August 18, 2025

Roger D. Klein, M.D., J.D.
Director
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857
Director@ahrq.hhs.gov

Re: 2024 National Healthcare Quality and Disparities Report, Missing

Dear Dr. Klein:

On behalf of Public Citizen, a consumer advocacy organization with more than 500,000 members and supporters nationwide, I am writing about the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) 2024 National Healthcare Quality and Disparities Report.

Mandated by the U.S. Congress (42 U.S.C. 299b-2(b)), the National Healthcare Quality and Disparities Report had been released by AHRQ through 2023 for 21 years in a row.[1,2,3,4,5]

The 2024 report should have been released in December 2024. As of mid-August 2025, however, the 2024 report has not been released.

Public Citizen respectfully requests that AHRQ immediately release the 2024 report, as mandated by Congress, and prioritize the subsequent release of the 2025 report in December 2025.

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[1] 2023 National Healthcare Quality and Disparities Report. Rockville, MD:
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality; December 2023. AHRQ Pub. No. 23(24)-0091-EF.
[2] 2022 National Healthcare Quality and Disparities Report. Rockville, MD:
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality; October 2022. AHRQ Pub. No. 22(23)-0030.
[3] 2021 National Healthcare Quality and Disparities Report. Rockville, MD: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality; December 2021. AHRQ Pub. No. 21(22)-0054-EF. [**Note**: in 2021 the agency changed the year-name to reflect the year of publication rather than the year of the most recently data used]
[4] 2019 National Healthcare Quality and Disparities Report. Rockville, MD: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality; December 2020. AHRQ Pub. No. 20(21)-0045-EF.
[5] 2018 National Healthcare Quality and Disparities Report. Rockville, MD: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality; September 2019. AHRQ Pub. No. 19-0070-EF.

The National Healthcare Quality and Disparities Report provides annualized information about the overall performance of the U.S. healthcare system including the system's record serving all Americans regardless of their age, race or ethnicity, and geography (e.g., urban/rural).

Annual release of the National Healthcare Quality and Disparities Report further serves as a public introduction and portal to a rich array of updated, taxpayer-supported, healthcare-related data compiled by AHRQ and other agencies within and outside of the Department of Health and Human Services (e.g., the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey and the U.S. Census).[6,7]

The hundreds of quantitative and qualitative indicators in the report cover many topics, including:

- demographic (e.g., age, gender, race/ethnicity)
- economic (e.g., income, employment, housing)
- educational (e.g., day care, high school and university degrees)
- geographic (e.g., by state and county)
- infrastructure (e.g., roads, parks, public transport, schools, hospitals)
- specific healthcare resources (e.g., supply of primary care clinics, insurance coverage)

The exhibits in the appendix of this letter highlight some of the important information in the report.

The National Healthcare Quality and Disparities Report has long been a quintessential "report card" on the fairness and quality of the U.S. healthcare system, calling attention to specific inefficiencies and deficiencies that can and must be addressed.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request.

Sincerely,

Michael T. Abrams

Michael T. Abrams, M.P.H., Ph.D.
Senior Health Researcher
Health Research Group
Public Citizen

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[6] Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. National Healthcare Quality and Disparities Reports. July 2024. https://www.ahrq.gov/research/findings/nhqrdr/index.html. Accessed August 3, 2025.
[7] Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. AHRQ: a brief history. March, 2025. https://www.ahrq.gov/cpi/about/brief-history.html. Accessed July 31, 2025.

Appendixes
Exhibit 1. Leading causes of death in 2021 by race/ethnicity
Exhibit 2. Deaths stratified by population density (urban to rural)
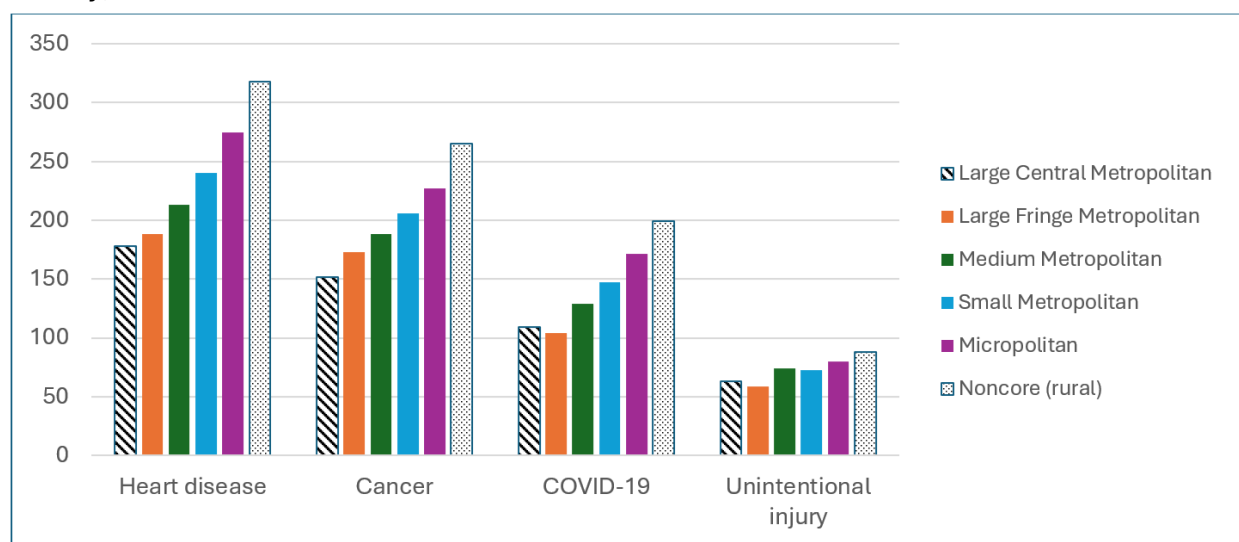*Exhibit 3*. National map of race/ethnicity disparity scorecards by state
Exhibit 4. Bar graph depicting recent quality-of-care changes experienced by Black people compared with White people
Exhibit 5. Illustrative listing of indicators used in previous NHQDRs

Exhibit 1. Leading causes of death in 2021 by race/ethnicity, age-adjusted deaths per 100,000 of the population

Race/ethnicity	Heart disease	Cancer	COVID-19	Unintentional injury
NH-White	180	154	94	70
NH-Black	226	167	136	80
NH-AI/AN	155	124	184	123

Source: 2023 NHQDR, Table 2; NH = non-Hispanic, AI/AN = American Indian/American Native

Exhibit 2. Age-adjusted deaths per 100,000 inhabitants, stratified by cause and population density, 2021

Source: 2023 NHQDR, adapted from Table 3

Exhibit 3. Race/ethnicity disparity scorecards (composite scores) by state, 2018-2021 (2023 NHQDR, Figure 46)

Note: More information about the measures and data sources included in the creation of the quality and disparities maps can be found in Appendix C. Specific information about healthcare quality in each state can be found on the NHQDR Data Tools website, https://datatools.ahrq.gov/nhqdr. All measures in this report that had state-level data to assess racial and ethnic disparities were used. Separate quality scores were computed for AI/AN, Asian, Black, Hispanic, multiracial, NHPI, and White people. For each state, the average of the AI/AN, Asian, Black, Hispanic, multiracial, and NHPI scores was divided by the White score. States were ranked on this ratio, and quartiles are shown on the map. The states with the worst disparity scores are in the fourth quartile, and states with the best disparity scores are in the first quartile. Disparity scores were not risk adjusted for population characteristics in each state, so these findings do not take into account population differences between states. Historically, the NHQDR has included state-specific estimates for selected AHRQ Quality Indicators based on Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project data. States with fewer than 50 data points were excluded. More information is available in Appendix A.
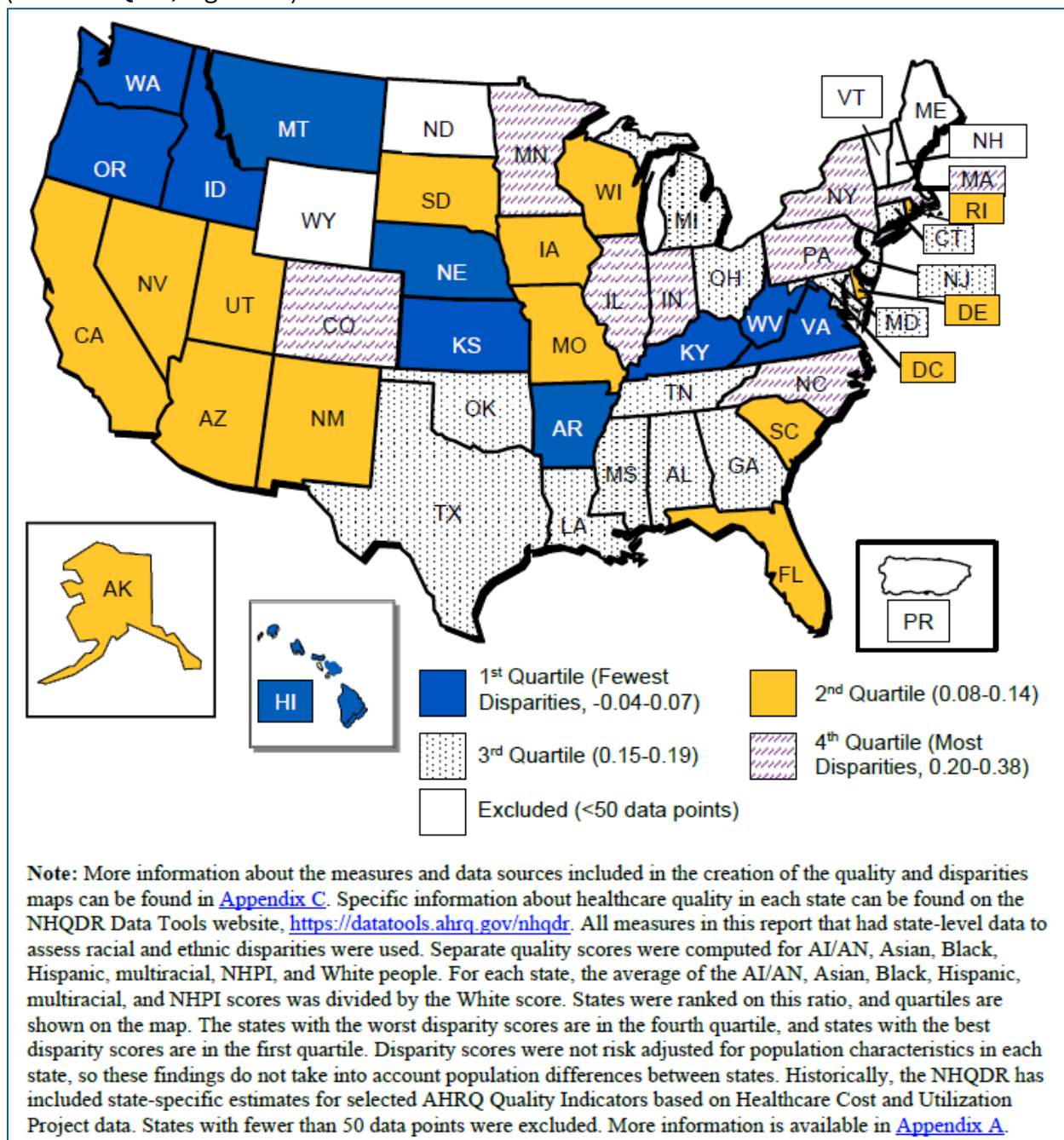
Exhibit 4. The number and percentage of measures for which Black people experience better, similar, or worse quality of care compared with White people for the most recent year available, 2019 to 2021(Source: 2023 NHQDR, Appendixes Figure 20)
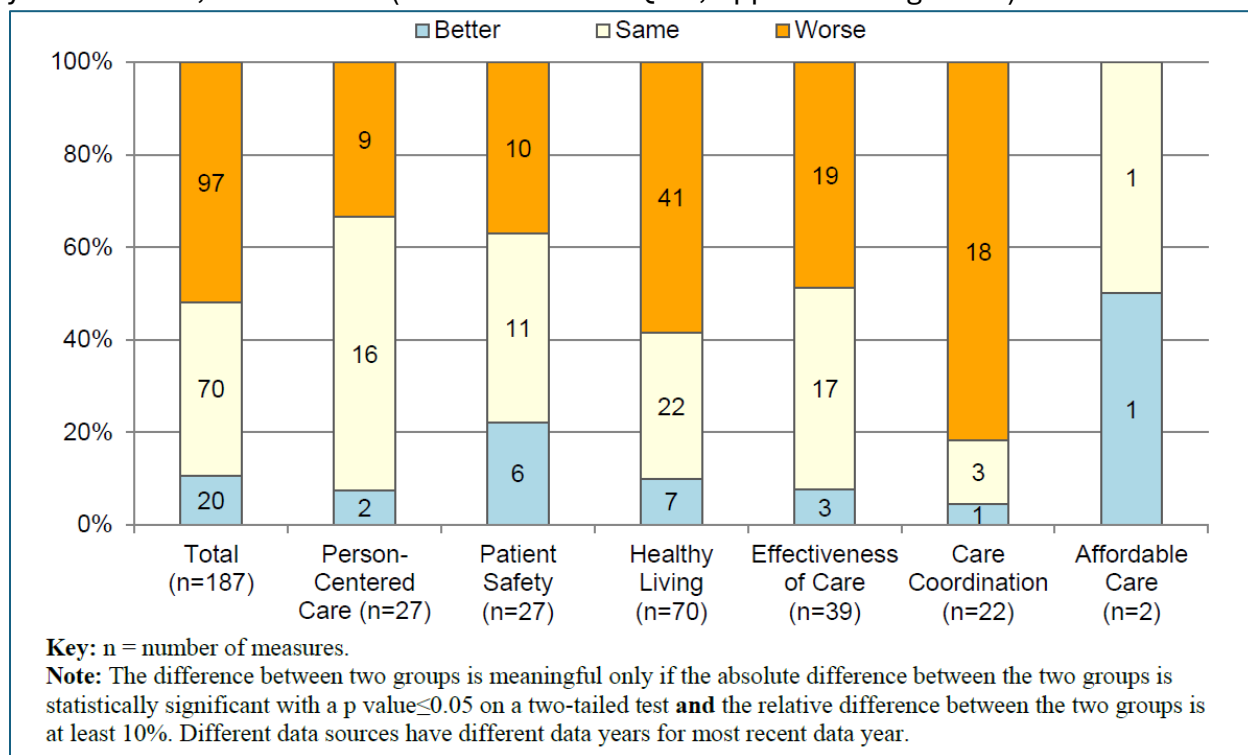

Key: n = number of measures.
Note: The difference between two groups is meaningful only if the absolute difference between the two groups is statistically significant with a p value≤0.05 on a two-tailed test **and** the relative difference between the two groups is at least 10%. Different data sources have different data years for most recent data year.

Exhibit 5. An illustrative listing of indicators included in recent National Healthcare Quality and Disparities reports, produced by the Agency for Healthcare Quality and Research

Measure (indicator), brief description	Dataset/source	Year of data used for the 2023 NHQDR
Postoperative sepsis	HCUP	2020
Surgical-wound healing	OASIS	2021
Deaths per 1,000 elective surgeries	HCUP	2020
Pressure sores during nursing-home stay	MDS	2021
Urinary tract infection during nursing-home stay	MDS	2021
Neonatal injury per 1,000 live births	HCUP	2020
Falls in nursing homes, with major injury	MDS	2021
Adults who report home health providers always explain things in a way that is understandable	HHCAHPS	2022
Hospice patients whose care team always treats them with dignity and respect	HOSPICE_CAHPS	2021

Measure (indicator), brief description	Dataset/source	Year of data used for the 2023 NHQDR
Adult hospital patients who strongly agree that staff respected their preference regarding their discharge healthcare	HCAHPS	2021
Hospital admissions for diabetes per 100,000 of the population	HCUP	2020
Hospital admissions for asthma	HCUP	2020
Hospital admission for hypertension	HCUP	2020
Breast cancer deaths per 100,000 females	NVSS_M	2021
Colon cancer deaths per 100,000 of the population	NVSS_M	2021
Deaths per 1,000 coronary artery bypass surgeries	HCUP	2020
Patients with chronic kidney failure who received a transplant within three years of diagnosis	USRDS	2017
Diabetes patients annually screened for eye and foot issues	BRFSS	2021
New HIV cases	HIV_AIDSSS	2021
Adults with a major depression episode who received treatment	NSDUH	2021
Deaths from suicide	NVSS_M	2021
People treated for illicit drug use who received treatment at a specialty facility in the past year	NSDUH	2021
Emergency department visits involving opioids	HCUP_NEDS	2020
Infants who were breastfed for at least three months	NIS	2020
Nursing-home residents with moderate to severe pain	MDS	2021
Home health patients who improve regarding confusion frequency	OASIS	2021
Adults older than 65 who get annual flu vaccination	BRFSS	2021
Children 19-35 months who receive DTPV, polio, MMR, hepatitis B, and varicella vaccines	NIS	2021
Those on Medicaid (or Medicare managed care, fee for service) who had a routine care appointment and said that during the past six months they "sometimes" or "never" got such appointments.	NCBD	2022
Those who needed care urgently from an illness or injury in the last month who "sometimes" or "never" received such care	NCBD	2022
Adults who in the last six months "sometimes" or "never" found it easy to see a specialist	NCBD	2022
Overall rating of health care as greater than 7 on a 1-to-10-point scale, with higher numbers reflecting better care (Medicare, Medicaid)	NCBD	2022

Measure (indicator), brief description	Dataset/source	Year of data used for the 2023 NHQDR
Medicare/Medicaid-enrolled adults who got advice to quit smoking at least once	NCBD	2022

BRFSS = Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System; **HCAHPS**= Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems; **HCUP** = Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project; **HCUP_NEDS** = HCUP Nationwide Emergency Department Sample; **HHCAHPS** = Home Health CAHPS; **HIV_AIDSSS** = National HIV Surveillance System; **HOSPICE_CAHPS** = Hospice CAHPS; **MDS** = Minimal Data Set for skilled nursing facilities; **NIS** = National Immunization Survey; **NSDUH** = National Survey on Drug Use and Health; **NVSS_M** = National Vital Statistics System—Mortality; **OASIS** = Home Health Outcome and Assessment Information Set; **USRDS** = Unites States Renal Data System