Understanding and Addressing Racial and Ethnic Inequities in Pediatric Length of Stay

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Prolonged pediatric hospitalizations can lead to financial and capacity strain for health systems and generate psychosocial and economic stress for children and their caregivers. Hospital length of stay (LOS) is therefore often measured as an indicator of health care quality, reflecting differences in both access to high-quality preventive care before admission and quality and efficiency of care delivered in the inpatient setting. Several recent studies have found that Black and Hispanic/Latine children, as well as children from other minoritized groups, have a longer average LOS when admitted for common pediatric conditions like appendicitis and severe sepsis. These studies provide critical quantitative evidence of inequities within our health system and underscore the need for interventions that address key drivers of these disparities and promote more equitable health care delivery.

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