

**Income Briefing Document**  
**Presented to the Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities**  
**September 20, 2007**

**Income**, along with education and occupation, are common measures of socioeconomic position. For the purposes of this briefing document, data on annual household income are provided.

**CRITERION #1: PREVALENCE / INCIDENCE**

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- In 2005, the median household income in Washington was \$49,262. This was higher than the U.S. median household income of \$46,242.
- In 2005, 10% of Washington State residents had household incomes below the federal poverty level of \$19,806, compared to 13% for the U.S. as a whole.

**CRITERION #2: SEVERITY**

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- Populations with lower incomes have lower overall health and life expectancies than populations with higher incomes.
- In Washington, populations with lower incomes are more likely to smoke, binge drink, be obese, and less likely to meet guidelines for physical activity and nutrition, than populations with higher incomes.
- Populations with lower incomes have lower levels of health literacy, are less likely to have health insurance, and are less likely to use medical services, particularly preventive health services, than populations with higher incomes.
- In Washington, lower incomes are associated with higher rates of asthma and diabetes.
- Lower maternal income is associated with higher infant mortality rates.
- There is substantial evidence documenting higher mortality rates among populations with lower incomes compared to those with higher incomes.

**CRITERION #3: DISPARITY**

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- In Washington, from 2003-2005, 33% of Hispanic adults lived in households with annual incomes less than \$20,000, followed by 24% among blacks, 22% among American Indian and Alaska Natives, 14% among Asians and Pacific Islanders, and 12% among whites.
- The Index of Disparity for living in a household with an annual income less than \$20,000 was 94%.

**The Index of Disparity** is the average of the difference in rates between the racial/ethnic group with the "best" rate and all other racial/ethnic groups.

*Keppel KG et al., Measuring progress in healthy people 2010. Statistical Notes, no 25. NCHS, 2004.*