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April 2021 Edition

April represents springtime in D.C. with the famous Cherry Blossom Festival and beautiful blooms on display. Earth Day is also this month (Apr. 22), making it a great month to both focus on issues relating to the health of our planet and reflect on how the environment affects our health.

Many of our AMGA members are aware of the social determinants of health (SDOH), including the environment. Often, when we talk about this aspect of SDOH, we tend to focus on lack of access to healthcare resources, transportation issues, housing, and other common challenges patients may experience when seeking medical care. However, other physical aspects of the environment are also critical to our health: the air we breathe, the water we drink, and pollutants we are exposed to can have a long-lasting impact on our health.



Often typically disadvantaged populations are forced to bear the burden. For example, because of [structural racism](#), minorities have had to live in unhealthy areas near power plants and industries that pollute the air. Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians have a higher risk of premature death from particle pollution than Whites in the United States. Similar data demonstrate the inequities for such populations in relation to water quality, exposure to environmental toxins, and [consequences from climate change](#). As we continue to look to address health disparities through our work with our members, it is important to highlight the impact environmental factors have on the health of our communities.

Resources of the Month

DE&I Committee April Picks:

- [Press release](#) : Media urged to recognize shift from “Autism Awareness Month” to “Autism Acceptance Month” this April
- [Infographic](#) : Autism 101
- [Article](#) : What Is Environmental Racism?
[Article](#) : Flint Water Crisis: Everything You Need to Know

Staff Submissions:

- [Policy Brief](#) : Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Advances Guidance to Address SDoH
- [Article](#) : Pandemic’s Racial Disparities Persist in Vaccine Rollout
- [News](#) : UCHHealth shares results of new “cultural navigator” pilot program
- [Glossary](#) : Glossary of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Terms
- [Article](#) : COVID Vaccine Websites Violate Disability Laws, Create Inequity for the Blind

Do you have a resource you want to see in the next edition of the *DE&I Digest*? Next month, we’ll be recognizing **Mental Health Month** and **Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month**! Send resources to DEICommittee@amga.org for review by the DE&I Committee. Please ensure resources submitted are from reputable sources.

Raise Your Cultural IQ!

Did You Know?

Food insecurity on Native American reservations is a significant environmental factor affecting their health. Often reservations are subject to environmental contaminants, such as polluted runoff and dumping, leaving the lands without sufficient water sources and making them inadequate for farming. Many of these communities are also food deserts, meaning they lack adequate access to supermarkets and fresh foods. A study published in the [Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition](#) found that over a 10-year period, tribal communities averaged a food insecurity rate of 25%, with many communities lacking access to enough good, healthy, and culturally appropriate food. Efforts to help mitigate this issue have focused on food sovereignty.

Food sovereignty is the community’s right to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through sustainable methods, as well as the right to define their own food and agriculture systems. This grass-roots approach fulfills Native Americans’ strong desire for strengthened governance of tribal lands and stewardship of cultural resources to increase access to and home production of traditional foods.

[Learn More](#)

Something to Celebrate!

- [Environmental heroes to inspire you in 2021](#)

Questions? Comments? Suggestions? We'd love to hear from you! Email the DE&I Committee at DEICommittee@amga.org. To see previous editions of the *DE&I Digest*, click [here](#).

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