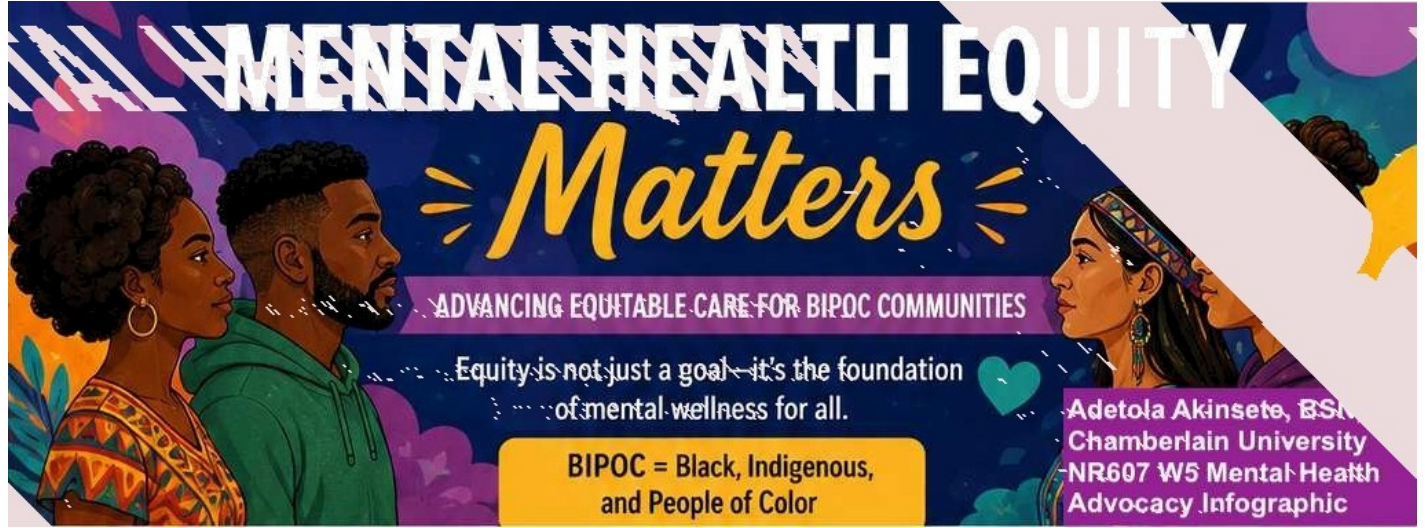




BACKGROUND BIPOC

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are essential in mental health care because culture, race, ethnicity, language, socioeconomic status, and discrimination can influence how individuals understand mental illness, seek help, and respond to treatment. Culturally responsive care can improve communication, trust, diagnostic accuracy, treatment engagement, and outcomes (CoynaBaasley et al., 2023).



CURRENT CHALLENGES

g*/

culturally responsive services. Historical mistreatment and discrimination may contribute to distrust and delayed help-seeking. Provider bias and cultural differences may also contribute to misunderstanding, underdiagnosis, or inappropriate diagnosis (CoynaBaasley et al., 2023).



IMPACT OF LEGISLATION



Legislation can reduce disparities by expanding insurance coverage, community mental health services, telepsychiatry, culturally appropriate services, and workforce diversity.

The Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA) requires comparable coverage for mental health/substance use and medical/surgical services, reducing insurance-related disparities (Rapfogel, 2022).

Legislation can address systemic barriers that cannot be corrected solely through individual provider behavior.



BENEFITS OF LEGISLATION



For BIPOC patients, legislation could increase access to early intervention, affordable services, culturally responsive treatment, and diverse clinicians.



For healthcare providers, it can increase workforce diversity, training, and community resources.



For society, reducing untreated mental illness could decrease hospitalization, emergency care, homelessness, disability, and incarceration.



CALL TO ACTION

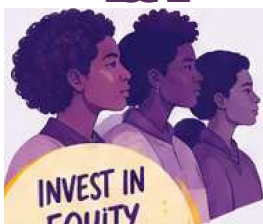
Healthcare professionals, students, patients, families, and communities can advocate by:

- ✓ Contacting elected representatives
- ✓ Supporting mental health equity legislation
- ✓ Educating communities
- ✓ Promoting culturally appropriate care



PMHNPs have an important advocacy role. Clinical practice addresses one patient at a time, while legislative advocacy can address structural barriers affecting entire populations.

CURRENT PROPOSED NATIONAL LEGISLATION



INVEST IN EQUITY.
INVEST IN OUR FUTURE.

The Pursuing Equity in Mental Health Act, S. 1448/H.R. 2904, 119th Congress (2025–2026).

Is proposed legislation designed to reduce mental health disparities among racial and ethnic minority populations, particularly youth.

implications for BIPOC populations: If enacted, the legislation could increase culturally responsive resources, strengthen research on disparities, improve mental health literacy, and support earlier treatment in underserved communities.

REFERENCES



- CoynaBaasley, T., H.M., S. V., Miller, E., & Svetaz, M. V. (2023). Health equity and the impact of racism on adolescent health. *Pediatrics*, 151(Supplement 1), e2022057267F. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2022-057267F>
- Rapfogel, N. (2022, May 26). The behavioral health care affordability problem. Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/the-behavioral-health-care-affordability-problem/>
- U.S. Congress. (2025). S. 1448—Pursuing Equity in Mental Health Act, 119th Congress (2025–2026). <https://www.congress.gov/bills/119th-congress/senate-bill/1448/history>

