

Breast Cancer Mortality Gap Grows Between White, Black Women In Chicago, Report Says

Main Category: [Breast Cancer](#)

Also Included In: [Public Health](#)

Article Date: 23 Oct 2008 - 12:00 PDT

Chicago black women's mortality rate from [breast cancer](#) was 116% higher than that of white women in 2005, according to a new report from the [Metropolitan Chicago Breast Cancer Task Force](#), the [Chicago Sun-Times](#) reports. The task force last year reported that the mortality gap was 68%.

Steven Whitman, a task force member and director of the [Sinai Urban Health Institute](#), called the gap "unconscionable," adding that "the really shocking thing is that the black death rate has not gone down at all in the last 25 years. There's virtually no other health condition in which there's just no improvement at all."

According to Whitman, a lower awareness of breast cancer and a distrust of the health system among minority women plays a role in the disparity. Elizabeth Marcus, who runs the breast oncology division at Stroger Hospital, said the disparity also is related to minorities having less access to care at facilities that provide high-quality mammograms and breast cancer treatment.

There are some efforts underway to address the gap, including a recent expansion of the [Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program](#), which allows uninsured women to receive mammograms and breast exams at no cost. In addition, the state Senate recently approved a bill that would eliminate copayments for mammograms and boost reimbursements for centers providing the screenings in underserved communities (Thomas, *Chicago Sun-Times*, 10/22).

Reprinted with kind permission from <http://www.kaisernetwork.org>. You can view the entire Kaiser Daily Health Policy Report, search the archives, or sign up for email delivery at <http://www.kaisernetwork.org/dailyreports/healthpolicy>. The Kaiser Daily Health Policy Report is published for [kaisernetwork.org](http://www.kaisernetwork.org), a free service of The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation.