

# Structural Obstacles to Contact Tracing During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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# Roadmap

- Viewing contact tracing through a lens of the ethics of care
- Structural issues affecting contact tracing
  - Housing
  - Employment
  - Health Care Access
  - Language
  - Trust
  - Transportation/Resources
- Building contact tracing focused on care

# Ethics of care



“The ethics of care begins with a conception of moral life as a network of relationships with specific people, and it sees ‘living well’ as caring for those people, attending to their needs, and maintain their trust”

Feminism and the ethics of care, from *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*. Rachels (2010, p. 153).

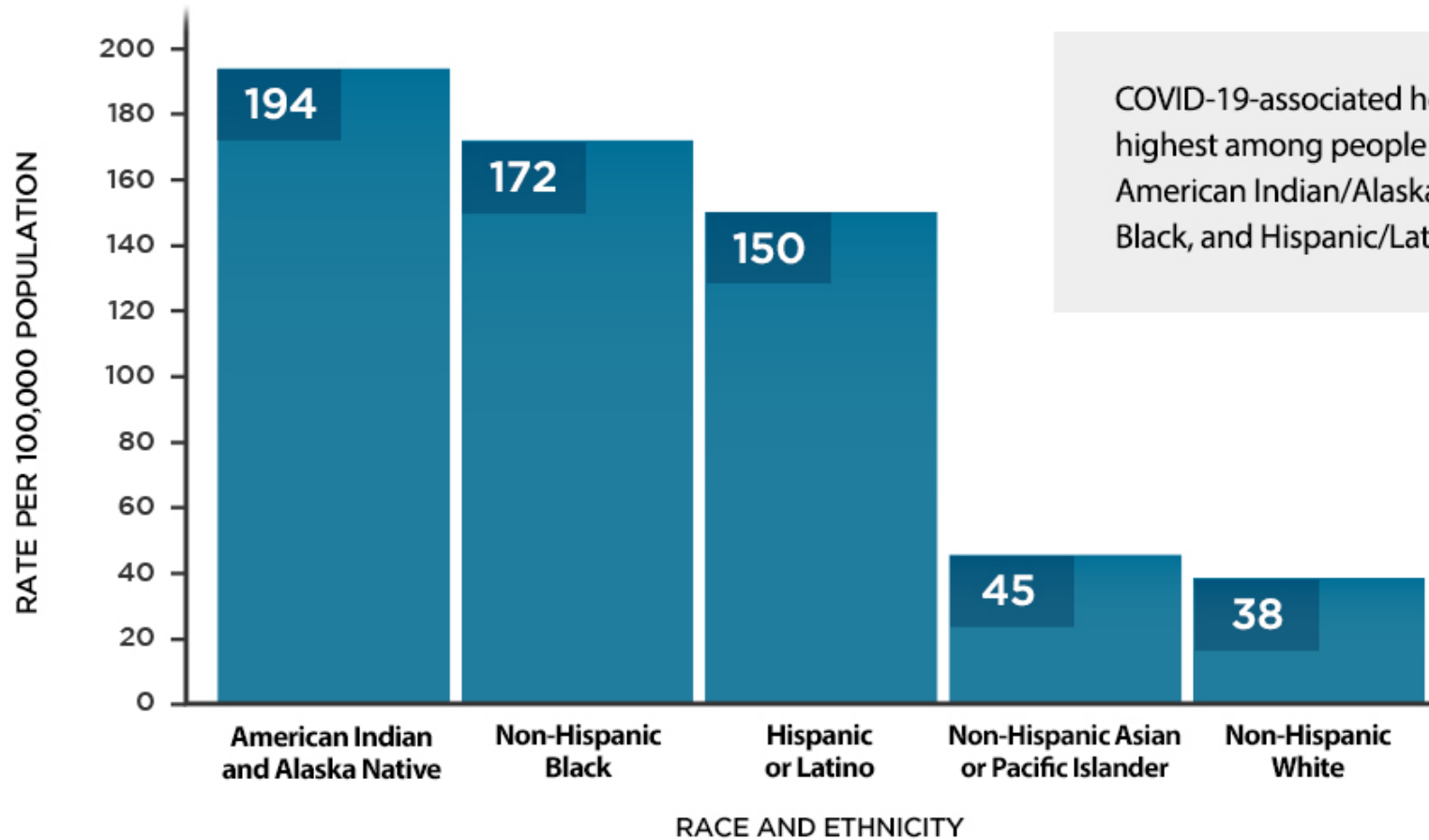
# Structural Issues

- Housing
- Employment
- Health Care Access
- Language
- Trust
- Transportation/Resources



# Age-adjusted COVID-19-associated hospitalization rates by race and ethnicity

COVID-NET, MARCH 1 - JUNE 6, 2020



COVID-19-associated hospitalization rates are highest among people who are non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native, non-Hispanic Black, and Hispanic/Latino.

[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus)



CS317587

Rates are statistically adjusted to account for differences in age distributions within race/ethnicity strata in the COVID-NET catchment area. Rates are based on available race and ethnicity data which is now complete in 86% of cases from COVID-NET sites. COVID-19-associated hospitalization rates for American Indian and Alaska Natives may be impacted by recent outbreaks among specific communities within this population and the small numbers of American Indian and Alaska Natives cases included in COVID-NET.

## WHO IS IMPACTED THE MOST?



- A CDC analysis of about 1,500 hospitalizations in 14 states found that black people made up 33% of the hospitalizations, although they made up only 18 percent of the population in the areas studied.
- In Chicago, African Americans account for 29% of population, but have suffered 70% of COVID-19 related deaths of those whose ethnicity is known.
- In New Mexico, Native Americans are only 11% of the population, but account for nearly 37% of the COVID-19 infections and 26% of the deaths.

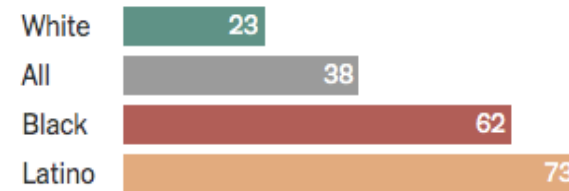


# Why the different rates of infection?

HISTORICAL AND  
CURRENT PRACTICES  
OF DISCRIMINATION

The New York Times

Coronavirus cases per 10,000 people



## The Fullest Look Yet at the Racial Inequity of Coronavirus

By [Richard A. Opiel Jr.](#), [Robert Gebeloff](#), [K.K. Rebecca Lai](#), [Will Wright](#) and [Mitch Smith](#) July 5, 2020

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/07/05/us/coronavirus-latinos-african-americans-cdc-data.html>





# Logistics: Housing, Work, Health Care

## What you can expect to happen



### If you were around someone diagnosed with COVID-19

If you were around someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, someone from the health department may call you.

#### Stay home away from others:

- Stay away from others, especially people who are at higher risk for getting very sick from COVID-19, such as older adults and people with other medical conditions, if possible.
- If you have been around someone with COVID-19, stay home away from others for 14 days ([self-quarantine](#)) after your last contact with that person and monitor your health.
- If you have a fever, cough or other symptoms of COVID-19, stay home and away from others (except to get medical care or testing, if recommended).
- If you need support or assistance while in self-quarantine, your health department or community organizations may be able to provide assistance.

For COVID-19, a **close contact** is anyone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes. An infected person can spread COVID-19 starting from 48 hours (or 2 days) before the person had any symptoms or tested positive for COVID-19.

#### Monitor your health:

- Watch for fever, cough, shortness of breath, or [other symptoms of COVID-19](#). Remember, symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to COVID-19.

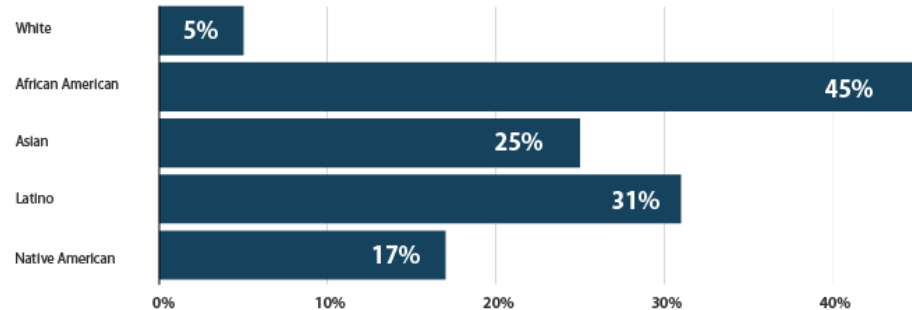
**Answer the phone call from the health department.** If someone from the health department calls you, answer the call to help slow the spread of COVID-19 in your community.



# Structural Factors in Housing

## Housing

**FIGURE 4**  
**People of color are more likely to report racial discrimination when trying to rent or buy housing**  
Likelihood of experiencing racial discrimination when trying to rent or buy housing by race/ethnicity, 2017



Source: Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and NPR, "Discrimination in America: Experiences and Views on Affects of Discrimination Across Major Population Groups in the United States" (Boston; Princeton, NJ; and Washington: 2017), available at <https://www.rwjf.org/en/library/research/2017/10/discrimination-in-america-experiences-and-views.html>.



- Nowhere to keep away and isolate
- Multigenerational families
- Not working for two weeks can affect rent/food/etc

<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/race/reports/2019/08/07/472617/systemic-inequality-displacement-exclusion-segregation/>



# Structural Factors in Health/Public Health

**THE RIGHT TO HEALTH MEANS...**

Ending discrimination in all healthcare settings



**Health care should be provided to all** regardless of race/ethnicity, age, gender, religion, place of birth, health or other status

#StandUp4HumanRights

 World Health Organization

Past poor experiences/lack of trust

Lack of diverse providers

Lack of testing

Not enough contact tracers, especially from marginalized communities

Health literacy



# Structural Factors in Employment

## Work Conditions

Low wage/essential workers—cannot work from home

Lack of sick leave

Lack of benefits/child care

Need for salary

Threats from employers for cooperating with contact tracers

HUMAN RIGHTS

The Impact of Structural Racism in Employment and Wages on Minority Women's Health

by Ruqaiijah Yearby

[https://www.americanbar.org/groups/crsj/publications/human\\_rights\\_magazine\\_home/the-state-of-healthcare-in-the-united-states/minority-womens-health/](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/crsj/publications/human_rights_magazine_home/the-state-of-healthcare-in-the-united-states/minority-womens-health/)



# Language Barriers

## **8:30 a.m. Language barriers, fear hinders immigrant contact tracing**

Only a handful of contact tracers working to slow COVID-19 in 125 communities near Chicago speak Spanish, despite significant Hispanic populations. Churches and advocacy groups in the Houston area are trying to convince immigrants to cooperate when health officials call. And in California, immigrants are being trained as contact tracers to ease mistrust.



# California And Texas Health Officials: Mistrust A Major Hurdle For Contact Tracers

August 10, 2020 · 3:48 PM ET

Heard on [All Things Considered](#)



ARI SHAPIRO



MAUREEN PAO

**Latinos' health is threatened by coronavirus misinformation as well as fear, distrust**

For many, the reluctance to get tested or seek treatment stems from fear of deportation in a community with a significant percentage of immigrants.

Q Search

**Bloomberg CityLab**

Sign

**CITYLAB**

# Contact Tracing Is Having a Trust Crisis



# Lack of Trust/Fear

**Answer the phone call from the health department.** If someone from the health department calls you, answer the call to help slow the spread of COVID-19 in your community.

- Discussions with health department staff are **confidential**. This means that your personal and medical information will be kept private and only shared with those who may need to know, like your health care provider.
- Your name will not be shared with those you came in contact with. The health department will only notify people you were in close contact with (within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes) that they might have been exposed to COVID-19.



**Tell the health department staff if you develop symptoms of COVID-19.** If your [symptoms worsen or become severe](#), you should seek emergency medical care.





# *On Native American Land, Contact Tracing Is Saving Lives*

As the coronavirus spread on the Fort Apache reservation in Arizona, medical teams sought out residents who might have been exposed. The effort paid off in unexpected ways.

Members of the White Mountain Apache tribe in Arizona have been infected with coronavirus at more than 10 times the rate of people in the state as a whole, yet their death rate is far lower.

By [Gina Kolata](#) Photographs by Tomás Karmelo Amaya

Aug. 13, 2020





# Technology Assisted Contact Tracing



## Principles for Technology-Assisted Contact-Tracing

By Daniel Kahn Gillmor  
April 16, 2020

The basic principles we see for evaluating a TACT are:

- Not displacing non-technical measures
- Voluntary
- Non-punitive
- Built with public health professionals
- Privacy-preserving
- Non-discriminatory
- Minimal reliance on central authorities
- Data minimization everywhere
- No data leakage
- Measurable impact
- Have an exit strategy
- Narrowly-tailored to target a specific epidemic
- Auditable and fixable
- Sustainably maintained

# Contact Tracers In Massachusetts Order Milk And Help With Rent. Here's Why

August 11, 2020 · 2:01 PM ET

MARTHA BEBINGER

FROM **90.9 WJZ**  
BOSTON'S NPR NEWS



# Goals

- Gain trustworthiness
- Employer cooperation and support
- Legislative support
- Helping marginalized communities
  - Community contact tracers
  - Financial/social support
  - Contact tracers as care providers
  - Language/resources



<https://tcf.org/content/report/racism-inequality-health-care-african-americans/?agreed=1>



# Longer term goals

- Just immigration policies
- Financial support
- Paid sick leave
- Comprehensive health care not tied to employment
- Housing support
- Community buy in to build trust

## In the United States...

People of Color (POC) are much more likely to live in poverty than White people.



**Homelessness** – and **food and housing insecurity** – all disproportionately affect POC. <sup>(1)</sup>

**\$13x\$**

White people in the U.S. have **13x** the net worth of Black people. <sup>(1)</sup>

**228**

The average Black family would need **228 years** to build the wealth of a White family today. <sup>(2)</sup>



Race-based barriers such as **redlining** have historically limited opportunities for POC to own real estate and accumulate wealth. <sup>(1)</sup>

(1) Pew Research Center (2) The Nation Daily, 8/8/16

<https://www.solid-ground.org/our-impact/race-social-justice/>



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