

Community Violence and Health

Health Equity Council

Executive statement

Daily incidents of community violence plague Albuquerque communities. According to the Albuquerque Police Department (APD) there were 7,532 crimes against persons reported in 2021. According to APD interpersonal crimes such as aggravated assault, homicide kidnapping, sex offenses and human trafficking. In 2021, one hundred and seven homicides were reported in the City of Albuquerque (APD 2021). There is a correlation between health outcomes, race, gender and community violence. Community violence education and prevention is key to creating healthy communities.

Background

Exposure to violence have been linked to chronic diseases such as asthma, stroke, cancer, heart disease and mental health. In addition, exposure to violence also increases the risk of future violence victimization and perpetration. Neighborhood-level effects of community violence may include increased police presence, metal detectors at schools, sidewalk memorials, fenced off property, closed businesses and other disinvestments in the local economy, and disrupted social relations.

Health risks associated with experiencing or witnessing violence include smoking, physical inactivity, sexual risk taking, and suicide attempts. Exposure to violence is linked to the following:

- 1) Asthma rate: 10.9% of adults 18 years or older; by race- 14% Black, 9% Hispanic, 11.2 % Native American , 10.8 % mixed/other,
- 2) Diabetes rate: 8%; by race- 18% Native American, 17% Black, 11% Hispanic and 24% Asian/Pacific Islander,
- 3) Increased cancer rates. Bernalillo County are higher than rates for New Mexico- ie. 80% breast cancer and 44% prostate cancer,
- 4) Obesity by race - 31% Native American, 28% Black, 27% Hispanic, 25% mixed/other and 5) cardiovascular disease (4% of population).

Recommendations

Recommendation 1:

Partner with HEC to update Bernalillo County Community Health Profile to disaggregate community violence related data (I.e. domestic violence, child abuse/neglect, rape, suicide, homicide etc.) by race and gender at census tract level.

Recommendation 2:

Partner with HEC to revise survey to include questions @ home safety (weapons owner; need for gun locks) correlate with zip code and health data.

Recommendation 3:

Partner with CoA Office of Equity and Inclusion to provide social determinants of health, anti-racism and cultural humility education sessions for City of Albuquerque departments.

Recommendation 4:

Partner with CoA Community Restorative Justice Center, and other partners for trainings for youth, and broader community, in using non-violent alternatives to dispute resolutions (i.e. APS used to have a Playground Mediation program).