

**Intro:** It's disheartening. Healthcare disparities persist in 2023. It's a problem that has plagued the U.S. for decades. According to data from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), Black people and other minorities are less likely to receive adequate healthcare than their white counterparts.

[Dr. Kim Barbel Johnson](#), a Mayo Clinic family medicine physician, discusses ways patients and healthcare professionals can close the health equity gap.

Video	Audio
	<p>Although the U.S. is a vibrant melting pot of cultures and races, Dr. Kim Barbel Johnson says the playing field is not level. That's because healthcare equity remains elusive for some people of color.</p>
<p>Kim Barbel Johnson, D.O. Family Medicine Mayo Clinic</p>	<p>"We all are aware that health disparities, health inequities, they have evolved over time."</p>
	<p>The statistics are startling. Non-Hispanic Black people have a higher heart disease death rate than other racial and ethnic groups. And Black people are more likely to die from cancer than others.</p>
	<p>"It's probably multifactorial. It has to do with some genetics. It has to do with environmental exposures. It has to do with some habits and choices."</p>
	<p>Dr. Barbel Johnson says healthcare disparities are complex for many reasons, including lack of access and bias within the healthcare industry. She says part of the solution is to empower patients.</p>

	<p>"And that empowerment comes with education. It comes with access. It comes with timely intervention, access to timely intervention. It comes with education for prevention."</p>
	<p>She also calls on researchers and clinicians to be inclusive regarding trial studies.</p>
	<p>"We know that the data shows that racial and ethnic minorities haven't been present in many clinical trials in the clinical trial space."</p>
	<p>The family medicine physician encourages patients to be proactive in reducing their chances of developing cancer and other chronic conditions by maintaining a healthy diet, exercising regularly, getting adequate sleep, and reducing tobacco and alcohol use.</p>
	<p>"It's really important that we do everything that we can to treat the body and the mind and our spirit in as gracious a way as we can."</p>
	<p>For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Sonya Goins.</p>