

Executive Summary: Health Equity Focus Group Report

Health Equity Focus Group
Event Date: April 12, 2023

Conducted by:

Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association

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June 15, 2023

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GSA Multiple Award Schedules No. GS-00F-101CA and GS-35F-355CA



Executive Summary

o Background

Nurses and other health care professionals (HCPs) have a key role in promoting health equity and access to care, treatments, and therapies in cardiovascular disease (CVD) and other disease states. Despite being highly preventable, CVD is the leading cause of death globally, killing more than 17.9 million people across the globe—and more than 650,000 Americans—each year, with health inequities playing a substantial role.^{1,2,3} The American Heart Association (AHA) has declared structural racism as a cause of poor health and premature death from heart disease and stroke.⁴ Intersecting threats of systemic racism, historical mistrust of health care institutions and medical professionals, modifiable global risk factors for CVD (obesity, diabetes, hypertension, dyslipidemia), and social determinants of health (SDOH) can compound risks for CVD and related comorbidity and mortality and health inequalities.

o Focus Group Selection and Format

Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association (PCNA) contracted with Econometrica, Inc., on an initiative to help better understand HCPs' needs, barriers, and areas of improvements related to health equity and to create a health equity self-assessment for individual HCPs. To improve understanding of these topics and inform the draft content of the next project phase, a 1-day, in-person Health Equity Focus Group was held on April 12, 2023. Nine participants were purposefully selected from diverse geographical settings and represented clinical, academic, and community settings, with patient populations including White, Black, Latino, indigenous, and immigrant communities.

An overview presentation of health equity in practice was followed by a large group discussion. Participants then took part in one of three breakout groups: peripheral arterial disease (PAD), heart failure (HF), and cardiovascular (CV)-related maternal mortality.

o Focus Group Results

From both the large and breakout group discussions, Econometrica identified the three key themes outlined below. *Italics indicates themes that were mentioned most frequently.*

1. Health Disparities

Participants identified health disparities related to *race and ethnicity*, socioeconomic status, and SDOH.

2. Barriers to Health Equity

In the large group discussion, the most frequently mentioned theme was the *limitations HCPs face* due to patient load, administrative burden, and lack of funding that prevented them from providing optimal care. Another theme was the difficulties dealing with insurance companies to get medications and treatments approved for their patients. Breakout group discussions included *treatment difficulties for these conditions*, which led to patients not receiving all needed components of treatment.

3. Tools and Resources

Education and organizations promoting health equity were mentioned in the large group discussion; *partnerships* and collaborating with other groups that are also promoting health equity were points of discussion in breakout group discussions.

The results of the Focus Group will inform the next project phase, the development and deployment of a health equity self-assessment for individual HCPs. Full results of the Focus Group and description of next steps can be found in the complete project report.

Appendix A. Health Equity Focus Group Agenda



**Health Equity Focus Group
AGENDA**
Wednesday April 12, 2023

TIME	TOPIC
8:30 - 9:00 AM	Breakfast Served
9:00 AM	Welcome and Introductions
9:30 AM	Introduction to Health Equity Self-Assessment Tool
9:40 AM	State of Cardiovascular Health Equity Today
10:00 AM	Health Equity Focus Group
11:00 AM	Break
11:15 AM	Breakout Group Discussions 1. Peripheral Arterial Disease 2. Heart Failure 3. Cardiovascular Related Maternal Mortality
12:00 PM	Lunch
12:30 PM	Breakout Groups Report Out 1. Peripheral Arterial Disease 2. Heart Failure 3. Cardiovascular Related Maternal Mortality
1:15 PM	Exit Ticket and Post-Event Survey
1:30 PM	Closing

Appendix B. Focus Group Participants



**PCNA's Health Equity Focus Group
PARTICIPANT LIST**

Yvonne Commodore-Mensah, PhD, MHS, RN
 Susan Halli Demeter, DNP, FNP-BC, CLS, FNLA, FPCNA
 Daphne Ferdinand, PhD, RN
 Emily Jones, PhD, RNC-OB, FAAN, FAHA, FPCNA
 Stephanie Little, MSN, RNC-OB, C-EFM
 Natalie Pierson, MSN, RN, NC-BC, FHFA
 Jauna Royal, DNP, APRN, FNP-C
 Heidi Salisbury, RN, MSN, CNS-BC, ACGN
 Chloe Villavaso, MN, APRN, ACNS-BC, FPCNA, AACN

¹ Cardiovascular Diseases (CVDs) Fact Sheet. World Health Organization (WHO). Published June 11, 2021. Accessed May 16, 2023. [https://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/cardiovascular-diseases-\(cvds\)](https://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/cardiovascular-diseases-(cvds)).

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Underlying Cause of Death, 1999–2018. CDC WONDER Online Database. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 2018. Accessed May 16, 2023. <https://wonder.cdc.gov/ucd-icd10.html>.

³ Virani SS, Alonso A, Benjamin EJ, et al. Heart disease and stroke statistics—2020 update: A report from the American Heart Association. *Circulation*. 2020;141(9):e139-e596. doi:10.1161/CIR.0000000000000757.

⁴ Churchwell K, Elkind MSV, Benjamin RM, et al. Call to action: Structural racism as a fundamental driver of health disparities: A presidential advisory from the American Heart Association. *Circulation*. 2020;142:e452-e468. doi:10.1161/CIR.0000000000000936.