

Hillsborough County Health Equity Profile



THE OFFICE OF HEALTH EQUITY
THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

Created June 2020
Revised July 2021



Dear Community Members:

In our first health equity profile (2020), we presented the reader with extensive information on health inequities in Hillsborough County. We introduced the concept that differences in social factors including neighborhoods, transportation, income, education and health care access often result in differences in opportunity for good health.

Thus far, the profile has helped to support growing initiatives in the community related to health equity. For example, community members shared this resource with members of the Hillsborough Board of County Commissioners to support their work declaring racism as a public health issue. We hope that this edition may be used for continued grassroots policy change, initiating research, grant-seeking, community dialogue and engagement to advance health equity.

In this 2021 profile, we have worked to identify updated data, as available, and new data points that further describe the social inequities that contribute to differences in health outcomes. Included in this edition where possible are narratives and data points that explain some of these issues of systemic racism in more detail.

The Office of Health Equity at the Florida Department of Health in Hillsborough County works towards policy, system and environmental changes that will help to improve community conditions. The goal of this profile is to shed light on where continuing effort is needed to achieve more equitable health outcomes for our residents. We hope it will serve as a resource and inspiration for individuals and organizations to actively participate to make the changes necessary to support our belief that ***good health should be an option for everyone*** in Hillsborough County.

Sincerely,

The Office of Health Equity
The Florida Department of Health in Hillsborough County

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This profile is the result of the work and dedication of many individuals and organizations.

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	1
NEIGHBORHOODS.....	3
TRANSPORTATION.....	5
INCOME.....	7
EDUCATION.....	9
HEALTH CARE ACCESS.....	11
DEATH & DISEASE.....	13
CONCLUSION.....	15
SOURCES.....	16



INTRODUCTION

"**Health equity** means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. This requires removing obstacles to health such as poverty, discrimination, and their consequences, including powerlessness and lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education and housing, safe environments, and healthcare." –*Robert Wood Johnson Foundation*

Health is about more than genetics. Available choices and lifestyle play a big role in health. Housing, income, education and access to resources like health care, parks, transportation and nutritious food determine the options available.



The places where people live, learn, work and play have a big impact on whether they can achieve good health.



The root causes of health inequities go beyond individual circumstances and location. They include many unfair systems and policies which serve as barriers to achieving good health.



The whole person is affected throughout their life by the environment in which they live.

Health inequity doesn't just affect individuals, it can cause damage to **whole communities**.

The Hillsborough County Health Equity Profile explores the differences in opportunity, access, and outcomes of health among residents using select local data on neighborhoods, transportation, income, education and health care in Hillsborough County, FL.

In Hillsborough County



We have not yet achieved health equity in Hillsborough County. A person's opportunity to live a healthy life can vary based on their race, ethnicity, gender, income, age and other factors. This is shown through data in this and other reports. These differences in health are due to current and historical discrimination against people of color, women and other groups. The resulting health inequities are avoidable, unfair, and unjust, and impose an economic burden on all members of the community.

Social Factors

A recurring theme throughout this report is that social factors are interconnected; one factor can have a ripple effect on many others. For example, education and income impact access to safe and healthy neighborhoods, reliable transportation and quality health care. All these factors, separately and combined, impact health outcomes. Some of the other systemic factors that can impact health in our communities include homelessness, access to traditional financial institutions, policing and incarceration, voting rights and pre-school enrollment. Changes to policies, systems and the built environment through approaches such as Health in All Policies can help to reduce these inequities.

COVID-19

COVID-19 has made health inequities, or differences in health outcomes due to unfair, unjust, avoidable differences in health, more visible in the news. Nationally we have continued to see disparities in COVID-19, as Black residents and other residents of color experience cases and deaths at a higher rate than White residents.

GOOD HEALTH SHOULD BE AN OPTION FOR EVERYONE

The Florida Department of Health in Hillsborough County's Office of Health Equity supports programs and partnerships that advance health equity by addressing inequities in the conditions in people's lives, and by ensuring health services are accessible to those with limited resources. We invite you to join in our efforts. Health equity is everyone's responsibility, and we all have a role to play.

NEIGHBORHOODS matter for health.

The spaces where people live, work, and play have a tremendous impact on health. Income is often a factor in deciding where people live within the community. Research shows that a person's zip code is a more significant predictor of life expectancy than their own genetic code. Conditions needed to achieve health equity include affordable, adequate and stable housing, access to goods and services, jobs that provide living wages and economic opportunity, quality education and childcare, and accessible transportation. When people have places to exercise, can easily access affordable and nutritious food, and experience a sense of safety, they have a foundation for making healthy choices and living healthy lives. Many places in Hillsborough County lack the structural and psychological conditions needed for good health.



In Hillsborough County, finding and maintaining affordable housing is a significant challenge.

Increased demand for housing continues as people move into the area. This can drive the cost of housing up, making it less affordable. Lower income residents have a greater challenge finding safe, affordable housing. Stable and affordable housing makes it easier for people to obtain and maintain employment, support their children's academic achievement, and focus on health priorities¹. Housing affordability affects all residents, particularly school-aged children, older adults, and individuals experiencing disabilities or health conditions. **The City and County waitlist for rental assistance has around 14,000 families. The waitlist is currently closed and may not re-open for 5 to 7 years or longer².**



Public Spaces & Accessibility

More than half of residents (56%) live farther than a 10-minute walk from a park³.



2 out of 3 residents (67%) live farther than a 10-minute walk from a healthy food source³.



Accessibility is about increasing availability to everything from goods and services, to spaces for exercise and play. Residents needs - including disability and age-related needs – must be considered.

1 in 4 residents live with a mobility disability and an income less than \$25,000 per year⁴.

Those responsible for neighborhood design need to ensure planning is inclusive of, and responsive to the needs of residents living with challenges and limited financial resources. This includes the layout and design of street and public spaces like parks, as well as reasonable proximity to goods, services, and healthcare. It also includes ensuring accessibility, connectivity, and affordability of transportation systems.

Community Safety + Security

1 in 5 parents with household income less than \$25,000 report feeling unsafe in their neighborhoods compared to less than 1 in 10 parents with household income of \$50,000 or over ⁴.



Low-income communities are *less likely* to have sidewalks, marked crosswalks and **street design** to support safer, slower speeds for traffic calming.

Why does how we perceive community safety matter?



Neighborhoods connect us to others and is where we experience a sense of community. **Feeling safe in our neighborhood is key to health**, as well as many other life outcomes like achieving educational goals.

Nearly 1 in 10 middle and high school students who identify as Hispanic or Black who report not going to school because they **felt they would be unsafe at school or on their way to school** within the last 30 days⁴.

The Office of Health Equity is working to make improvements to:

- Connect community members with access to healthy and affordable food in partnership with Tampa Bay Network to End Hunger and Feeding Tampa Bay.
- Understand access to available services and improve opportunities for physical activity through neighborhood walkability studies.
- Support neighborhood development projects through partnerships with organizations like Corporation to Develop Communities, Inc. (CDC) in the University Area and East Tampa.

More is needed. Tell us how we can support your efforts or join us by:

- Becoming involved in the civic process by attending public meetings and providing public comment on issues that matter to you.
- Learning more about the health impacts of community planning decisions.
- Telling city or county planners about needed road and sidewalk improvements.
- Supporting efforts to increase affordable housing throughout the county.
- Communicating with city or county planners about needed public transit changes that increase access and connectivity for residents.
- Ensuring community services are inclusive of the needs of residents including older adults.

TRANSPORTATION matters for health.

Access to transportation is impacted by both neighborhood and income. In turn, access to transportation also affects these same social determinants since reliable and affordable transportation gives people access to jobs, education, food, health care, and other goods and services needed for healthy living. Motor vehicles threaten health through crashes, pollution, and physical inactivity, but walking and biking also pose safety concerns in Hillsborough.

Some residents do not have access to a vehicle and require use of public transportation, ride sharing, and walking as their main modes of transit. A balance is needed between safety, connectivity, and access including affordable and efficient transportation for all residents.

Getting Around Town

6.5% of Hillsborough households are without a vehicle available to them.



20%

The percent of 1,216 Department of Health clients in a 2018 study that said transportation problems were the reason for one or more missed appointments⁷.

- Medical needs are unmet for over half the county's transportation-disadvantaged population⁷.
- Safe and affordable housing near public transportation is lacking⁸.

The Cost of Transit

Household budgets can be impacted by the cost of transportation, especially for people experiencing transportation disadvantages. Limitations exist in accessing areas of the county without a vehicle. Some jobs may require employees to have access to a vehicle to obtain work. Transportation can be a barrier to the type of job people qualify for based on their financial resources and credit.

The average household in greater Tampa Bay spends 25% of their annual income on transportation.

\$65

The cost of a 31-day unlimited ride bus pass in Hillsborough County is close to 8 hours of pre-tax minimum wage work⁵.

\$608

Estimated monthly cost to maintain a personal vehicle including finance charges, depreciation, insurance, maintenance, registration, taxes, and tires⁶.



Another cost related to transportation is time spent commuting. It decreases time to do other things, like caring for a child or family, engaging in self-care and exercise, attending preventive health care appointments, and preparing family meals. Long commutes increase childcare needs, which impact funds available for other things like healthy food. Commute times are not equitable and often are longer for residents reliant on public transportation.

Hillsborough County Road Safety

Tampa Bay is ranked the 8th most dangerous area for pedestrians in the nation.



On average, each year on Tampa's roads, **44 people are killed & 289 people are severely injured.**

*"Older adults, people of color, and people walking in low-income communities are disproportionately represented in fatal crashes involving people walking."*⁹

People walking are Hillsborough's most vulnerable road users.



46% of **pedestrians suffering fatal and severe injuries** are between **56 – 75 years old**⁹.

74% of **cyclists suffering fatal and severe injuries** are **under 25 years old**⁹.

66% of **fatal and severe crashes** happen in these **same communities** of concern⁹.

The Office of Health Equity is working to make improvements:

- By participating in transportation and planning committees of the Hillsborough County Metropolitan Planning Organization to address transportation equity for disadvantaged groups.
- Through membership with Vision Zero Hillsborough and City of Tampa - both organizations aim to reduce traffic fatalities and severe injuries to zero occurrences.

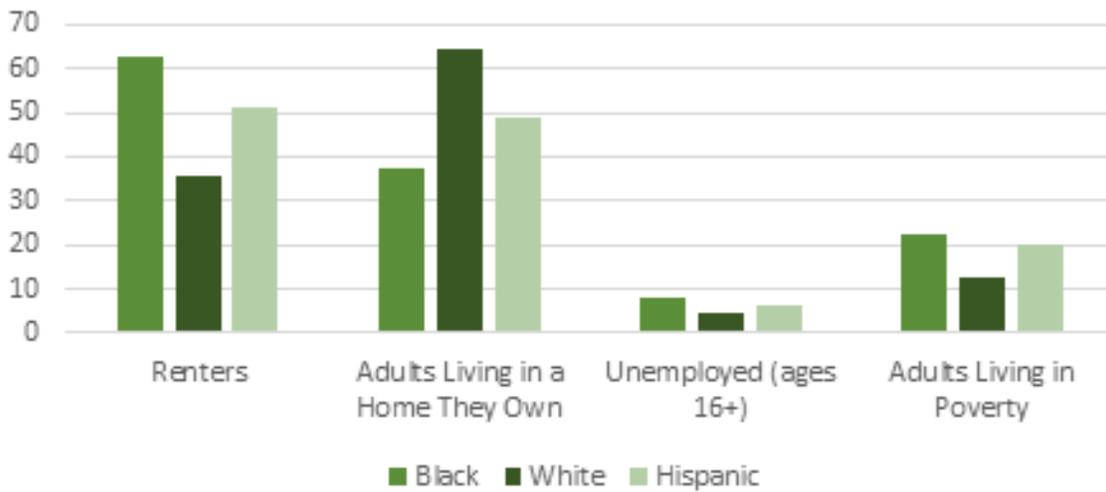
More is needed. Tell us how we can support your efforts or join us by:

- Supporting affordable public transportation options and transportation improvements, particularly in areas of high need and in unincorporated Hillsborough County.
- Joining Vision Zero Hillsborough and City of Tampa to work with others in preventing traffic deaths.

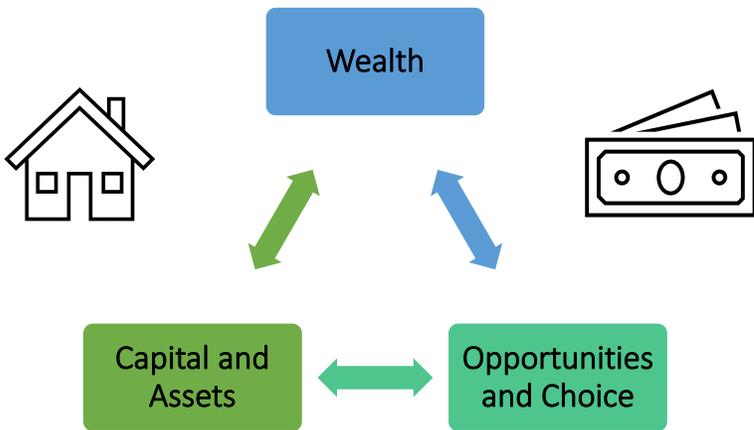
INCOME matters for health.

Income is necessary for meeting our basic needs as individuals, families, and communities. When people have enough income to consume healthy food, access transportation, obtain an education, and receive health care, as well as save for emergencies, they are more likely to achieve good health. In Hillsborough County, residents of color make up the majority of those who are experiencing economic hardships due to ongoing barriers to economic opportunities.

Economic Conditions Among Adults in Hillsborough County by Race/Ethnicity (2019)⁴

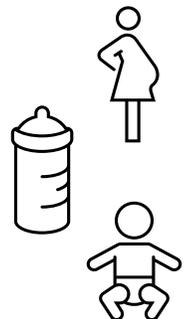


Unemployment data shown at left are from 2019; there are significant national data which show **unemployment rates rose significantly in the wake of COVID-19**. These rates were highest among employees of color, women, and those with less formal education¹⁰.



15.7% of **employed** residents of Hillsborough County, between the ages of 19 – 64, do not have any type of health insurance⁴.

In 2020, **only 62.1% of individuals eligible for WIC** in Hillsborough County **received services**⁴. The % of eligible Hillsborough County residents receiving WIC services has decreased every year since 2018.

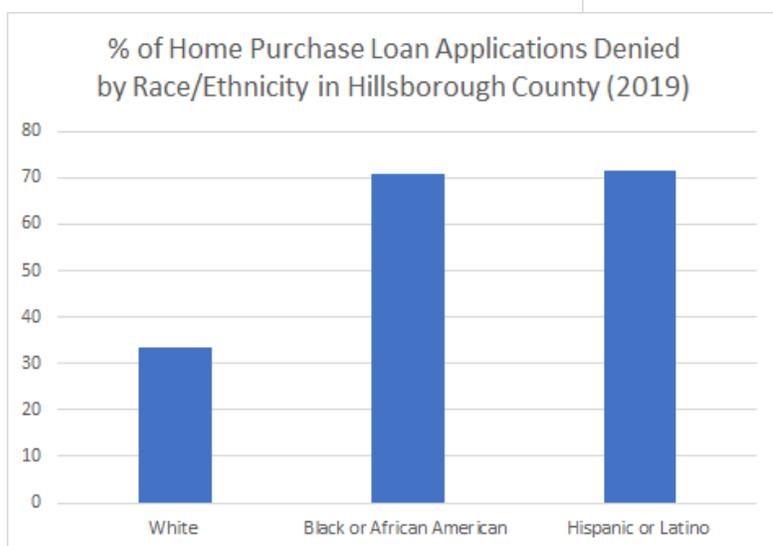
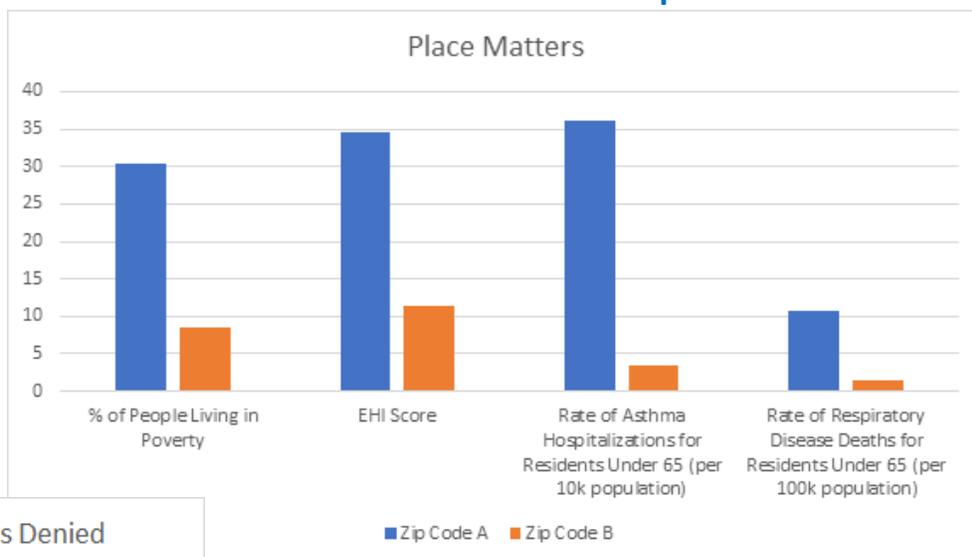


"...wealth is iterative, it provides people with the necessary initial capital to purchase an appreciating asset, which in turn generates more and more wealth, and can be passed from one generation to the next."¹¹

Income, health, and zip codes below represent **two real zip codes** within Hillsborough County and are provided as examples of how **social determinants can impact health**⁴.

Approximately 6% of Florida's homeless population resided in Hillsborough County in 2019³.

9.4% of all housing units in Hillsborough County were vacant in 2019⁴.



EHI Score = The **economic hardship index**⁴ compares financial strain between communities. It combines six population-level social and economic measures to provide a more complete picture of the difficulties faced in a community than a single measure could provide.

The Office of Health Equity is working to make improvements:

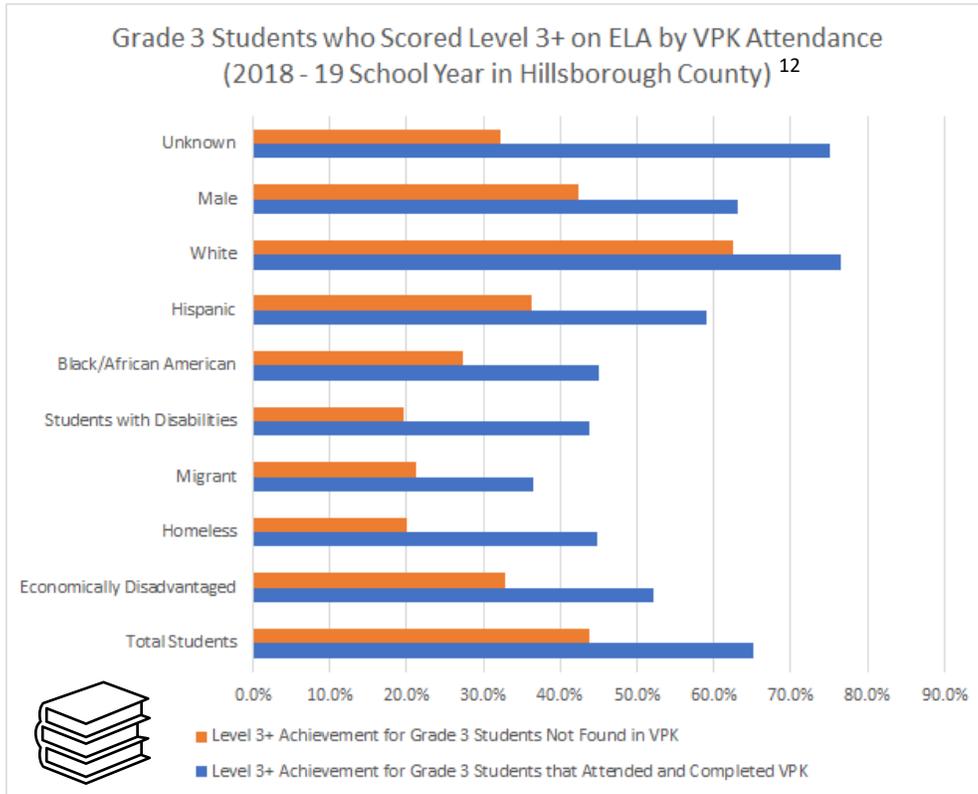
- Food insecurity is addressed by expanding the use of a food insecurity screening and referral system in health care settings, included in the 2020-2025 DOH-Hillsborough Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP).
- The Compass Program provides clients with navigation to services in the community, such as food assistance, rental assistance, career resources, child development support, and other resources that help meet their short and long-term health-related social needs.
- Low and no-cost birth control, exams and education are provided to women, men and teens through Title X family planning services contracted with local health centers.

More is needed. Tell us how we can support your efforts or join us by:

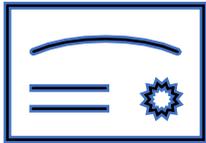
- Partnering with the Corporations to Develop Communities, Inc., which provides job training, financial counseling and home-ownership programs.
- Being a champion for equity and health in all policies.
- Ensuring your organization or business strives for excellence as an Equal Opportunity Employer.
- Promoting equitable pay across all groups where you work, shop, and spend time.

EDUCATION matters for health.

Education is an important factor in overall health and quality of life. When people receive quality education, they have access to better jobs, higher earnings and more resources for health. Education improves social and psychological wellbeing and health behaviors. However, quality education is not accessible in many communities, especially low-income and communities of color. Even with access to quality education, many inequities may persist through systemic racism and discrimination (gender, nativity, sexual orientation, etc.).



Research shows that stereotypes and discrimination negatively affect performance on standardized tests for female students and students of color¹³.



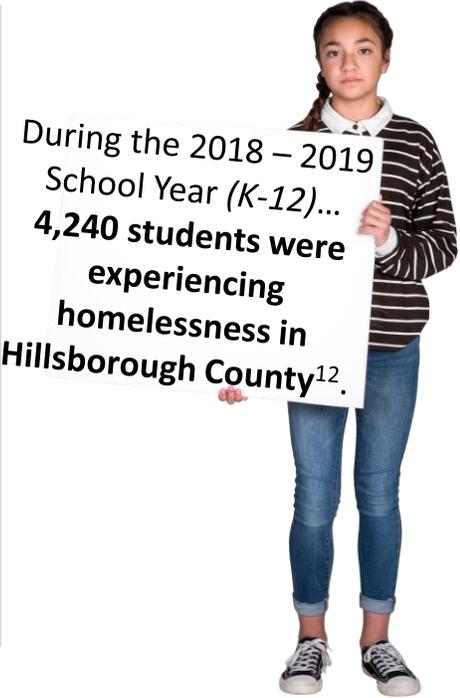
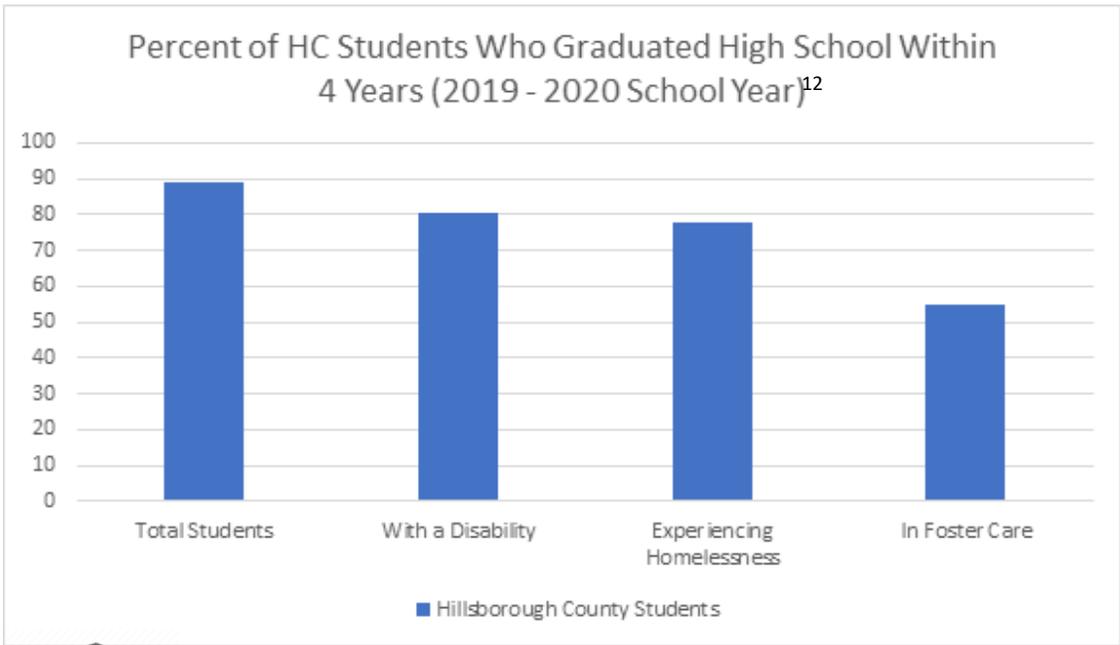
11.3% of Hillsborough County residents 25 years or older do not have a high school diploma or GED⁴.

Out of school suspensions create disruptions to learning, achievement, and support¹⁴.

Black students are suspended from school at a higher rate than White students, in Hillsborough County¹⁵ and nationally.

2019 -2020 School Year in Hillsborough County	Black	White	Hispanic
% of Students with 2+ Out-of-School Suspensions, by Race/Ethnicity ¹²	49.1%	15.7%	30.5%

- Research¹⁴ suggests this is because:
- Black students’ behaviors are more likely to be interpreted by teachers as insubordinate when **compared with the same behavior** in White students. This is an example of **implicit bias**, which refers to the attitudes that affect peoples’ understandings, beliefs and behavior, sometimes unconsciously.
 - Black students are more likely to attend schools with a “zero tolerance” policy for misbehavior.
 - Black students are more likely to be facing additional barriers, such as food insecurity, which can impact behavior, ability to concentrate, and decision-making.



- Median wealth for *Black families* whose head of household **earned a college degree**: \$23,400¹¹
- Median wealth of *White families* whose head of household **dropped out of high school**: \$34,700¹¹
- This *inequity* amounts to a **difference of more than \$10,000**

2019 – 2020 School Year in Hillsborough County	Low Minority Schools	High Minority Schools	Low Poverty Schools	High Poverty Schools
% of Inexperienced Teachers ¹²	13.0%	26.9%	25.5%	26.5%
% of Classes Taught By "Out-of-Field" Teachers ¹²	4.1%	9.1%	7.6%	10.2%

In the Fall 2020 – 2021 School Year, **31.7%** of students enrolled in Hillsborough County School District were **White**. **60.1%** of all students enrolled in Hillsborough County School District were **considered economically disadvantaged**¹².

The Office of Health Equity is working to make improvements:

- Paid internships are offered as an educational opportunity for students.
- School health is addressed through our partnership within the multi-agency School Health Advisory Committee.
- Early childhood education is addressed through participation on the Early Learning Coalition of Hillsborough County Board.
- Health literacy is addressed through ongoing training and education for DOH-Hillsborough staff and a continuous commitment to health literacy within our programming.

More is needed. Tell us how we can support your efforts or join us by:

- Supporting equitable funding for schools across Hillsborough County.
- Becoming a volunteer tutor for youth in disadvantaged communities through Big Brothers Big Sisters of Tampa Bay or another tutoring/mentoring organization.

HEALTH CARE ACCESS matters for health.

Health care access means being able to use health services when you need them, which improves overall health and wellbeing. This includes having access to affordable and quality care. In Hillsborough County, health care access can vary by race, ethnicity, income, gender and geography. These variations contribute to health inequities.

Uninsured Individuals by Race (2019)¹⁶

Black	13.5%
White	12.1%
Hispanic	19.1%
Asian	10.4%
White Alone, not Hispanic or Latino	9.0%

Most people without health insurance cannot afford quality, comprehensive health care. These people are likely to experience premature death and disease and are unlikely to be able to afford medical bills.

Uninsured Individuals by Country of Birth (2019)¹⁶

United States	10.6%
Outside the United States	23.8%
Outside the United States, Non-Citizen	35%

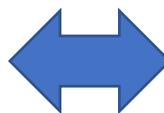
Uninsured Individuals by Age (2018)¹⁷

Under Age 65*	15%
Under Age 19*	7%

*Compared to other US counties with the smallest rates of uninsurance, Hillsborough county could do better. In other places, the best uninsurance rates under age 65 are 6% and best uninsurance rates under age 19 are 3%.

What does access to health care mean for quality of life?

Hillsborough County residents rank *Access to health care* as the **3rd most important factor impacting their quality of life.**¹⁷



48% of Black, 49% of Hispanic, and 65% of White survey respondents agree with the statement "the quality of health care in my neighborhood is good."¹⁷



In 2019, Residents of Color visited the Emergency Room (ER) for asthma at three times the rate of White residents and are admitted to the hospital for asthma 2.5 times more⁴. This happens in part because Residents of Color are more likely to be uninsured and lack primary care. As a result, this group is less likely to receive needed preventive care and disease management support that could help them avoid using the ER and being hospitalized.

There are **no safety-net dental programs** for most adults in Hillsborough County.

People foregoing regular dental care often use emergency services as a last resort.



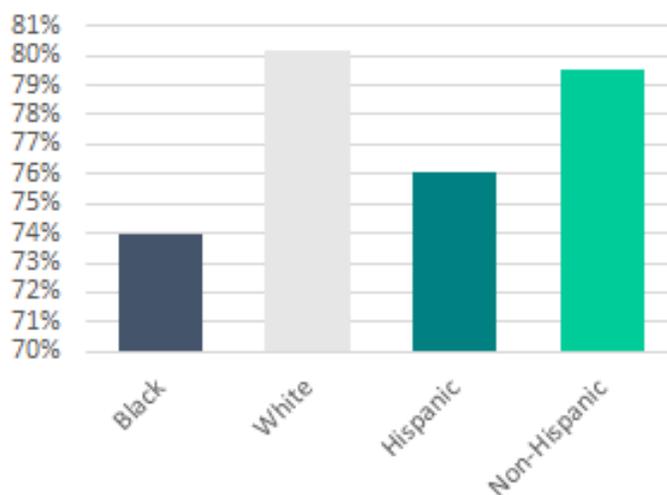
In 2019, there were **8,430 emergency room visits** for dental conditions in Hillsborough County in people older than 5 years of age⁴.

Men are 12% less likely to have a personal doctor compared to women.

These are the people who have a personal doctor in Hillsborough County⁴: 58% of Hispanics, 61% of Black Non-Hispanics, and 75% of White Non-Hispanics.



Percent of Births to Mothers with 1st Trimester Prenatal Care (2019)⁴



Early pre-natal care has been declining across all races & ethnicities for more than 5 years⁴. Late and no prenatal care is associated with babies born too small and too soon¹⁹.

The Office of Health Equity is working to make improvements:

- Health care access is addressed in partnership with federally-qualified health centers that offer low or no cost primary care and other services.
- We work with The Healthy Start Coalition to increase access to medical care, information and community resources to better ensure all moms and babies have the care they need.
- To increase access to dental care, we contract with local health centers to provide services for children, pregnant women and postpartum women.

More is needed. Tell us how we can support your efforts or join us by:

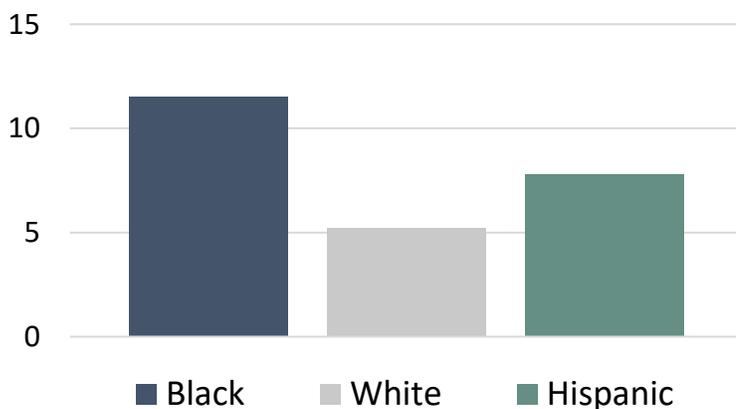
- Being a champion for state and federal policies that support access to affordable health care, including family planning services.
- Becoming involved in our Access to Health Services Action Plan in our 2020-2025 Community Health Improvement Plan.
- Evaluating policies in your organization that support good health, such as access to health insurance and paid sick leave.

Differences in DEATH & DISEASE are the result of differences in life conditions and resources.

This report shows inequities in neighborhoods, transportation, education, economic conditions and health care access for residents of Hillsborough County. These conditions are important factors for good health. Therefore, health outcomes vary across groups of people. These differences in health— **HEALTH INEQUITIES**— are avoidable, unfair, and unjust.

There are many health inequities in Hillsborough County. These are just a few.

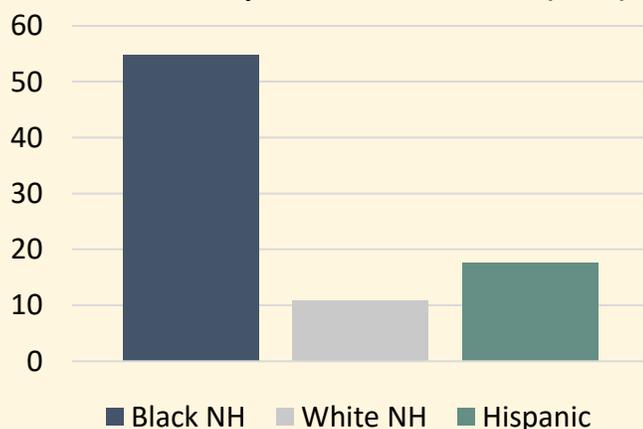
Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 Live Births in Hillsborough County by Race/Ethnicity (2019)⁴



Severe Maternal Morbidity is the presence of a complication during a delivery hospitalization. In 2019, Black women were almost twice as likely than White women to experience complications during pregnancy or delivery. These complications can lead to negative outcomes for the woman and the infant. Monitoring trends and disparities in severe maternal morbidity allows public health and medical professionals to improve the health of women and children⁴.

Many new HIV cases are among young people who were unaware of their HIV status due to lack of testing. A lack of testing may indicate a larger equity issue related to access to healthcare for HIV testing and prevention services, as well as inability to access HIV medications that can reduce the risk of transmission to their sex partners^{20, 21}.

New HIV Cases per 100,000 Residents (2019)⁴



INJURY & VIOLENCE⁴

In 2019, Black residents were hospitalized with non-fatal firearm injuries at 5.8 times the rate of White residents. In the same year, Black residents died from homicide at 5.8 times the rate of White residents.

These rates of death and injury are consistent with a greater public health violence crisis that impacts Black communities. Factors influencing it include historical and current systemic inequities in economic and educational opportunities, justice practices, geographic location, other health issues and access to care, and toxic stress from life conditions. The result compounds stress and strain already experienced by Black residents and particularly Black youth²².

Black residents are more likely to die from cancer than white residents.

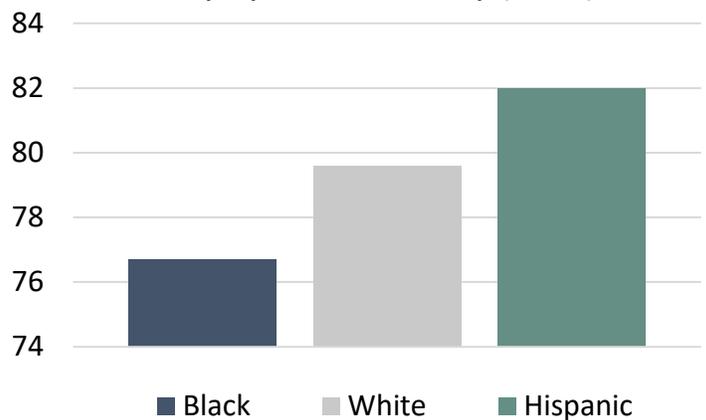
This is partly because Black residents are more likely to lack access to quality health care, and therefore receive delayed cancer screenings and begin cancer-related treatment further into the course of the disease than White residents ⁴.

Age-Adjusted Cancer Death Rate Per 100,000 Population (2019) ⁴

Residents	Prostate	Breast	Colorectal
Black	35.2	28.8	18.9
White	15.1	19.5	13.6

In 2019, twice as many Black residents died from **diabetes** compared to White residents⁴. Challenges to managing diabetes that may lead to death include unaffordability of medication, lack of consistent access to health care, food insecurity that limits access to healthy meal options, safe places to exercise in neighborhoods, and increased levels of toxic stress due to life conditions²³.

Life Expectancy in Years in Hillsborough County by Race/Ethnicity (2019)⁴



The Hillsborough County Health Department is working to address this:

- Infant deaths are addressed through the Florida Healthy Babies initiative, local community health improvement and strategic plans, and through local partnerships.
- Offering HIV counseling services and testing sites. Learn about DOH's PrEP and nPEP online at: <http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/aids/PrEP/index.html>
- Vaccinating Black and Hispanic adults for COVID-19 through our Targeted Vaccine Area program.
- Partnering with Hillsborough County and the City of Tampa to educate on COVID-19 vaccine access.
- Working with the Environmental Health Migrant Program to provide COVID-19 testing and vaccination information through growers and contractors to migrant agricultural workers.
- Targeting chronic disease prevention and cancer screening programs for vulnerable populations.

More is needed. Tell us how we can support your efforts or join us by:

- Encouraging friends and family to get vaccinated against COVID-19 and seasonal flu.
- Supporting programs providing routine screenings for diabetes, cancer and other chronic diseases.
- Working to destigmatize STD and HIV testing by supporting community-based equity campaigns.
- Knowing your own status by getting tested for HIV and support others in your social circle.

CONCLUSION

In Hillsborough County, not everyone has a fair opportunity to be healthy. This lack of opportunity is not only due to only individual behaviors, but largely due to historical lack of access to many resources. We all have a role to play in changing that. In this report we have suggested many ways to get involved in the areas of neighborhoods, transportation, income, education and health care access.

You can support improvements in health equity even if you don't work in these areas. If you care about communities of color and other marginalized groups, you can become a health equity champion in your own personal or professional life. By understanding and acting upon the idea that health is strongly influenced by the conditions in which people live, and that all people deserve the opportunity to be healthy, you can have an impact. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- **Acknowledge and respect different experiences.** Actively listen to the stories of people who are not like you. Lift up and validate the perspectives of others.
- **Financially support** agencies and businesses that align with your equity values.
- **Become a volunteer** where help is needed most.
- **Talk about the equity you see** or don't see with trusted friends and family. Talking about things makes them less scary and more actionable.
- **Find a health equity coffee buddy.** Whether you drink coffee or not, a buddy is someone of like-mind who has your back. You are building a health-equity support network.
- **Become involved in the civic process.** Attend public meetings in your neighborhood and among county officials and vote in elections.
- **Consider the health impacts** of community changes before they happen.
- **Consider the health impacts** of the things you have influence over at work.
- **Support equitable opportunities** for people inclusive of age, sex, gender, race, income, ability or other characteristic in organizations, businesses, and schools.
- **Watch, read, and share.** Check out our [Health Equity Video](#) and [Hillsborough County Health Equity Profile](#) and if you like them, spread the word.

Join us in exploring and promoting solutions to improving the health inequities in our community. We can have a lasting impact for present and future residents of Hillsborough County, and can help make ***good health an option for everyone.***

Contact us at HillsboroughHealthEquity@flhealth.gov.

GOOD HEALTH SHOULD BE AN OPTION FOR EVERYONE

SOURCES

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