



# African American Representation in Healthcare

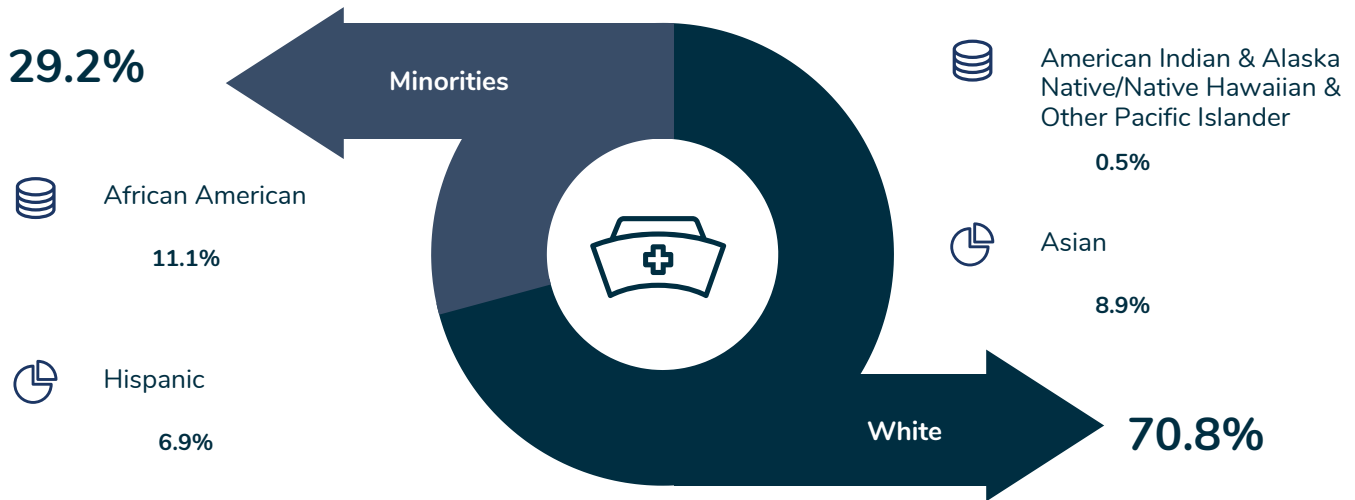
**Racial Disparities within the State's Healthcare Workforce**  
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This report provides a brief overview of African American representation within the state's healthcare system. Data originated from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey One-Year and Five-Year Estimates. This information has been presented publicly at the South Carolina Commission for Minority Affairs Black History Month Celebration on February 10, 2022. All rights reserved.

**9.9%**  
 African American males as a proportion of the State's male Healthcare Practitioner population

**18.11%**  
 African American females as a proportion of the State's female Healthcare Practitioner population

Minorities as a Share of those Employed as Registered Nurses, National 2014-2018



Balance of not Hispanic or Latino : 1.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 Equal Employment Opportunity Tabulation Data Tables, 5-year American Community Survey estimates

Across the world, institutional/systemic racism has served as a barrier to equal representation for African American professionals. Various factors such as prejudice and discrimination have led to social and economic healthcare disparities that, for decades, have negatively affected African American communities. The presence of these disparities, compounded by poverty, distrust, and limited access to quality healthcare has led African Americans to suffer from heart disease, COVID-19 infection, and

diabetes at rates beyond their proportion in society and beyond other ethnic/racial demographic groups. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, as it relates to COVID-19 in comparison to whites, African Americans are about as likely to contract infection, two and a half times more likely to become hospitalized and 1.7 times more likely to die from COVID-related symptoms. Given such disparate outcomes, African American representation in healthcare has become increasingly more imperative.

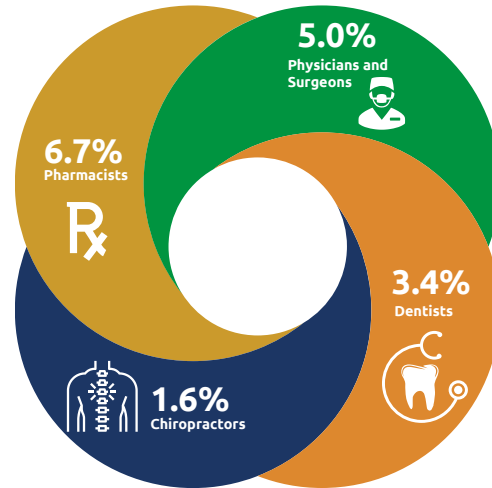


Currently, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2014-2018 Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) tabulation, approximately 11% of the nation's registered nurses self-identify as African Americans. This is an increase of approximately 36% from 2006-2010 figures. As African American and other minority populations strive to make impressive contributions to the healthcare industry, they continue to raise awareness on racial and ethnic diversity across several subfields within healthcare, including African American representation as pharmacists (+44%), physicians and surgeons (+13.9), dentists (-3.2%) and chiropractors (-16.5%).

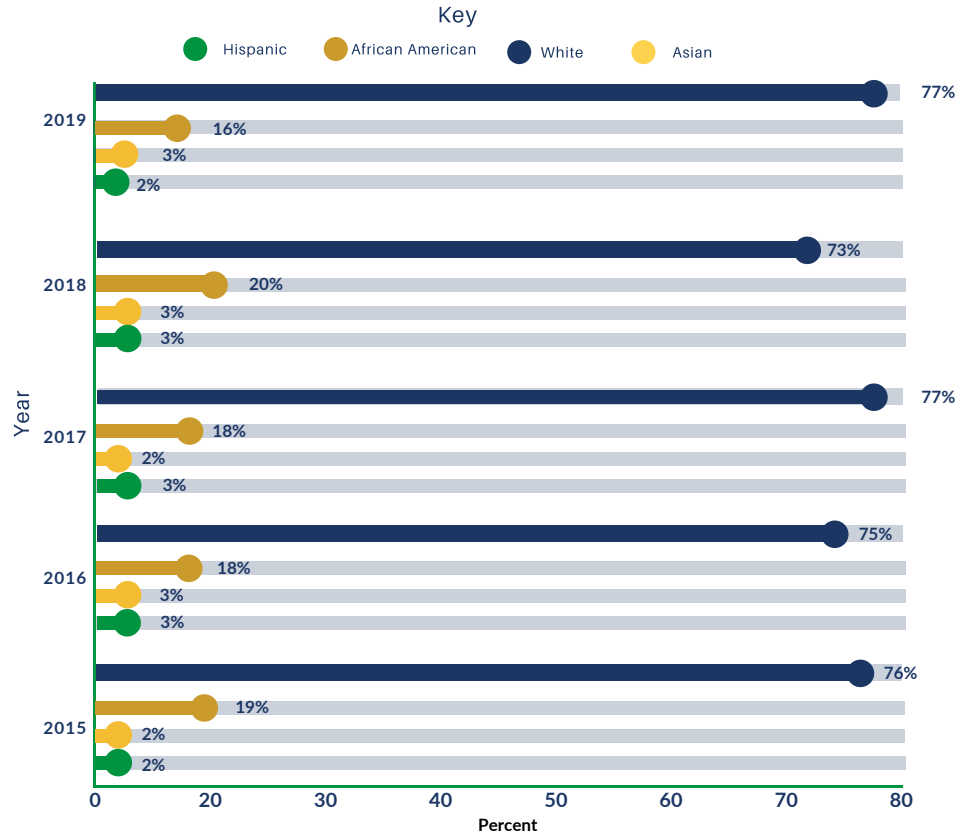
Although representation for South Carolina's minority healthcare professionals has steadily improved, it continues to lag as a share of their population in the state. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2020 Decennial Census, minorities accounted for approximately 37.89% of the state's population. This is in contrast to the, U.S. Census Bureau's 2019 American Community Survey showing that minorities made up approximately 21.2% of the state's healthcare practitioners. African Americans, however, comprised nearly 16% of the state's healthcare labor force, while accounting for almost 25% of the state's population. As a result, racial and ethnic representation continues to be problematic for the state's minority populations.

Additionally, per a recent study conducted by the South Carolina Office for Healthcare Workforce, approximately 14.2% of the state's healthcare workforce directly involved in South Carolina's COVID-19 response identified as African Americans: 9% were primary care physicians, 11.2% were Registered Nurses, 11.5% were Nurse Practitioners, 29.2% were Licensed Practical Nurses, 6.7% were pharmacists, 30% were Pharmacy Technicians, 10.1% were social workers, and 18.6% were Respiratory Care Practitioners. In spite of the many barriers facing African Americans who wish to enter into healthcare, the impact of those who have succeeded has greatly enhanced the state's ability to confront pandemics like COVID-19. Thus, racial and ethnic diversification in healthcare not only enhances the patient-physician experience, but aides in combatting misdiagnoses while also building patient's trust in medicine.

**African Americans as a Share of those Employed across Several Healthcare Occupations, National 2014-2018**



**Racial/Ethnic Distribution of Healthcare Practitioner Workers, South Carolina 2015-2019**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 Equal Employment Opportunity Tabulation Data Tables, 5-year American Community Survey Estimates

U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates Table: B24010

Gaul K, Greenberg KP, Sarrica B. A Snapshot of Health Workforce Diversity in South Carolina. Charleston, SC: South Carolina Office for Healthcare Workforce, South Carolina Area Health Education Consortium. April 2021.