

# Utilizing Claims Data to Identify the Drivers of Disparities in Health Care Journeys

# cardiac health

**Significant racial disparities for prevalence of clinically diagnosed atrial fibrillation (AFib) in the US are well documented.** Prevalence of diagnosed AF is highest among non-Hispanic White (NHW) populations. However, **AF risk factors** such as **hypertension, obesity, and diabetes are more common among non-Hispanic Black (NHB) populations** and populations with **higher social needs**.

Accelerate Health Equity (AHE) and Independence Blue Cross (IBX) have begun analyzing claims data in Philadelphia to help reduce disparities in cardiac health care. This research aims to **describe disparities in AF diagnosis among IBX members by both patient-level characteristics and neighborhood-level social determinants of health.\***

## findings

- 5.1% of IBX members were diagnosed with AFib during our study period (2018-2021)
  - 5.6% of NHW members and 4.1% of NHB members were diagnosed with AF
  - 4.9% of low SBI members, 5.4% of medium SBI members, 5.2% of high SBI members were diagnosed with AFib
- Racial disparity of age-adjusted AF diagnosis was largest among members that lived in most disadvantaged neighborhoods
  - Age-adjusted AFib diagnosis rate in the high sbi: 53/1000 NHW people vs 31/1000 NHB people
- These disparities in AFib diagnosis existed even among members who received regular primary care visits and members who had continuous insurance coverage
- When looking at members with AFib associated claim, **NHB members diagnosed with AFib were less likely to have continued AFib claims than NHW members** – this trend was visible across health systems in the greater Philadelphia area
- Significant differences in post-diagnosis AFib-related management and treatment such as **catheter ablation, cardioversion, and maze procedures by race and SDOH were not observed** in our study population
- 58% of members diagnosed with AFib were prescribed an anticoagulant during the study period. **NHW members were slightly more likely to be prescribed an anticoagulant than NHB members (58% vs 55%)**

## recommendations

Given our findings, we encourage providers to talk to all patients about **AFib, including those in more disadvantaged neighborhoods, and recommend educating providers about these disparities in AF diagnosis rates.**

## next steps

- **Expand the research to other cardiac conditions such as Acute Myocardial Infarction**
- **Understand why anticoagulant prescription rates are lower than anticipated**