

A Medicaid Equity Monitoring Tool

Project Overview

Medicaid is a critical component of the American health care system, providing coverage for one in five individuals and 40 percent of children—presenting significant opportunity to address disparities and inequities. The State Health Access Data Assistance Center (SHADAC), with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), is exploring whether a new national Medicaid Equity Monitoring Tool could increase accountability for making actualized progress toward improving population health while also supporting state Medicaid programs in advancing health equity.

Conducted in partnership with [RACE for Equity](#), an initial phase gathered insights from an Advisory Committee—a diverse group of experts who have experience with Medicaid—as well as other key partners and informants to answer the question: **“Is there a need for a Medicaid Equity Monitoring Tool?”** SHADAC hosted three virtual

convenings and held ad hoc conversations to discuss a number of project aspects, including tool purpose and proposed users, a measurement framework for advancing health equity in Medicaid (pictured), priority measurement concepts and populations of interest, and a prospective wireframe (a two-dimensional layout of a product designed to garner response on content and usability). The answer that SHADAC heard from the Advisory Committee and other stakeholders across our many meetings and conversations was a resounding: **“Yes.”**

Key Principles

1. **Accountability:** There is a need for a member-centered data resource for the purpose of monitoring health equity activities and outcomes.
2. **Intersectionality:** Data and perspectives from multiple communities should be considered in assessing Medicaid’s ability to advance equity.
3. **Root Causes:** The tool must highlight the root causes of inequities in the healthcare system and how they are connected to the Medicaid system.
4. **Community Engagement:** Centering member voices should be a primary focus in tool planning, development, and sustainability.
5. **Member Experience:** The tool should amplify self-reported data to showcase members’ experiences with Medicaid.
6. **Visibility:** The tool should identify where inequities exist, how they evolve over time, what actionable measures states are taking to address them, and areas in which more could be done.
7. **Foundational Data:** The collection of demographic data for traditionally marginalized populations—including race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, and primary language—should be improved, standardized and current data gaps must be addressed.
8. **Use for Good:** Data collected from this tool should be used for good, avoiding the potential to support a harmful narrative around Medicaid.

Looking Ahead

SHADAC continues to work alongside RACE for Equity and a community engagement partner on planning, data assessment, and engagement to inform the feasibility of and support for a Medicaid equity monitoring tool. By the end of the next phase, the project partners hope to begin making decisions on designing and developing a first version tool. Sign up for the SHADAC newsletter to follow the project at www.shadac.org/subscribe.

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Measurement Framework

