Racial Disparities in Heart Health:
Trends, Gaps and Consequences

Heart disease remains the number one killer in the United States. Black Americans in particular face higher rates of cardiovascular disease and incur worse health outcomes. Black Americans suffer from heart attacks, strokes and heart failure conditions more often, and have higher cardiovascular disease mortality rates compared to white Americans.

By the numbers, this disparity is clear:

Nearly **60% of Black adults have cardiovascular disease.** Only 49% of all U.S. adults have some type of heart disease.

Over half of all Black adults in the U.S. have hypertension.

Black men have a **70% higher risk of heart failure** than white men; Black women's rate of heart failure is **50% higher** than white women.

More than 16.8 million Black Americans live in counties with **limited or no access to cardiology care,** and over 2 million live in counties with no cardiologists at all.

Black Americans may carry a gene that makes them more salt-sensitive, **increasing risk of high blood pressure and heart disease.**

Despite having lower cholesterol on average, Black Americans are **30% more likely to die** from heart disease than white Americans.

Social determinants of health such as unemployment rates, low-income access barriers, food insecurity and insurance coverage issues **greatly increase Black Americans' cardiovascular mortality rate.**

Lawmakers must enact policies that better support heart failure patients and address these gaps in care.

Get involved