

## Commitment to Health Equity continues

Your health shouldn't depend on the color of your skin or the neighborhood you live in. Unfortunately, we have seen that minorities often experience a lower quality of health care.

As we continue our work to address health care disparities to help our members achieve their best health, Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey (Horizon BCBSNJ) is now joining other Blue Cross and Blue Shield (BCBS) companies and the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association (BCBSA) to announce a National Health Equity Strategy to confront the nation's crisis in racial health disparities.

The multi-year effort focuses on four conditions that disproportionately affect communities of color: maternal health, behavioral health, diabetes and cardiovascular conditions.



**BCBSA has set a goal to reduce racial disparities in maternal health by 50% in five years.**

**Maternal mortality**  
**3X HIGHER**

**Maternal morbidity**  
**2X HIGHER**

**Prevalence of delivery complications**  
**46% HIGHER**

**among black mothers versus white mothers.<sup>1</sup>**

### Where we are

Health care disparities related to race and the social barriers our members face in accessing care must be a continued focus. To date, Horizon BCBSNJ has:

- Deployed the most comprehensive effort yet in New Jersey to remove barriers that prevent Horizon BCBSNJ members living in underserved communities from achieving their best health. This program, Horizon Neighbors in Health, leverages the power of collaborating health systems and the reach of partner community organizations to connect at-risk members to services that are vital to their health and well-being.
- Joined a first-of-its kind partnership to create a new and integrated health care delivery model to remove racial disparities in maternal-child health. Initiated in 2019, the Advancing Health Equity Learning Collaborative is committed to reversing the upward trends of maternal and infant mortality rates.
- Directed 80% of The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey charitable giving to organizations that support people of color and are working to close health disparities, improve care access and create prevention and awareness programs for major diseases such as obesity and opioid misuse.

### Moving forward

Horizon BCBSNJ is committed to making additional improvements, but we know we cannot do this alone. We invite others — health care providers, industry leaders, community partners and policymakers — to join us as we continue to undertake this critical work.

#### Our plans in progress include:

- Increasing the diversity of primary care physicians and nurses, as well as behavioral health providers, in Horizon BCBSNJ's network.
- Incorporating a bias training requirement into our network provider relationships.
- Creating a scholarship initiative to increase the number of Black nursing students in New Jersey.
- Partnering with government agencies and community organizations to close racial health disparities and improve maternal and infant care.

Together, we can affect meaningful, measurable progress toward our goal of health equity.

To learn more about the National Health Equity Strategy and Maternal Health Program, visit [BlueHealthEquity.com](https://www.horizonbcbsnj.com/bluehealthequity).

<sup>1</sup> AJMC "Racial Disparities Persist in Maternal Morbidity, Mortality and Infant Health," 2020