

CHICAGO, IL

HIGHER MORTALITY RATES FOR BLACK WOMEN

In Chicago, Breast Cancer Kills Along Racial Lines

Although investments in high-quality screening have reduced racial disparities in breast cancer in Chicago, there's still more work to do. Black women continue to experience higher mortality rates than white women in each of the metro area's nine counties, with the greatest disparity in Cook County, where 56 percent of the population resides.

In a new in-depth report from Susan G. Komen, Black women relay experiences of racism in their treatment and implicit bias based on the insurance they have. Transportation presents a significant barrier. And Black neighborhoods are often served by clinics with older, less accurate screening equipment and staffed by technicians not adequately trained or experienced, which likely results in later-stage diagnoses.

“In places like Chicago, transportation is so important to your ability to access care in a timely manner. You need to be able to get to the treating facility without having to take 10 buses and a train...it is a huge problem.”

- Provider

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Chicago counties with large Black populations face more poverty, poorer health care quality and higher breast cancer deaths than other counties.
- Many area hospitals have invested in improvements but turn away patients due to the type of insurance they have, such as Medicaid, that often reimburses the provider at lower rates than other insurance.
- Some areas within the Chicago Metropolitan Area have experienced an influx of new immigrants from Muslim African nations who do not speak English, do not have a familiarity with U.S. health care system and have different religious/cultural norms. The barriers they face as Black women are therefore compounded, and the faith and community-based organizations they rely upon are likely to differ from those of other Black women, providing additional challenges for Patient Navigators trying to assist them.
- Black women are consistently more likely to die from breast cancer compared to white women in every county across the Chicago metro area.
- General lack of information for and discussion among Black women about breast cancer.
- Delaying routine screening for years following screening where they experienced painful handling from their provider.
- Very difficult city to travel by public transportation.

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