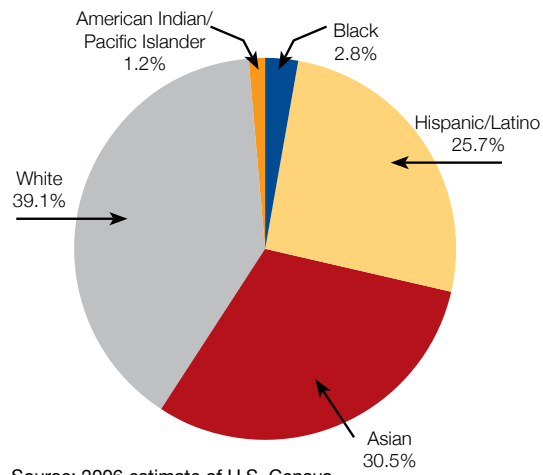


A region of diversity, a region of disparity

Ethnicity in Santa Clara County

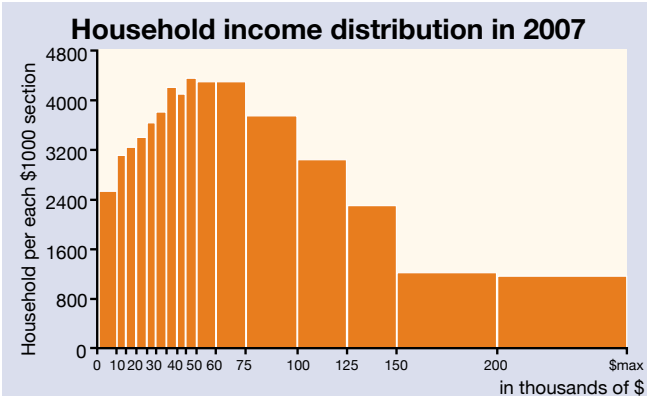


Source: 2006 estimate of U.S. Census

Language other than English spoken at home
45.4%

Foreign born
34.1%

Income in Santa Clara County

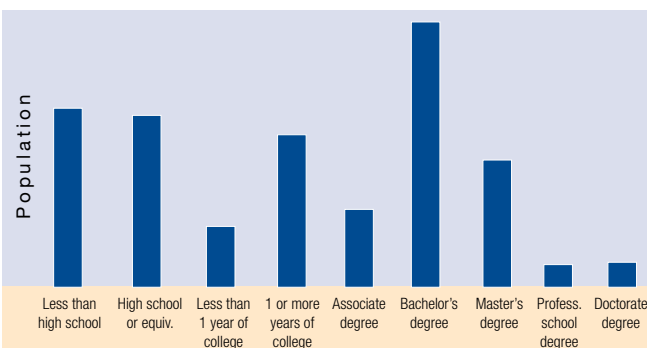


Source: city-data.com

Percentage of residents living in poverty in 2007:
8.3%

It has been estimated that every additional \$12,500 in household income buys one year of life expectancy, plateauing at household incomes above \$150,000.

Education in Santa Clara County



Source: city-data.com

"A review of the scientific literature shows associations between education and health across a broad range of illnesses, including coronary heart disease, many specific cancers, Alzheimer's disease, some mental illnesses, diabetes and alcoholism."

National Institutes of Health

About The Health Trust

In 2007, The Health Trust announced a new vision: Silicon Valley as the healthiest region in America. A charitable foundation, The Health Trust was founded in 1996 from the sale of three local nonprofit hospitals. For more than 12 years the organization has been a catalyst in Silicon Valley for community partnerships that identify health issues and work together to find innovative solutions. The Health Trust engages in policy and advocacy, provides grants and continues its legacy of providing health services including Meals On Wheels, AIDS Services, Children's Dental Services, and health education and insurance enrollment assistance through its Wellness Access and Education Program. In January of 2008, The Health Trust announced a \$30 million investment in three initiatives – Healthy Living, Healthy Aging, and Healthy Communities.

The Health Trust Healthy Communities Initiative focuses on reducing and eliminating health disparities through five strategies:

- Partnering with organizations to address the root causes of health disparities such as poverty, racism, discrimination and inequities in health, education and income;
- Providing access to prevention, screening and management of chronic diseases through our own services, grantmaking and partnerships;
- Supporting health care coverage and services via our own services and through our grantmaking and advocacy;
- Providing oral health prevention, education and treatment services for children and promoting policies that support oral health;
- Supporting employee wellness for businesses with uninsured or underinsured employees.

Achieving Health Equity

Can Silicon Valley become the healthiest region in America?

Health is about so much more than our hospitals, our insurance systems, or treatment protocols.

Our health is profoundly influenced by social determinants—where we live, our income, our education, and the color of our skin—even right here in Silicon Valley.

*When health is absent
Wisdom cannot reveal itself
Art cannot become manifest
Strength cannot be exerted
Wealth becomes useless
And reason becomes powerless*

*Herophilus
Greek philosopher and physician
300 BC*



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Health disparities are the differences in the incidence, prevalence, mortality and burden of disease that exist among specific population groups. Health inequities are those differences in population health outcomes that can be traced to unequal economic and social conditions. Validated research shows that social inequality causes health inequality.

“Despite steady improvement in the overall health of the U.S. population, racial and ethnic minorities, with few exceptions, experience higher rates of morbidity and mortality than non-minorities.”
Institute of Medicine

Health Disparities in Santa Clara County

- Although Black women constitute only 2 percent of the female population of child bearing age within Santa Clara County, they account for 42 percent of all infant deaths.
- Type 2 Diabetes incidence rates for both Latinos and Asians are high: about 8 percent for each group, compared with incidence among whites (less than 6 percent).
- Cervical and liver cancers have higher incidence rates among Latino and Asian populations than whites and African Americans. Cervical cancer incidence rates in the county are as high as 13.9 per 100,000 for Latina women and 12.7 for Asian women compared with 6.4 for white women and 5.7 for African American women. Latinos are up to twice as likely and Asians are between 2 and 5 times as likely to get and die from liver and stomach cancer than whites.
- Latinos are 20 percent more likely than whites to be infected with HIV/AIDS.
- Latino and Asian children are 35 percent and 25 percent more likely than whites to have experience with dental caries. Latino children are also about 15 percent more likely than white children to have no dental insurance.

The Financial Effect of Health

Ultimately, we all bear the financial burden for disease and disability through increased medical costs, lost economic activity, and lowered business productivity. The U.S. loses over \$1 trillion every year in work productivity due to chronic illness. Locally, the costs are also high:

Almost one in 10 Asian and Latino residents in Santa Clara County has Type 2 Diabetes.

- The price for the average hospital stay for a patient with diabetes: \$9,400.
- The cost to the employer for that stay in the hospital—up to \$30,000-- in employee absenteeism, job impairment, and disability.
- The cost to Santa Clara County: \$1.5 billion annually (or 29 percent of all health care dollars spent in the county) every year.

More than half of the County's adult population is overweight or obese.

- Within Santa Clara County total obesity-related charges for hospital admissions is about \$70 million each year.

Responsibility
 Although there is much that individuals can do to protect and improve their health by the lifestyle decisions they make, the health problems that certain populations experience are due to factors beyond individual control. The determinants of health status are many – some are avoidable, others are not.

Nor can inequalities in health among different populations be blamed just on a lack of access to health care. Former U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher noted that obstacles to health care access account for only about 15-20 percent of the variation in morbidity and mortality that exists across different populations.

“Healthy behaviors, molecular research, and of course, universal health care are all important. But evidence suggests they miss the most vital factor of all: how the social circumstances in which we are born, live and work can get under our skin and disrupt our biology as surely as germs and viruses.”
Larry Adelman, Executive Producer
“Unnatural Causes: Is Equality Making Us Sick?”

The root causes of health disparities are systemic, institutionalized, and many decades or even centuries in the making. Class, racism and disempowerment have tremendous impact on health outcomes. Our wellness is inextricably linked to the social conditions that surround and shape our lives. Social and economic conditions such as housing, education, jobs, community development, social supports, etc. impact our health far more than many people realize. Many studies have revealed a health-wealth gradient in which every descending rung of a socioeconomic ladder corresponds to worse health and lower life expectancy. Other research has shown that your street address can be a predictor of your health, because it places you either in or out of a neighborhood that is clean and safe and has access to nutritious foods, transportation, jobs and adequate housing.

Dr. David Williams, Professor of Public Health
Harvard University

“As a nation, we can address the racial and economic inequalities that increase our risk of disease now, or we can pay to repair our bodies later.”

Research and experience shows that communities can take effective steps to reduce and eliminate health inequality through institutional and policy changes that impact how we live, learn, work and play. Actions by individuals in the Silicon Valley community can help ensure optimal health for every resident.

Support Education

- ◆ Adults who have not finished high school are more than four times as likely to be in poor or fair health as college graduates. Babies born to mothers who did not finish high school are twice as likely to die before their first birthday compared to those born to college graduates. Many public health advocates believe investing in education is the single most effective intervention we can make to improve health outcomes and tackle inequities. One study estimated eliminating educational inequities would have saved eight times as many lives as were saved by medical advances between 1996-2002. By taking steps to promote education and reduce high school drop out rates, a community can have a long-term impact on reducing health disparities.
- ◆ Support the efforts of school districts to reduce the drop-out rate while also increasing test scores, with benchmarks reached for all ethnicities and income levels.
- ◆ Support the establishment of new innovative charter schools focused on getting low-performing children on to a college track.
- ◆ Advocate for school districts and the Santa Clara County Office of Education to create more alternative schools and programs for children who do not succeed in traditional public schools.

Support Preventive Health Care

Preventive health care for all individuals, regardless of income or race, greatly improves health outcomes.

- ◆ Support the fluoridation of the water supply for the entire Silicon Valley region, as a way to prevent dental caries and ensure optimal oral health for all area residents.
- ◆ To learn more, please contact Nicole Kohlieter at The Health Trust, nicolek@healthtrust.org, (408) 879-4112.
- ◆ Support efforts to reduce Santa Clara County's black infant mortality rate by promoting health education and services to pregnant women and infants.

To learn more, please contact Alma Burrell at alma.burrell@hhs.scgov.org, (408) 494-1555.

Access to quality health care—especially quality, culturally competent preventive care—significantly improves health outcomes for all populations. But to have access to care in our current system, individuals must have health coverage. By supporting affordable coverage, especially for lower income workers, the community can help improve their health outcomes and reduce disparities.

Support Coverage Expansion

- ◆ Support Working Partnerships and the Santa Clara Family Health Plan's community outreach efforts to provide Healthy Workers information to small businesses employers and workers through out Santa Clara County that may be eligible. Healthy Workers is a voluntary employer-based program that will be available to low and middle income workers in small businesses with 2-50 employees. It offers a comprehensive benefit plan that includes preventive care, hospitalization, emergency coverage, prescription drugs and specialty care.
- ◆ Support Working Partnerships at Smaller at Work.org, (408) 269-7872.
- ◆ The foreclosure crisis is impacting thousands of people in Silicon Valley, leading to greater financial insecurity, crime, and community disinvestment. On the flip side, home ownership brings financial security, attracts public and private investment in businesses, schools and infrastructure, and also promotes neighborhood cohesion - all of which are beneficial to health.
- ◆ Encourage Congress to use some of the federal bailout money to modify bad loans so that people can stay in their homes.
- ◆ Encourage the State of California to put a six-month moratorium on foreclosures and put pressure on banks to modify bad loans.
- ◆ Encourage the City of San Jose and other municipalities to increase the counseling available to homeowners who are at-risk of losing their homes, as this kind of counseling is often effective at preventing foreclosure.

To learn more, please contact Jennifer Wood-Taylor, community organizer with FACT, jenniferwood-taylor@pactsj.org, (408) 835-6708.

Health disparities are not inevitable. Community actions can make a difference!