

# Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Covid-19 pandemic

## Community Foundation for Greater New Haven

**Marcella Nunez-Smith, MD, MHS**

Associate Professor, Internal Medicine, Public Health, and Management  
Director, Equity Research and Innovation Center & Center for Research Engagement  
Deputy Director, Yale Center for Clinical Investigation

May 8, 2020

# An Overview of Today's Discussion

**Discussion Goal**  
Provide Context on  
Local & National  
Inequities  
& Paths Forward

- 1 COVID Inequities on a National and Local Level
- 2 Multifactorial Contributions to COVID Disparities
- 3 Within Our Community: New Haven Spotlight Issues
- 4 Looking Forward: Emerging Best Practices



Vulnerability  
Index



Screening



Communication  
Units



High Quality  
Data



Testing &  
Tracing



Task  
Forces

# An Overview of Today's Discussion

**Discussion Goal**  
Provide Context on  
Local & National  
Inequities  
& Paths Forward

1 COVID Inequities on a National and Local Level

2 Multifactorial Contributions to COVID Disparities

3 Within Our Community: New Haven Spotlight Issues

4 Looking Forward: Emerging Best Practices



Vulnerability  
Index



Screening



Communication  
Units



High Quality  
Data



Testing &  
Tracing



Task  
Forces

# Alarming COVID-19 Racial/Ethnic Disparities Reported Across the Nation



HEALTH CARE

## 7 Out Of 10 Patients Killed By COVID-19 In Louisiana Were African American

April 12, 2020 · 7:20 AM ET

Heard on [Weekend Edition Sunday](#)



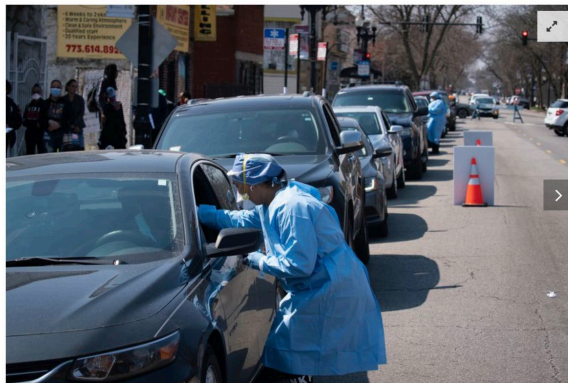
5-Minute Listen



NPR's Lulu Garcia-Navarro speaks with CEO and physician Takeisha Davis, who works at New Orleans East Hospital, about how her community is holding up during the pandemic.



## Chicago's coronavirus disparity: Black Chicagoans are dying at nearly six times the rate of white residents, data show



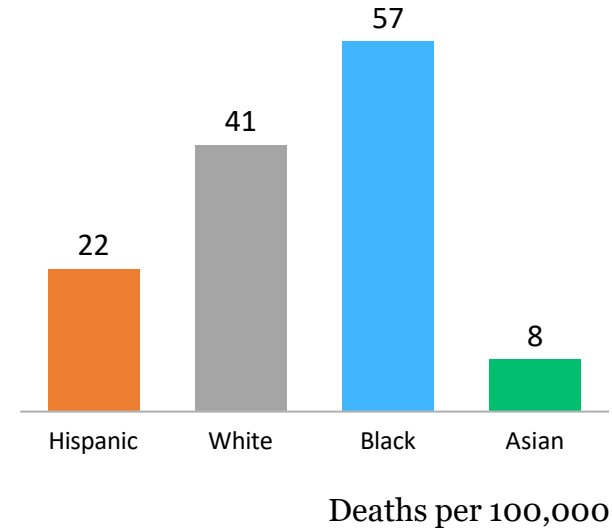
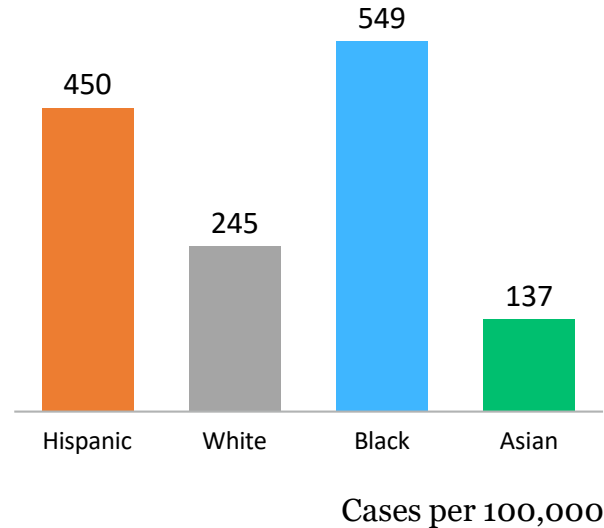
## Boston releases coronavirus data that point to stark racial disparities among those infected

By [Kay Lazar](#) Globe Staff, Updated April 9, 2020, 6:33 p.m.





# Connecticut Data: The impact to our citizens has not been uniform



Note: Data as of April 21, 2020  
Source: CT Department of Public Health April 21, 2020 COVID-19 Update

# COVID-19 Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Connecticut and New Haven

**New Haven** COVID-19 hospitalizations:

**43%** African Americans

**28%** Hispanics

Percent of total **NH** population:

**32%** African Americans

**30%** Hispanics

**Connecticut** COVID-19 hospitalizations:

**18%** African Americans

**24%** Hispanics

Percent of total **CT** population:

**12%** African Americans

**16.5%** Hispanics

NEW HAVEN

## New Haven Data Shows Clusters of Cases in Communities of Color

By Kyle Jones • Published April 13, 2020 • Updated on April 13, 2020 at 7:05 pm



One local clergy association is pushing for ore to be done to protect communities of color during this outbreak

## Connecticut Minorities Hit Hardest By Coronavirus

By EBONG UDOMA • APR 9, 2020

Share  
Tweet  
Email



A woman wears a mask and bandana to protect himself against COVID-19 in New York Tuesday. As the virus crosses the country, it is cutting a particularly devastating swath through an already vulnerable population, black Americans.

BEBETO MATTHEWS / AP

## New Haven social leaders call for more focus on coronavirus testing in minority communities

By Clare Dignan • Updated 9:23 pm EDT, Monday, April 13, 2020

Share f t p d e

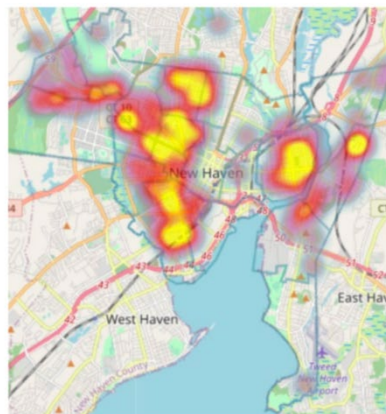
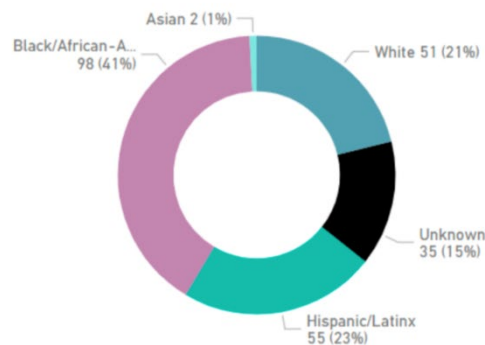


Photo: Hearst Connecticut Media File

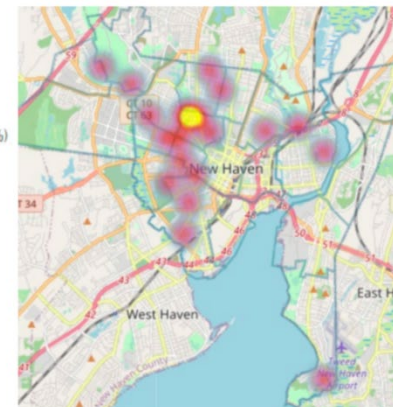
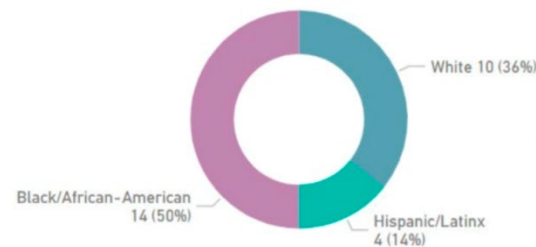
2 3 4

# COVID-19 Racial/Ethnic Disparities Reported in New Haven

## COVID-Related Hospitalizations



## COVID-Related Deaths



CREDIT COURTESY OF THE CITY OF NEW HAVEN

*In New Haven, African American residents make up 41% of hospitalizations due to COVID-19 and 50% of deaths, even though they make up 33% of the city's population.*

CREDIT COURTESY OF THE CITY OF NEW HAVEN

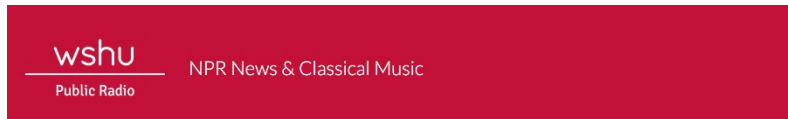


# Personal Tragedy



Robert Johnson, 49, of New Haven, died the Monday after Easter while he reportedly waited to be scheduled for a COVID-19 test.

COURTESY OF GLORIA JOHNSON



## Son's death highlights COVID-19 testing barriers for black residents

COVID-19 :: by CASSANDRA BASLER | WSHU | APRIL 22, 2020 | "EXIT CLEAN READ"

Accessed 04/23/2020. <https://www.wshu.org/post/sons-death-highlights-testing-barriers-black-residents#stream/0>



# An Overview of Today's Discussion

**Discussion Goal**  
Provide Context on  
Local & National  
Inequities  
& Paths Forward

1 COVID Inequities on a National and Local Level

2 **Multifactorial Contributions to COVID Disparities**

3 Within Our Community: New Haven Spotlight Issues

4 Looking Forward: Emerging Best Practices



Vulnerability  
Index



Screening



Communication  
Units



High Quality  
Data

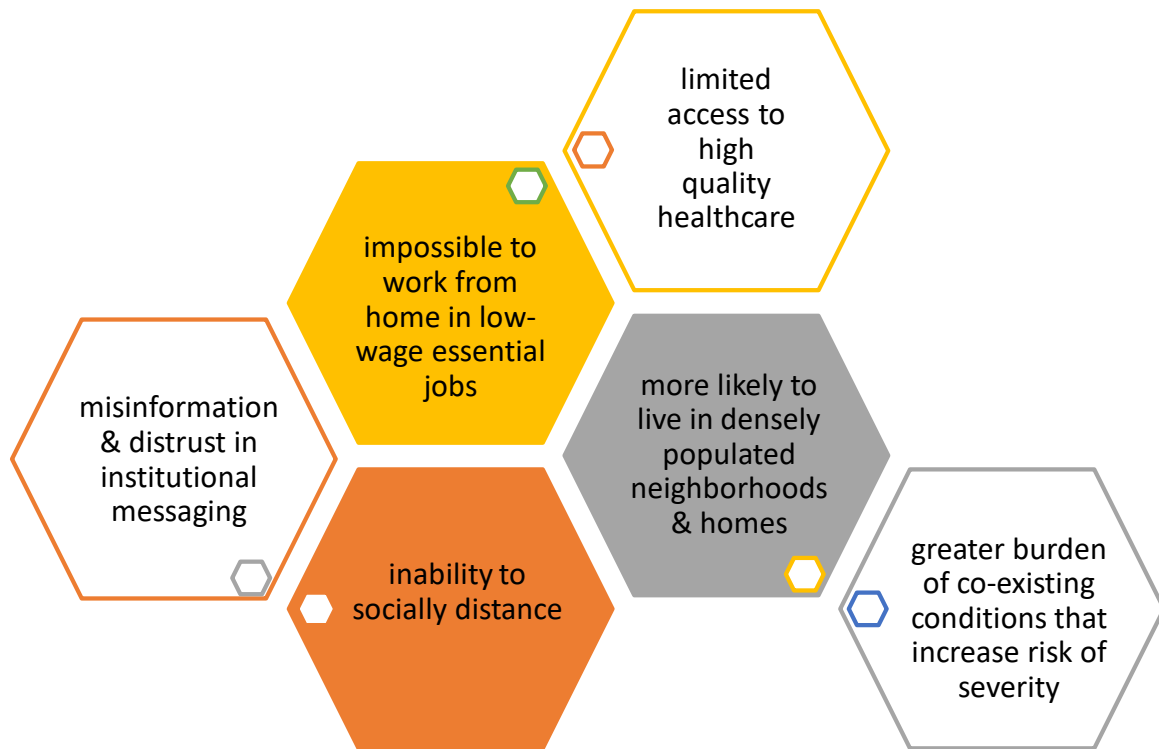


Testing &  
Tracing



Task  
Forces

# Multifactorial Contributions to COVID-19 Disparities: intergenerational & structural dis-investment in communities



# High level of social risk disparities in New Haven before COVID-19

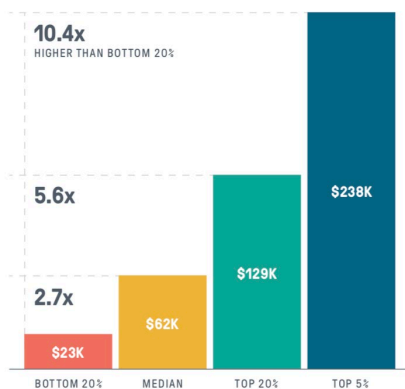


## Income Inequality

FIG 2.9

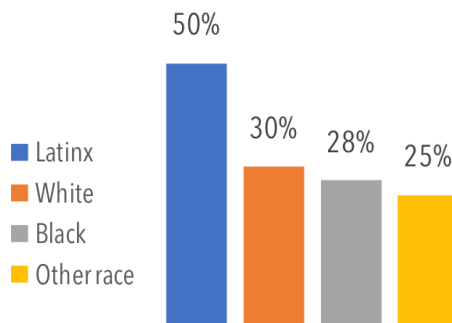
**The highest-earning 5% makes 10x more money than the bottom 20%**

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY QUANTILE, GREATER NEW HAVEN, 2016, WITH RATIO TO BOTTOM 20% INCOME

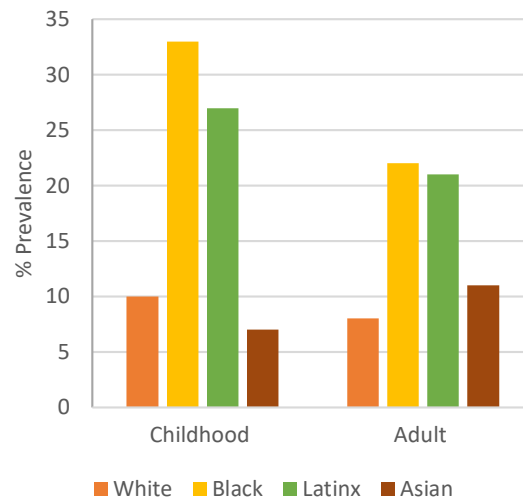


## Food Insecurity

prevalence of food insecurity in 6 low-income New Haven neighborhoods by race/ethnicity



## Housing Instability



Pre-existing social risk disparities are exacerbated

# An Overview of Today's Discussion

**Discussion Goal**  
Provide Context on  
Local & National  
Inequities  
& Paths Forward

1 COVID Inequities on a National and Local Level

2 Multifactorial Contributions to COVID Disparities

3 **Within Our Community: New Haven Spotlight Issues**

4 Looking Forward: Emerging Best Practices



Vulnerability  
Index



Screening



Communication  
Units



High Quality  
Data



Testing &  
Tracing



Task  
Forces



# Greater New Haven Issues Spotlight: public health & healthcare

## PUBLIC HEALTH

- basic needs
- support safe/effective self-isolation of Covid-19 & self-quarantine patients
- access to timely testing (active infection & antibodies)
- contact tracing
- protect low-wage essential workers
- data: timeliness, coordination, accuracy, quality

## HEALTHCARE

- clinical care transformation—televisit migration challenges
- challenges connecting patients with community resources
- crisis standards of care (“rationing” & limited visitation policies)
- lost revenue
- workforce redeployment
- proportion of residents without medical home
- access to experimental therapies

# An Overview of Today's Discussion

**Discussion Goal**  
Provide Context on  
Local & National  
Inequities  
& Paths Forward

1 COVID Inequities on a National and Local Level

2 Multifactorial Contributions to COVID Disparities

3 Within Our Community: New Haven Spotlight Issues

4 Looking Forward: Emerging Best Practices



Vulnerability  
Index



Screening



Communication  
Units



High Quality  
Data



Testing &  
Tracing



Task  
Forces



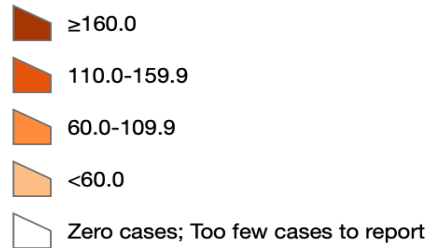
# Vulnerability Indices: Need for targeting limited resources to most at risk communities

## COVID-19 Vulnerability Index

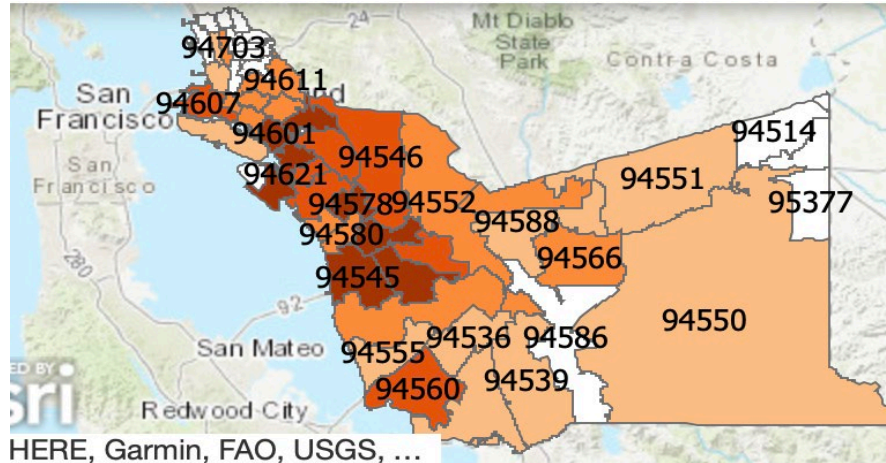
### 📍 *Oakland, California*

- Developed by Oakland COVID-19 Racial Disparities Task Force
- Will inform decisions on how to target communities most at risk for adverse COVID outcomes

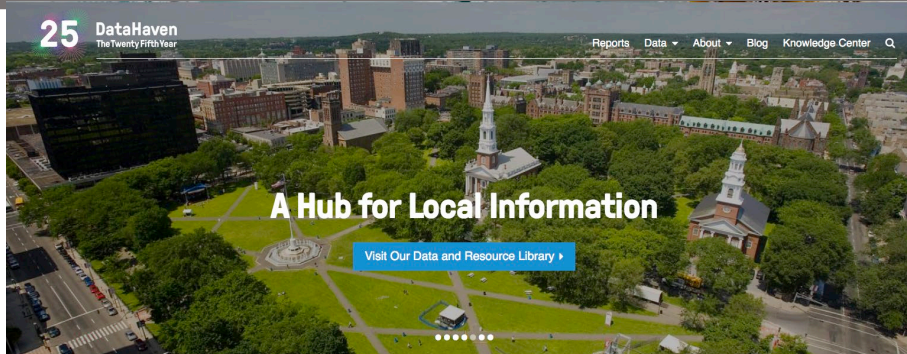
### Case Rates per 100,000 Population



- Oakland, Alameda County:  
~ **2000** COVID cases
- Oakland population:  
African Americans: **22.7%**  
Latinx: **26.5%**



# DataHaven: Rich repository of local data for targeting resources to need



## FEATURED CONTENT



**COVID-19 in Connecticut: Data Analysis**  
DataHaven analysis of Connecticut COVID-19 trends



**Connecticut State Legislative District Profiles**  
Map

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Apr. 23, 2020: DataHaven estimates that social distancing to counter the spread of COVID-19 has already saved 10,000 lives in Connecticut

Apr. 11, 2020: Newsletter: You are saving thousands of lives this week; new neighborhood maps

Mar. 11, 2020: Greater Hartford Wellbeing Index Highlights Challenges and Opportunities in the Region

Dec. 10, 2019: Newsletter: Submit nominations for the 2nd annual Innovation Awards, new hire, Women & Girls report

Nov. 12, 2019: Newsletter: DataHaven officially releases 2019 Community Index reports

[Read More](#)

## RECENT PRESS COVERAGE

Apr. 27, 2020: Press coverage of DataHaven COVID-19 Connecticut data report on lives saved due to social distancing

Mar. 18, 2020: CT's opportunity gaps: Two districts, two very different plans for students while school is out indefinitely

Mar. 12, 2020: For the Count

Mar. 10, 2020: Sowing Healthy Habits: Urban Agriculture

## ASK MARK



Are you writing a grant proposal, plan, or news story and having trouble finding information here? Complete the Ask Mark form to request assistance.

## TWEETS

"Food insecurity has doubled for all households & more than quadrupled among children from 2016 levels." Analysis o...  
<https://t.co/vlwM8GIAp>

Thank you to everyone who has supported us in this year's #TheGreatGive! The event, which looks to be on pace to ra...  
<https://t.co/9eb0V1daj>

RT @ctdata: Support DataHaven & other non-profits during #TheGreatGive on 5/5 & 5/6. More at <https://t.co/RU0IEzPm>. Gifts will be matched...

Update: By practicing #socialdistancing over the past several weeks, Connecticut residents have helped to save near... <https://t.co/zIC4W4B1Dj>

RT @urbandata: Connecticut friends: Please consider a \$5 gift today to DataHaven and other organizations. Matching funds are based on the n...

Follow us @ctdata

**DataHaven**  
The Twenty Fifth Year

<https://www.ctdatahaven.org/>



# An Overview of Today's Discussion

**Discussion Goal**  
Provide Context on  
Local & National  
Inequities  
& Paths Forward

- 1 COVID Inequities on a National and Local Level
- 2 Multifactorial Contributions to COVID Disparities
- 3 Within Our Community: New Haven Spotlight Issues
- 4 **Looking Forward: Emerging Best Practices**



Vulnerability  
Index



Screening



Communication  
Units



High Quality  
Data



Testing &  
Tracing



Task  
Forces



# State Re-opening Plans: Missing focus on most at-risk populations

9 categories of people with  
heightened risk

65 years and older

Living in nursing homes, group  
settings, & need in-home support

Medically vulnerable (co-existing  
high-risk conditions)

Low income & unable to  
effectively self-isolate at home

Frontline essential workers, caregivers,  
& undocumented immigrants

Homelessness or housing insecurity

Incarcerated or employed in prisons



In clamor to reopen, many blacks feel their safety ignored

JAY REEVES May 5, 2020 Updated May 6, 2020 0



*The Atlantic*

## Georgia's Experiment in Human Sacrifice

The state is about to find out how many people need to lose their lives  
to shore up the economy.

AMANDA MULL APRIL 29, 2020



**BuzzFeed News**

## The Governor Of Texas Acknowledged His Plan To Reopen Businesses Will Lead To More Coronavirus Cases

"The more that you have people out there, the greater the possibility is for transmission,"  
he told lawmakers in a private call on Friday.

Brianna Sacks  
BuzzFeed News Reporter

Posted on May 6, 2020, at 9:17 p.m. ET



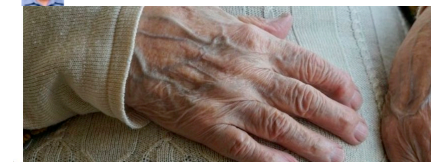
**CRAIN'S CHICAGO BUSINESS**

April 29, 2020 02:00 PM

## Throwing grandma under the COVID-19 bus

Increasing calls to reopen the state fast because COVID mostly  
just hits sick old people ignore what we don't know about this  
disease—and violate all that this country should stand for.

GREG HINZ  
On Politics






# Innovative CT Reopening Plan: Connecticut Non-Profit and Philanthropic Assets



**Uniting CT to Confront COVID-19**

With the unprecedented challenges our state and its residents currently face, the Connecticut COVID-19 Charity Connection (4-CT) was launched as a non-profit that unites donors with state-wide programs that will help make an immediate impact.





**WE ARE THE UNITERS.  
WE SOLVE PROBLEMS TOGETHER.**

**CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE**

**CORONAVIRUS: WHAT WE ARE DOING**

We identify the most pressing issues in our community and we bring together the people we think can solve them. Right now, one of the biggest issues we see facing all of the communities we serve is the Coronavirus. For workers living paycheck to paycheck and families facing homelessness or other financial pressures, the ripples caused by the Coronavirus will have a lasting impact on their lives.

**COVID-19 Relief and Recovery**



**COVID-19**

**Early Impact and Regional Response**

As with other communities across our nation, Greater New Haven's nonprofits and the people they serve are being impacted in unprecedented ways due to the COVID-19 crisis.



**COVID-19 RESPONSE**

**\*\* ALERT \*\***

**YOUR HELP IS NEEDED!**

**Click Here to Learn More!**



Downtown Evening SOUP KITCHEN



# An Overview of Today's Discussion

**Discussion Goal**  
Provide Context on  
Local & National  
Inequities  
& Paths Forward

- 1 COVID Inequities on a National and Local Level
- 2 Multifactorial Contributions to COVID Disparities
- 3 Within Our Community: New Haven Spotlight Issues
- 4 **Looking Forward: Emerging Best Practices**



Vulnerability  
Index



Screening



Communication  
Units



High Quality  
Data



Testing &  
Tracing



Task  
Forces



# Pandemic Communications Unit: Need for publicly-available high quality data

## COVID-19 Viral Outbreak Dashboard

📍 *Singapore*

- Publicly-available data in simple & effective visualizations
- Allowed for quick & effective disseminate information

HOME / SINGAPORE

### Dashboard of the COVID-19 Virus Outbreak in Singapore

📅 21 JANUARY 2020 TO 05 MAY 2020

TOTAL CASES

19,410 24 critical

ACTIVE CASES

17,873 92.1% of total cases

DECEASED

18 0.1% of total cases

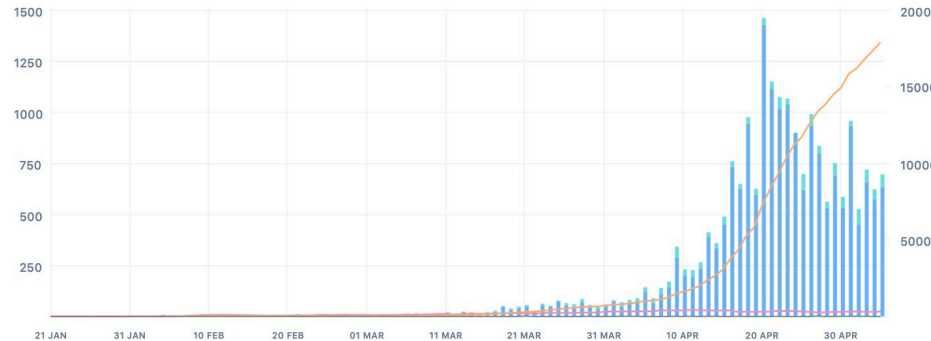
DISCHARGED

1,519 7.8% of total cases

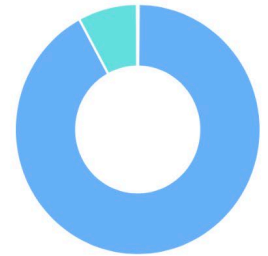
Number Of Cases

21 Jan 2020 to 05 May 2020

● ACTIVE CASES ● REPORTED ● CRITICAL ● RECOVERED ● DECEASED  
Bar ▾



Breakdown



ACTIVE  
● 17873 92.1%

RECOVERED  
● 1519 7.8%

CRITICAL  
● 24 0.1%

DECEASED  
● 18 0.1%



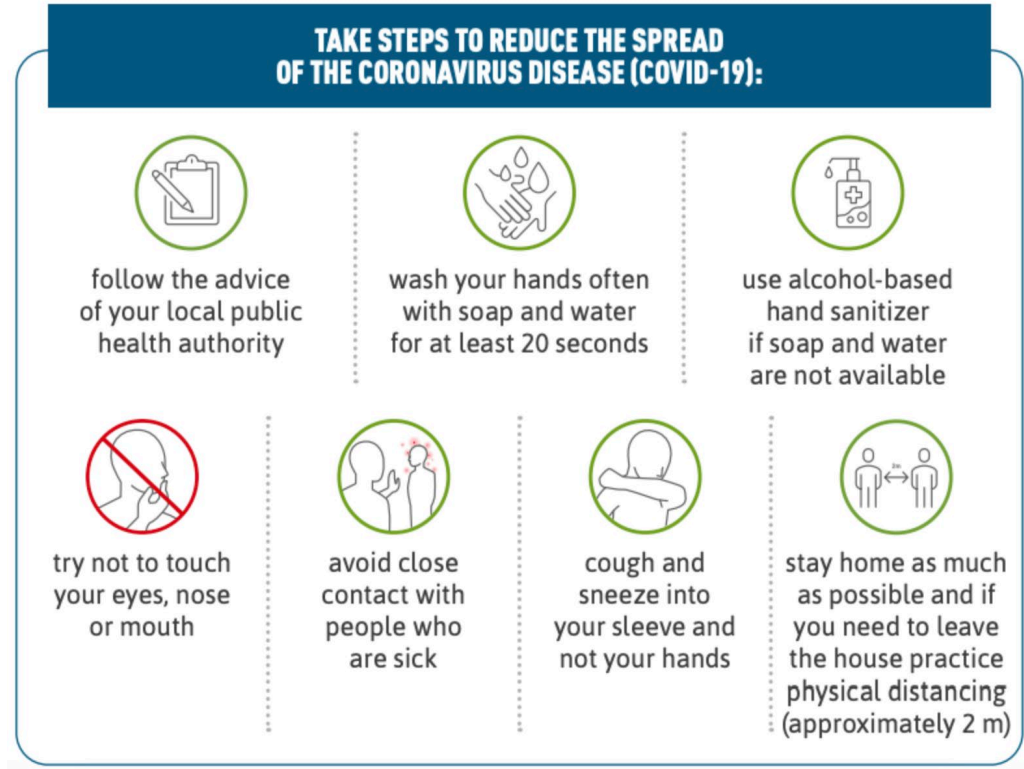
# Pandemic Communications Unit:

## Need for easily accessible educational materials regardless of literacy

### COVID Outbreak Safety Visuals

#### *Canada*

- Public Health Agency of Canada distributed this graphic in a leaflet to every home in the nation
- It follows the rules of a good visual – simple, colorful, and easily memorable



# An Overview of Today's Discussion

**Discussion Goal**  
Provide Context on  
Local & National  
Inequities  
& Paths Forward

- 1 COVID Inequities on a National and Local Level
- 2 Multifactorial Contributions to COVID Disparities
- 3 Within Our Community: New Haven Spotlight Issues
- 4 **Looking Forward: Emerging Best Practices**



Vulnerability  
Index



Screening



Communication  
Units



High Quality  
Data



Testing &  
Tracing



Task  
Forces



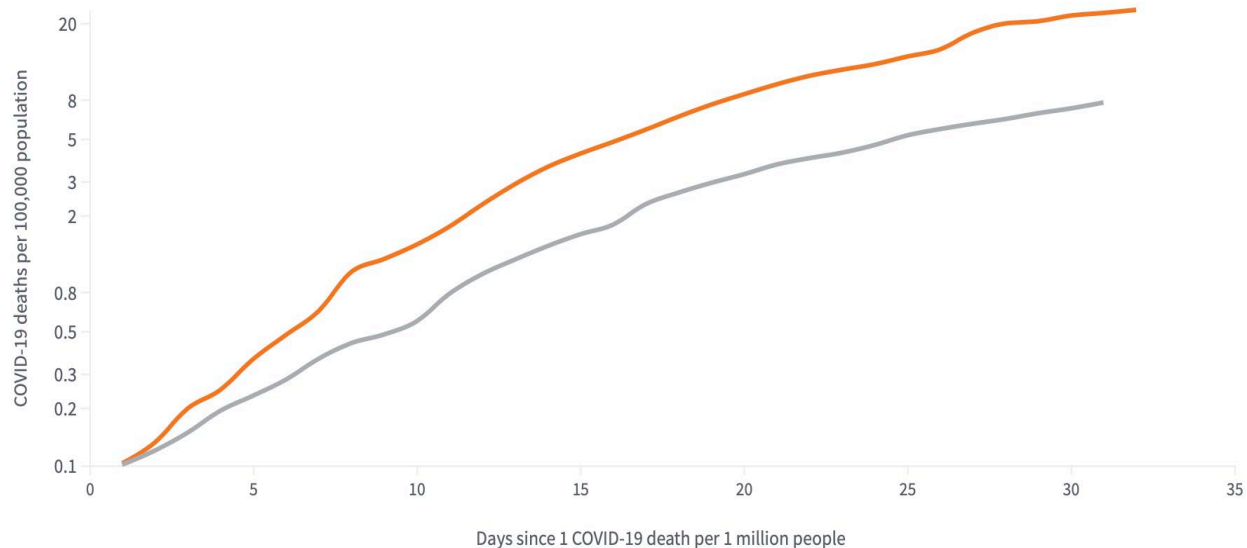
# Need for High Quality Race/Ethnicity Data Collection

## The Commonwealth Fund

- Data shows widening disparity between countries with higher & lower shares of black people
- States across the country are beginning to use race & ethnicity data to identify disparities to inform their COVID responses

## Deaths from COVID-19 in High- and Low-Concentration Black Counties

- Counties with higher-than-average black race
- Counties with lower-than-average black race

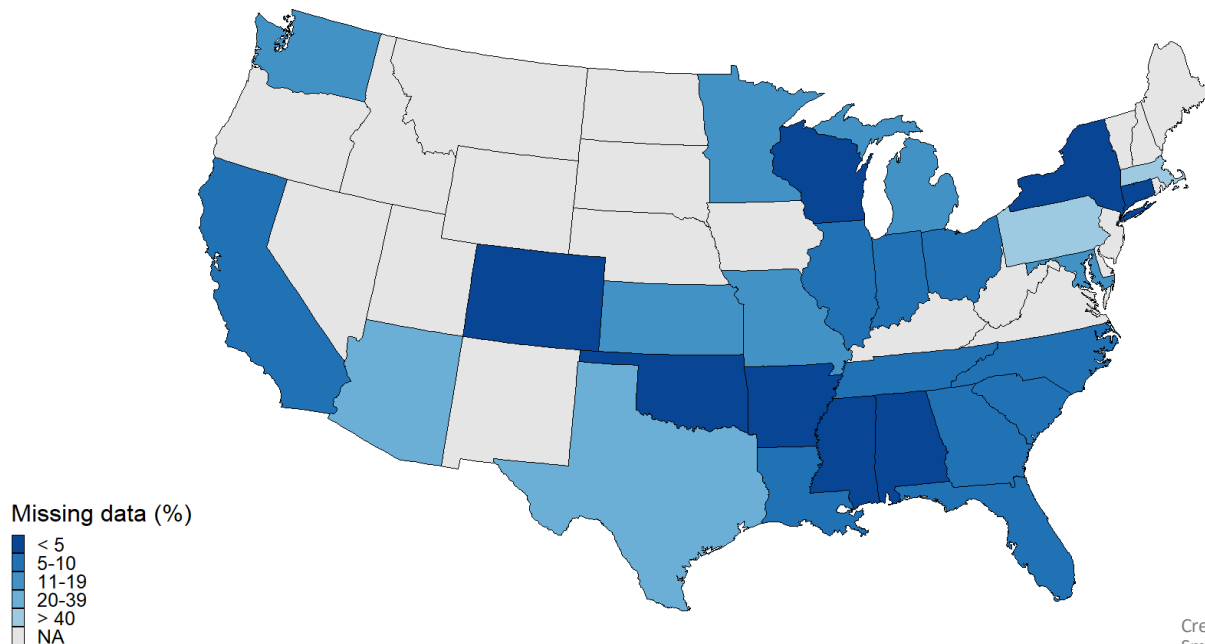




# Need for Data:

## Missing race/ethnicity data underestimates COVID-19 mortality disparities

Percent race/ethnicity information missing in COVID death data by State, April 21, 2020



Credit: courtesy of C.P. Gross, *et al.*, M. Nunez-Smith, Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Population Level Covid-19 Mortality

# COVID Testing: Need for Community Organized Testing & Relief

## Community Organized Relief Effort(CORE)

📍 *Los Angeles, California*

- Network of doctors, emergency workers, & government officials collaborating to provide testing
- Currently operates in 6 sites:
  - tests **3,000 - 3,500** people **per day** (LA);
  - **62,000+** total tests to date
- Began in LA; has since expanded to Napa Valley, Malibu, and Atlanta



**CORE**

Community Organized  
Relief Effort

# COVID Testing: Getting tests where needed in Greater New Haven



- ▶ **Fair Haven Community Health Center** and **Cornell Scott-Hill Health Center** with walk-up testing
- ▶ **Nursing home residents** account for **60%** of COVID-related deaths state-wide; **nursing home employees** also affected
- ▶ **Fair Haven Community Health Center** partners with **Mary Wade Nursing Home** to test all residents and employees

# An Overview of Today's Discussion

**Discussion Goal**  
Provide Context on  
Local & National  
Inequities  
& Paths Forward

- 1 COVID Inequities on a National and Local Level
- 2 Multifactorial Contributions to COVID Disparities
- 3 Within Our Community: New Haven Spotlight Issues
- 4 **Looking Forward: Emerging Best Practices**



Vulnerability  
Index



Screening



Communication  
Units



High Quality  
Data



Testing &  
Tracing



Task  
Forces

# Cities across U.S. Create COVID-19 Equity Task Forces

## Racial Equity Rapid Response Team (RERRT)

📍 *Chicago, Illinois*



**Need:** Chicago population: **30%** African Americans; **47%** African American COVID cases & **60%** COVID deaths

**Goal:** Develop hyperlocal, data-informed strategies to slow the spread of COVID & improve outcomes among vulnerable populations

## Michigan Coronavirus Task Force on Racial Disparities

📍 *Detroit, Michigan*



**Need:** Michigan population: **14%** African Americans; **40%** African American COVID deaths

**Goal:** Provide recommendations on addressing COVID outcome disparities; work to increase transparency in reporting racial/ethnic data

# Cities across U.S. Create COVID-19 Equity Task Forces

## Louisiana COVID-19 Health Equity Taskforce



📍 *Alexandria, Louisiana*

**Need:** Louisiana population: **33%** African American; **60%** African American COVID deaths

**Goal:** Use **\$500,000** in funding to assess state's COVID response, provide health awareness educational media campaigns, develop health-promoting interventions

## COVID Disparities Strike Force



📍 *Cleveland, Ohio*

**NEED:** Based on available data, African Americans comprise **13%** of the population + account for **22%** of COVID cases

**Goal:** Strike Force: increasing testing in black communities & developing “pointed and specific” messaging to keep them informed



# CT COVID-19 Equity Task Force: Health Equity Solutions calls for equity task force for CT reopening

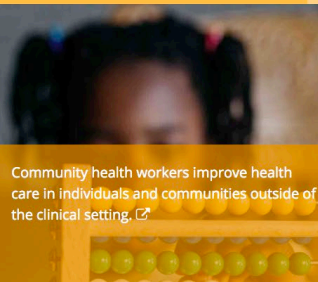


♥ HES is an organization focused on advancing health equity in the state of Connecticut.



Connecticut has a long way to go towards achieving health equity, according to the America's Health Rankings report of 2017. Health inequities for the less educated in our state continues to be a significant problem. [↗](#)

The collection of race, ethnicity and language (REL) data is a critical component of evaluating health outcomes among various populations and ensuring health equity for everyone. [↗](#)



Community health workers improve health care in individuals and communities outside of the clinical setting. [↗](#)

## Task Force Recommendations

- Include representation from diverse communities
- Support meaningful influence
- Link to other advisory bodies
- Advise on data collection & transparency to monitor & evaluate disparities
- Reduce barriers to COVID-19 testing & health care
- Promote equity by modifying existing supports & adopting long-term recovery efforts

<http://hesct.org/>

# Greater New Haven Issues Spotlight: public health & healthcare

## PUBLIC HEALTH

- basic needs
- support safe/effective self-isolation of Covid & self-quarantine patients
- access to timely testing (active infection & antibodies)
- contact tracing
- protect low-wage essential workers
- data: timeliness, coordination, accuracy, quality

## HEALTHCARE

- clinical care transformation—televisit migration challenges
- challenges connecting patients with community resources
- crisis standards of care (“rationing” & limited visitation policies)
- lost revenue
- workforce redeployment
- proportion of residents without medical home
- access to experimental therapies





# In Conclusion

- Covid-19 has revealed long-standing & pervasive racial/ethnic & socioeconomic disparities
- There are many urgent challenges that need to be addressed
- There are also opportunities to adopt & innovate best practices
- These next generation of best practices will ensure we do not “rebuild another broken system”

# Back to the future...

