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Gains in diabetes, vascular care narrow the disparity gap

Eighth annual Health Care Disparities Report indicates significant work still needed

While most outcomes for Minnesota Health Care Program clients continue to lag behind those for people with other insurance, data from the eighth annual Health Care Disparities Report released today shows that the gaps are narrowing.

“It’s encouraging to see we’re making progress addressing health care disparities for public program enrollees and people of color,” said Minnesota Human Services Commissioner Lucinda Jesson. “We will continue to focus on closing the gaps so that all Minnesotans can live healthy lives. This outside evaluation gives us important information on where we stand.”

Conducted by MN Community Measurement for the Minnesota Department of Human Services, the 2014 Health Care Disparities Report compares care provided to public program enrollees, including Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare, in managed care organizations to care provided to other Minnesotans in 2013. Because people with low incomes, people with disabilities and people of color are over-represented in public programs, comparing them to commercial patients illustrates Minnesota’s health care disparities.

The report covers 12 measures, from preventive care to care for chronic conditions. Seven of those measures improved over the previous year, with significant improvement in the number of enrollees receiving optimal care for vascular disease (8.5 percent) and diabetes (6.7 percent). Optimal care for these ailments increased only one percent for all Minnesotans during the same time period. Despite this progress, the report shows disparities persist with significantly lower outcomes overall for Minnesota Health Care Program clients in 10 of the 12 measures.

“Close to one million now have health insurance through publicly funded health care programs, but our work can’t stop there,” Jesson said. “We must ensure all Minnesotans are receiving the right care at the right time.”

The 2014 Health Care Disparities Report is available at www.mncm.org. More information is also in a [news release on the MN Community Management website](#).