



Statement of Problem

Overall, the health status of Alameda County residents is better than it has been for many years. However, a glaring statistic remains: the gap in health outcomes between Whites and people of color is steadily increasing. Although this gap, or inequity, impacts a myriad of racial and gender groups, African American and Latino men are at particular risk of having poor health outcomes because they live in a system that is characterized by racism, gender discrimination, heterosexism and class exploitation.

Regardless of race, men face worse health outcomes than women. African-American and Latino men in Alameda County die at an earlier age and have significantly higher rates of illness and death from heart disease, all forms of cancer, childhood asthma and most types of injury. Unintentional injuries, such as car accidents, account for a majority of injury-related deaths, and national rates among men are more than double the rates among women.

Among African-American and Latino men, certain inequities in social conditions like education and income lead to greater health inequities. For example, a strong relationship exists between income and health, and educational attainment is one of the strongest predictors of income. Further, people who graduate from high school earn much higher salaries and are two times more likely to be employed than those who do not. At the root of these social inequities is discrimination based on race, class, gender and other isms. This means that in Alameda County, African American and Latino men are more likely to have lower educational attainment, lower-wage jobs and higher rates of uninsurance than White men. Each of these social inequities contributes to health inequities and, ultimately, poorer health outcomes.

What do we mean by gender discrimination?

It is true that men as a group often have more power than women. But it is a relatively small group of predominantly White, highly-paid, heterosexual men whose power shapes politics, business, media, and priorities within the public sector and justice system. In contrast, men of color and men who do not fit the mold of traditional gender roles find themselves at the bottom of a hierarchy where they often face discrimination that can lead to unemployment, social isolation, depression, and poor health.

UMHI recognizes that maintaining the status quo and traditional gender roles is harmful and oppressive for both men and women. UMHI is committed to creating a continuum of care and promoting a society that values a variety of masculinities and challenging the status quo.



Program Description

The Urban Male Health Initiative (UMHI) was launched in 2005 in recognition that men in Alameda County do not access adequate health care and face a multitude of health risks ranging from occupational hazards to violence to societal pressure and lack of economic opportunity. The mission of UMHI is to reduce the premature and disproportionate mortality and morbidity of men and boys in Alameda County through changes in both policy and institutional practices.

Addressing the Disparities

The literature suggests a myriad of ways to address disparities in male health. A recurring theme demands that we identify and address inequities in education, employment, and social service systems. The literature also suggests methods that complement the “social determinants of health” framework. Some of these suggestions include:

- Collaborate with community stakeholders involved in the prison re-entry system and coordinating the transition of services;
- Increase the availability of community-based health screening and outreach;
- Increase health education that targets men and expand health insurance and access to care for men of color;
- Invest in enriching neighborhoods;
- Balance the promotion of behavior change and altering the structural and environmental factors that interact with behavior when looking at policy.

A Few Highlights: UMHI in the Community

- **Alameda County Re-entry Network** – UMHI staff collaborates with re-entry partners to establish the Alameda County Re-entry Network: a collaboration of public, private, and community-based agencies that coordinate, plan, and streamline county services for the formerly incarcerated. UMHI staff and partners organize monthly community roundtables. <http://www.acreentry.org>
- **Development of Healthy Oakland** – UMHI staff provides technical assistance to Healthy Oakland to become a medical home for formerly incarcerated men in Oakland.
- **Emergency Medical Services** – UMHI staff partners with the Emergency Medical Services Division to create and implement pre-EMT training at Camp Sweeney.
- **Technical assistance, training, and support to the San Quentin TRUST-** UMHI staff helps coordinate the annual San Quentin health fair and provides ongoing parenting and domestic violence classes to members of the Trust Fellows (TRUST-an organization who's mission is to educate, organize and assist incarcerated men to become vibrant and productive community members through an understanding and reawakening of their history, culture and values).
- **Build capacity within Latino Community Based Organizations to address health inequities for males** – UMHI staff provides technical assistance to La Clinica de la Raza to develop their own internal urban male health focus.

Ways to Get Involved

- Urban Male Health Forum – a bi-monthly forum that brings together community members, policy makers, health care providers and various community-based organizations that serve males to network, share ideas and learn about male health issues together.
- Collaborate with our partner organizations – many of our partner organizations could benefit from different types of technical assistance. Contact us to find out how!



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