



Health Disparity: A preventable health difference that means that people receive different healthcare based on their circumstances, which may have a negative effect on their medical experiences and outcomes. “For example, people with low incomes, low health literacy, or long travel distances to screening or treatment sites, or who lack health insurance, transportation to a medical facility, or paid medical leave are less likely to have recommended cancer screening tests and to be treated according to guidelines than those who don’t encounter these obstacles.”¹

Common Health Disparities

Location

Living in a rural area or relying on public transportation may make access to care more difficult. Resources include:

- The American Cancer Society has a “Road To Recovery” program to provide free transportation to medical appointments for patients. Learn more at [cancer.org](https://www.cancer.org).
- Telehealth can allow you to see specialists or physicians via your smartphone or computer.
- If you need to stay overnight for care, lodging can be an extra expense. Advocacy groups such as [CancerCare](#) and [Joe’s House](#) have resources to help with the cost of hotel stays.

Finance

The overall financial burden of a cancer diagnosis can be a struggle for many. Support organizations include:

- [Patient Advocate Foundation](#): Provides financial aid and case management services to patients.
- [PAN Foundation](#) (Patient Access Network Foundation): Helps people to pay for medications and to access treatments they need.
- [Triage Cancer](#): Provides free education on the legal and practical issues that one may face when diagnosed with cancer.

Language

For people whose first language isn’t English, it can be more difficult to understand disease information, to make decisions, and to access services. Resources include:

- Many medical centers provide translation services that are available upon request.
- Many advocacy groups provide educational materials and support in several languages, including the [Patient Empowerment Network](#), which provides content in more than 100 languages.

Racism / Bias

Racism and bias can still exist alongside ALL of these obstacles. You should always feel safe and comfortable with your healthcare team. If you are not receiving good care:

- Consider getting a second opinion or changing doctors.
- Bring up the issue with someone you trust on your healthcare team or reach out to a social worker for help.

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¹ *Cancer disparities*. National Cancer Institute. (2024, March 21).

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**OVERCOMING OBSTACLES TO QUALITY CANCER CARE: WHAT
RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE?**

Program Resource Guide

