluate and rank the most prevalent and costliest—yet manageable—health conditions by ethnicity, age and job category.	Health Plan / Data Warehouse
3	<input type="checkbox"/> Investigate the impact of health disparities on productivity measures.	Health Plan / Data Warehouse

II. Develop Your Data Strategy and Operations

Priority Action Level	Employer Goals	Target Partner
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Create an action plan to collect and analyze racial and ethnic data using all available resources: new employee intake forms, health appraisal or health plan enrollment information.	Health Plan / PBM / Behavioral Health Provider / Wellness Provider / EAP / Data Warehouse
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Ask health partners who support employees to identify gaps in engagement and/or outcomes and recommend highest-value solutions.	Health Plan / PBM / Behavioral Health Provider / Wellness Provider / EAP / Data Warehouse
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Review certification status of vendors for implementing disparities-directed initiatives (e.g., National Committee on Quality Assurance/NCQA multicultural health care distinction).	Health Plan / Behavioral Health Provider / Wellness Provider
2	<input type="checkbox"/> Examine key employee factors, including race/ethnicity, primary language, gender, age, length of service, location, disability, and job category (primary); full-time status, income, education, health literacy and other perceptions (secondary).	Health Plan / PBM / Behavioral Health Provider / Wellness Provider / Data Warehouse
2	<input type="checkbox"/> Consider environmental factors where employees live with respect to multicultural lifestyle demands, provider practice variations, community feedback and geographic well-being.	Health Plan / Behavioral Health Provider / Wellness Provider / Employees
3	<input type="checkbox"/> Modify HR policies to increase internal access to sensitive but aggregated employee data (i.e., employment data with medical data) for health promotion.	C-Suite

III. Customize Your Plan Design Benefits

Priority Action Level	Employer Goals	Target Partner
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Hold health plan partners accountable for closing health disparities gaps by developing a strategic action plan using touch points.*	Health Plan / PBM / Behavioral Health Providers / Wellness Providers / EAP / Data Warehouse
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Build staff cultural competency using training tools incorporated into your renewal contracts and performance guarantees for all health and wellness vendors.	Health Plan / PBM / Behavioral Health Provider / Wellness Provider / EAP / Data Warehouse / Employees
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Implement favorable benefits premiums and out-of-pocket pricing for low-wage workers if there is a high number of racial/ethnic minority workers in this income group.	All
2	<input type="checkbox"/> Investigate psychosocial and biological differences among racial/ethnic minority workers, which may increase their susceptibility to certain health conditions (e.g., healthy-weight Asians at risk for diabetes or hepatitis) or behaviors (e.g., African Americans less likely to participate in health appraisals).	Health Plan / PBM / Behavioral Health Provider / Wellness Provider / EAP / Data Warehouse
3	<input type="checkbox"/> Manage program incentives, especially those that may have a negative effect on the health of racial/ethnic minority workers who are disproportionately more affected by health conditions (e.g., obesity) or behavior (e.g., tobacco use).	Health Plan / PBM / Behavioral Health Provider / Wellness Provider / EAP / Data Warehouse

Note: Touch points are critical points of contact with employees and dependents.

IV. Communicate to Your Diverse Employees

Priority Action Level	Employer Goals	Target Partner
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Design communications on general disparities information, how employees can help close health care disparities gaps through appropriate use of health services, and success stories of ethnic workers enrolled in health improvement programs.	All
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Affirm privacy protection statements, non-punitive use of data collection, and information about plan and community partnerships.	All
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Establish multicultural staff representatives to support on-site health services (e.g., wellness champions, employee resource groups, marketing teams and HR/benefits professionals).	All
2	<input type="checkbox"/> Understand and overcome cultural mistrust among ethnic employees and where it exists by partnering with community leaders.	All
2	<input type="checkbox"/> Encourage healthy lifestyles for diverse spouses, domestic partners, dependents and families.	All

V. Navigate Your Legal Environment

Priority Action Level	Employer Goals	Target Partner
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Work with corporate counsel to translate law into health disparities policy.	C-Suite
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirm compliance with existing federal laws (e.g., HIPAA privacy and security).	All
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Develop or revise Notice of Privacy Practices and HIPAA authorization forms, as necessary.	All
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Review any applicable state laws.	All
2	<input type="checkbox"/> Manage HR risks associated with using various methods of collecting racial/ethnic data.	Health Plan / PBM / Behavioral Health Provider / Wellness Provider / EAP / Employees
3	<input type="checkbox"/> Support aggregating and integrating employee data with medical, health and productivity, and wellness/health promotion data to develop more complete information for use in planning.	All