

The background of the slide features a close-up of a hand with red and yellow stripes, likely representing the state flag of New Mexico. The hand is positioned as if holding or supporting something, with the fingers slightly curled. The colors are vibrant and the texture of the fabric is visible.

Improving Child Well-Being by Addressing Social Determinants of Health


NM Legislative Health and Human Services Committee
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New Mexico Voices for Children


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www.nmvoices.org

A group of diverse children, including a boy in a blue denim jacket and a girl with curly hair, are playing outdoors with bubbles. The scene is bright and cheerful, with green foliage in the background.

**Our mission is to
champion public
policies that improve
the well-being of New
Mexico's children,
families, and
communities.**



Where and how families live, learn, play, and work impacts their ability to lead healthy lives.

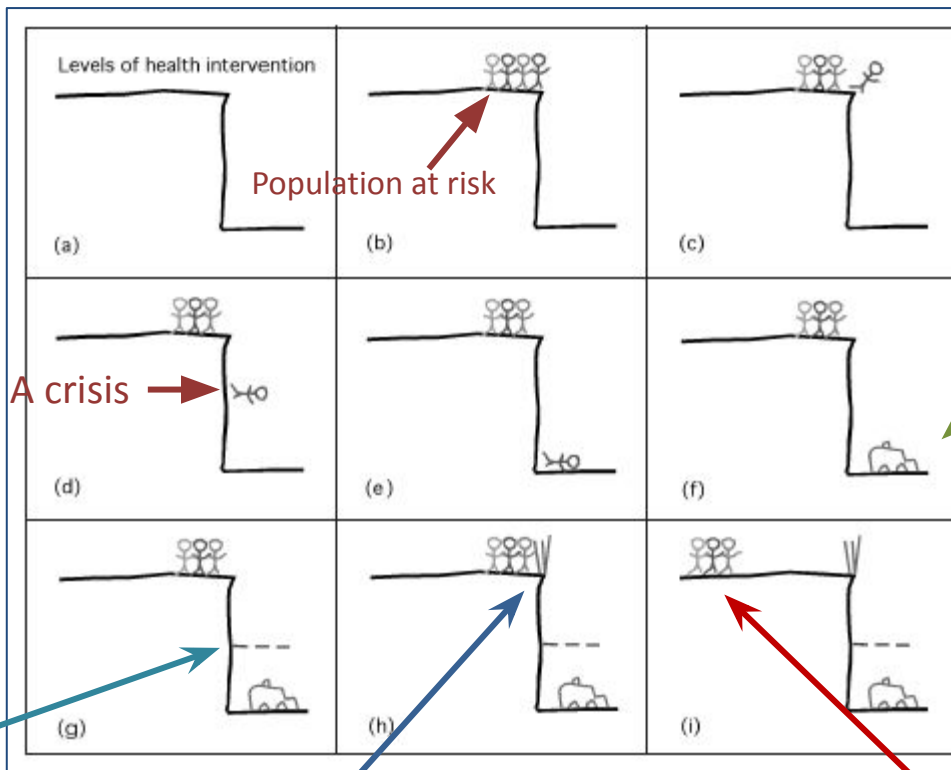
A silhouette of a person's head and shoulders is shown in profile, facing right. They are holding a map of the African continent. The background is a warm, golden sunset or sunrise with blurred trees and a bright light source on the right side. The overall mood is contemplative and focused on global health and development.

An Introduction to the Social Determinants of Health:

Why Social and Economic Policy Matter for Health and Child Development

The Cliff of Good Health

Jones, et al. (2009). *Addressing the social determinants of children's health: A cliff analogy*



Ambulance:
acute care,
treating
individual
people after
a health
crisis

Safety net:
Out-patient
treatment of
existing conditions

Fence at the cliff's edge:
Early intervention for those
at risk for health conditions

★ Moving groups away from the cliff:
Prevention, reducing
risks and building
communities to promote
health

The Social Determinants of Health (SDOH), Defined:

SDOH are the circumstances of our lives that affect health & mental health and are influenced by public policy.

Biological
Determinants
(Genetics)



Individual
Health
and
Wellbeing



SDOH include factors *beyond* direct medical care access & quality. **They are often environmental, rather than individual.**

External Risk & Protective Factors Present in the Physical & Social Environment:

+ Access to:

- + Medical care & health insurance
- + Accurate health knowledge
- + Healthy nutrition & other resources to meet needs
- + Quality education and job training
- + Employment opportunity & safe workplaces
- + Adequate income & the chance to accumulate wealth
- + Quality housing & safe neighborhoods
- + Safe opportunities for exercise, stress management, & recreation
- + Social connection & support

- Hazards in environment:

- Physical hazards such as toxins in the air, water and land, infectious agents, & climate events
- Chronic and acute stress & arousal
- Violence
- Discrimination in housing, employment, money lending, and the educational, health, & justice systems

Pathways through which the Social Determinants Impact Health:

Stress



- **Stress:** an emotional state, but also a **physiological reaction**
 - “Fight-or-flight” response helps us deal with threats
 - Accelerated heart rate & breathing
 - Spike in **cortisol** and **adrenaline**, which then release **glucose** into the blood stream
- **Chronic physiological arousal** can lead to a **high “allostatic load”**, where stress hormones rise more quickly & remain at higher-than-normal levels
 - Associates with: diabetes, auto-immune disorders, high blood pressure & cholesterol, obesity, osteoporosis, heart attack, stroke, vulnerability to infection, and more
 - Can also negatively impact fetal and child development
- Those at risk for chronic and acute stress include those who
 - Suffer financial and job insecurity
 - Live in a community with violence, crime, and other neighborhood disorder
 - Are victims of discrimination and oppression
- **All of these affect families who earn low income & BIPOC families with children at higher rates, placing their children at risk for a “hardship chain reaction”**

Pathways through which the Social Determinants Impact Health:

Health Behavior

- Health Risk Behaviors
 - e.g., smoking & vaping, alcohol & other substance misuse, sedentary lifestyle, poor quality diet, over/under eating, driving without a seat belt, unprotected sexual activity...
 - Can become habits, especially when we use these behaviors to help us manage chronic stress and to self-treat poor mental health
- Health Protective Behaviors
 - e.g., healthy diet, regular exercise, alcohol only in moderation, seeking regular preventive health care, taking medications as prescribed, managing stress...
 - Usually, we know what we need to do, but can't always follow through:



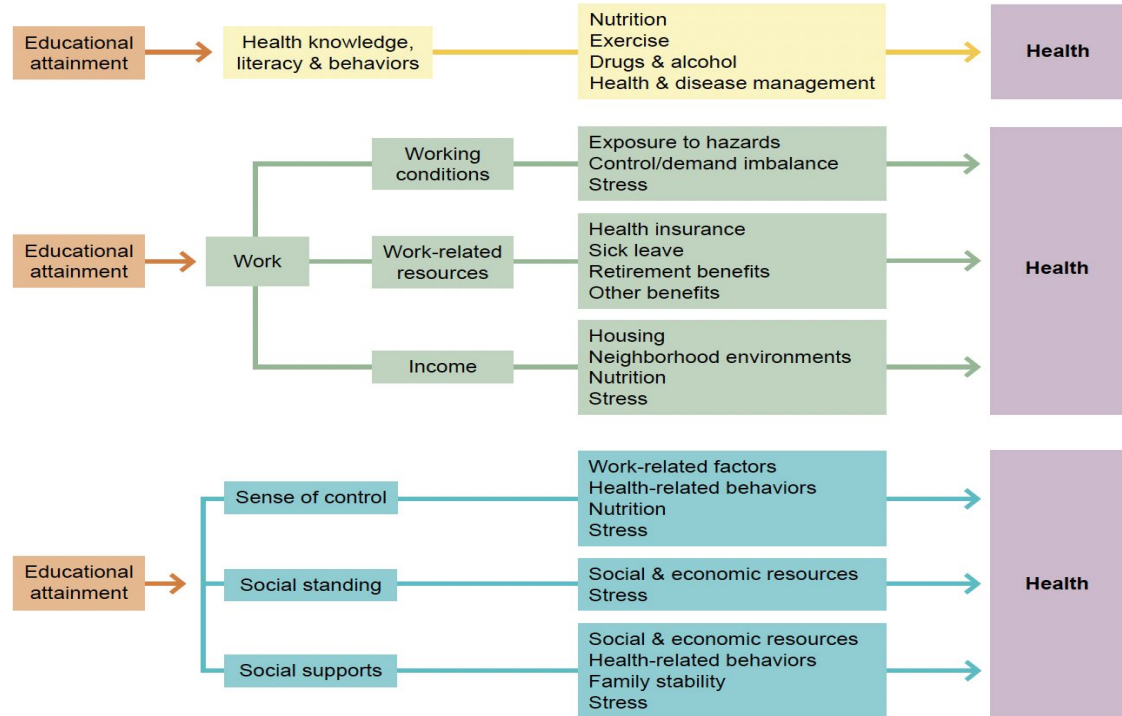
- ★ Our health choices (our options for how to manage our stress & how to take care of ourselves) depend on external factors
- ★ **Our life choices depend on our life chances:**
 - ✓ **Our personal resources and opportunities**
 - ✓ **Resources & opportunities present in our communities**

Personal Resources & Opportunity: Education, Employment, and Income

- **Personal resources**
–income, financial reserves, training and credentials – all greatly influence our level of stress AND our opportunities for healthy choices.
- Income is tied to **employment**, which is closely tied to **education**, and education is actually one of the most powerful correlates of health.
- The other great predictor of health is one's **community**.

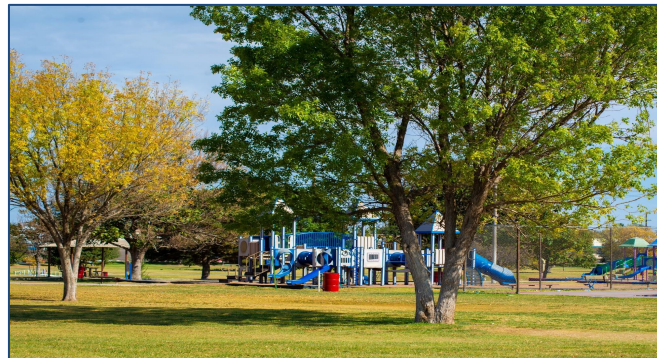
FIGURE XII

Education Impacts Health on Multiple Levels

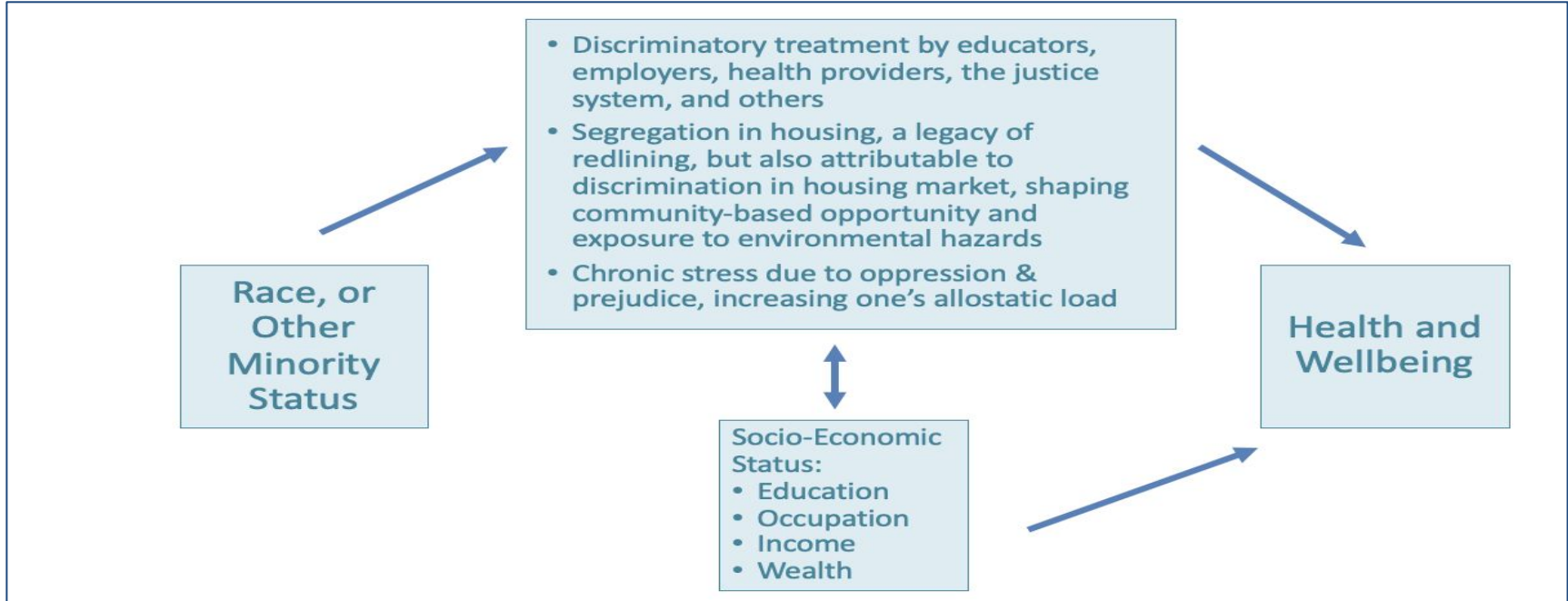


Pathways through which the Social Determinants Impact Health: Health Risks & Opportunity in One's Community

- Physical Environment:
 - Air pollution & hazardous waste
 - Toxins like lead, mercury, arsenic, & uranium in air, water, soil, and building materials
 - Allergens, extremes of temperature, and other weather events
- Built Environment:
 - Safe and accessible playgrounds, parks, well-lit sidewalks, trails, greenspace
 - Safe roads and transportation systems
 - Quality housing, with adequate ventilation, heating and cooling
- Service Environment
 - Quality childcare, education, and health, mental health and dental health care
 - Grocery stores with affordable, nutritious food
 - Safe, affordable recreational opportunities
 - Limited access to hazardous retail items like substances
- Social Environment:
 - Violence, crime, and public safety services
 - Noise, crowding, and building decay
 - Prejudice, discrimination and oppression
 - Secure, well-paying, safe jobs
- **Immigrants, people of color, and households earning low incomes are have higher likelihood of living somewhere where environmental hazards are high and environmental opportunities are limited.**

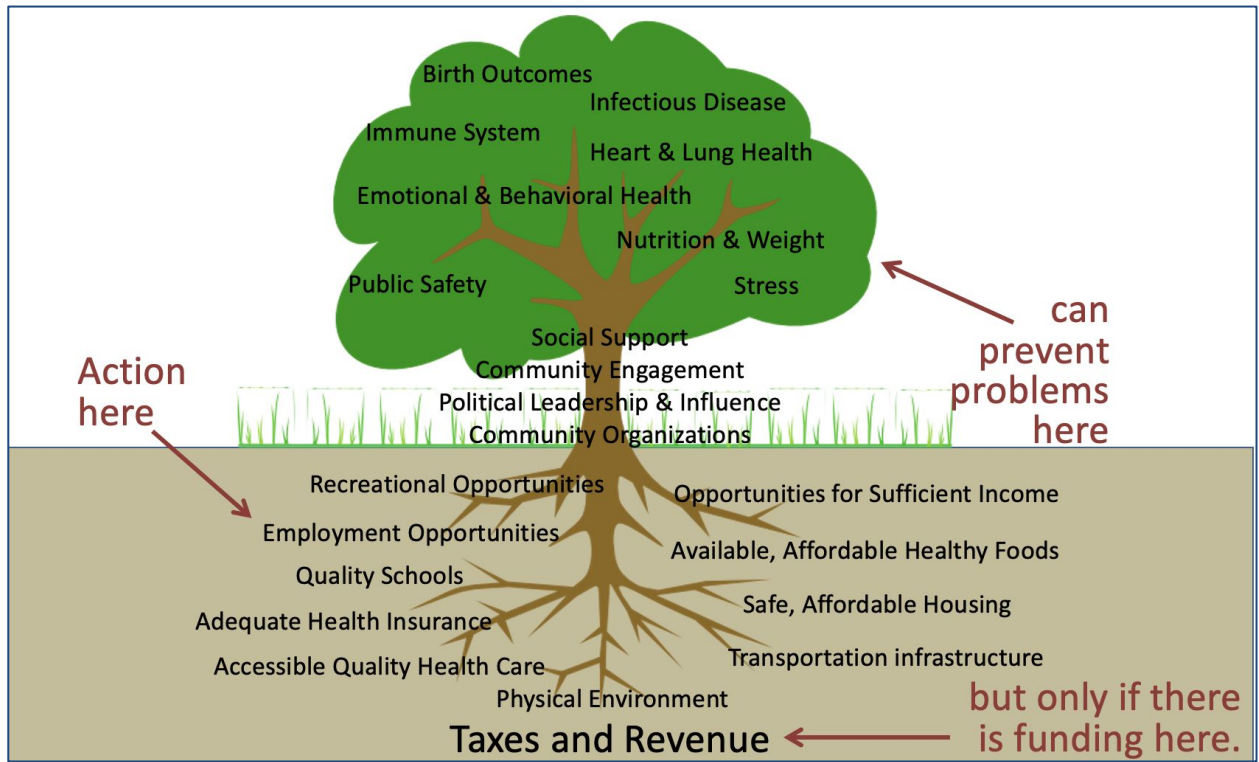


Discrimination increases both stress and the likelihood of exposure to environmental risks. It can also limit opportunities for health behaviors... It is woven through ALL social determinants of health.



Policies to promote health should thus consider inequity of opportunity and should work to correct systemic racism and other forms of discriminatory treatment.

The Root-Tree-Branch Metaphor for the Social Determinants of Health



Adapted from Ramirez, Baker & Metzler (2008).
*Promoting Health Equity: A Resource to Help
Communities Address Social Determinants of Health*

Our environments cultivate our communities. Our communities nurture our health.

But only if we invest in them through housing policy, employment policy, tax policy, early childhood and education policy, and so on. Social policy is health policy.

KIDS COUNT



ECONOMIC
WELL-BEING



EDUCATION



HEALTH



FAMILY AND
COMMUNITY

A social determinants of health framework

A group of four diverse children are sitting on the ground outdoors, playing with bubbles. The children are smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with trees and sunlight. The text "KIDS COUNT tells a story of opportunity." is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font across the center of the image.

KIDS COUNT tells a
story of opportunity.

2021 KIDS COUNT rankings



ECONOMIC
WELL-BEING

DOMAIN RANK

48



EDUCATION

DOMAIN RANK

50



HEALTH

DOMAIN RANK

37

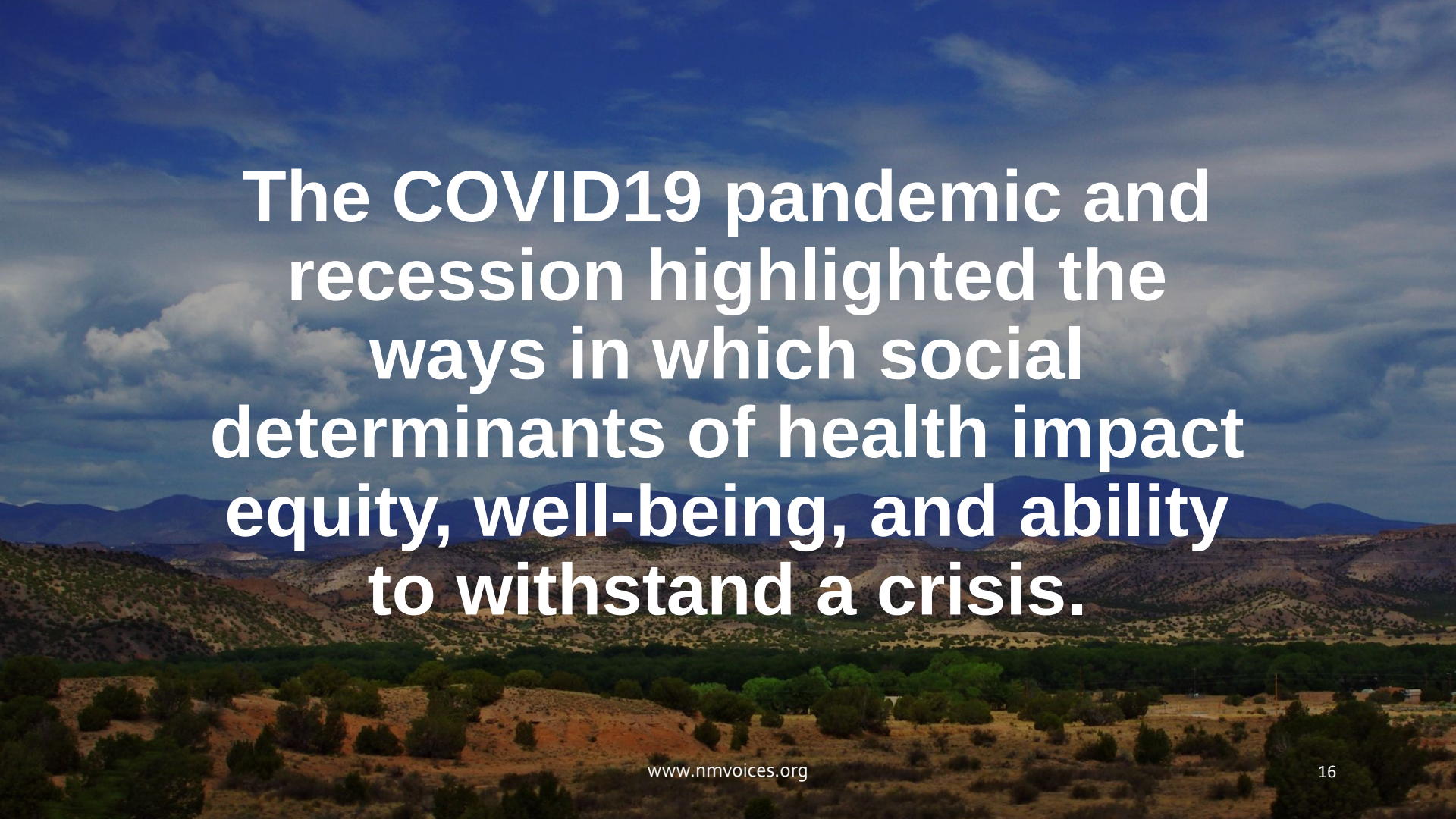


FAMILY AND
COMMUNITY

DOMAIN RANK

48

49th overall *using pre-pandemic data*

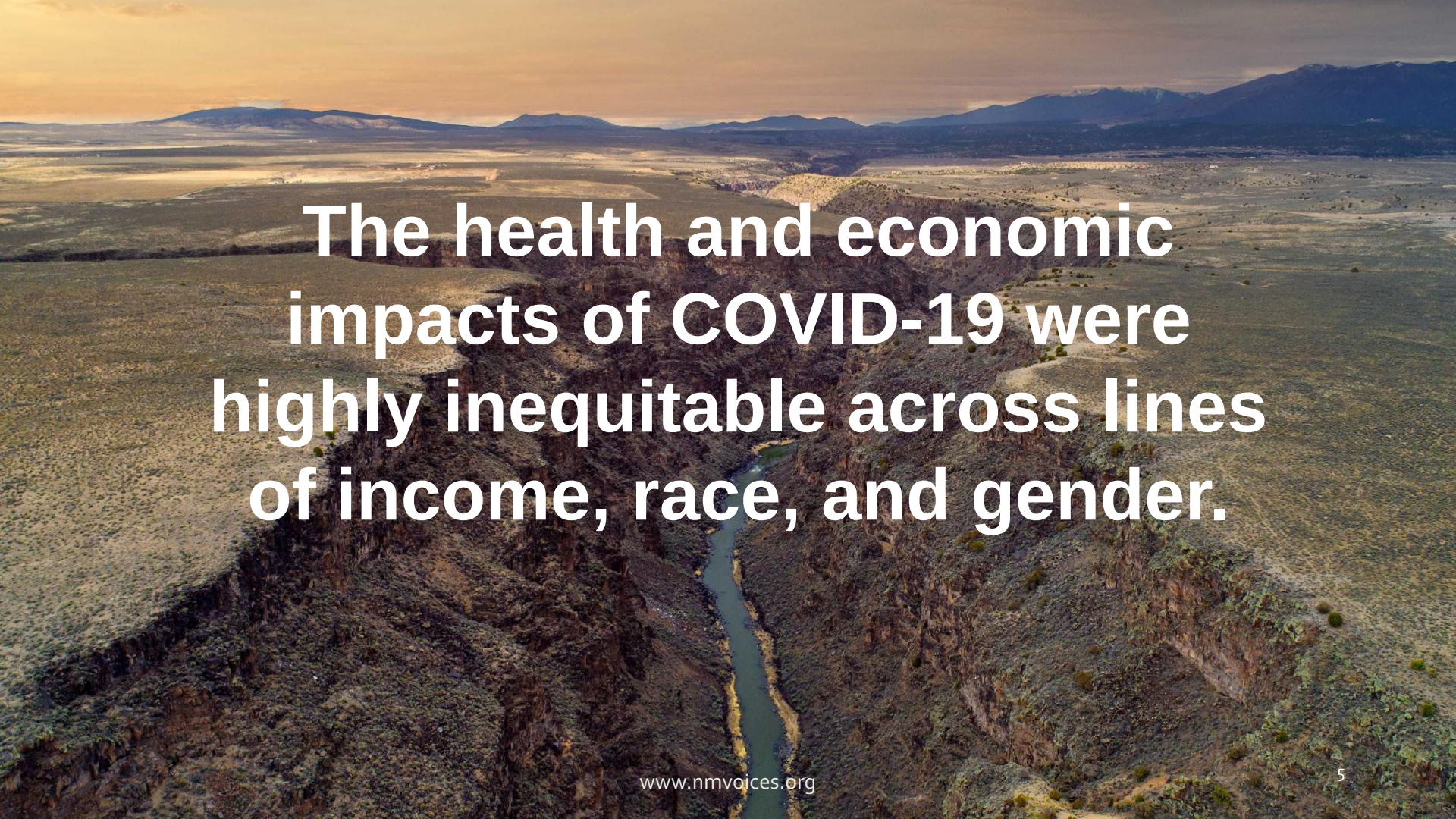


The COVID19 pandemic and recession highlighted the ways in which social determinants of health impact equity, well-being, and ability to withstand a crisis.

Pandemic impacts on family well-being

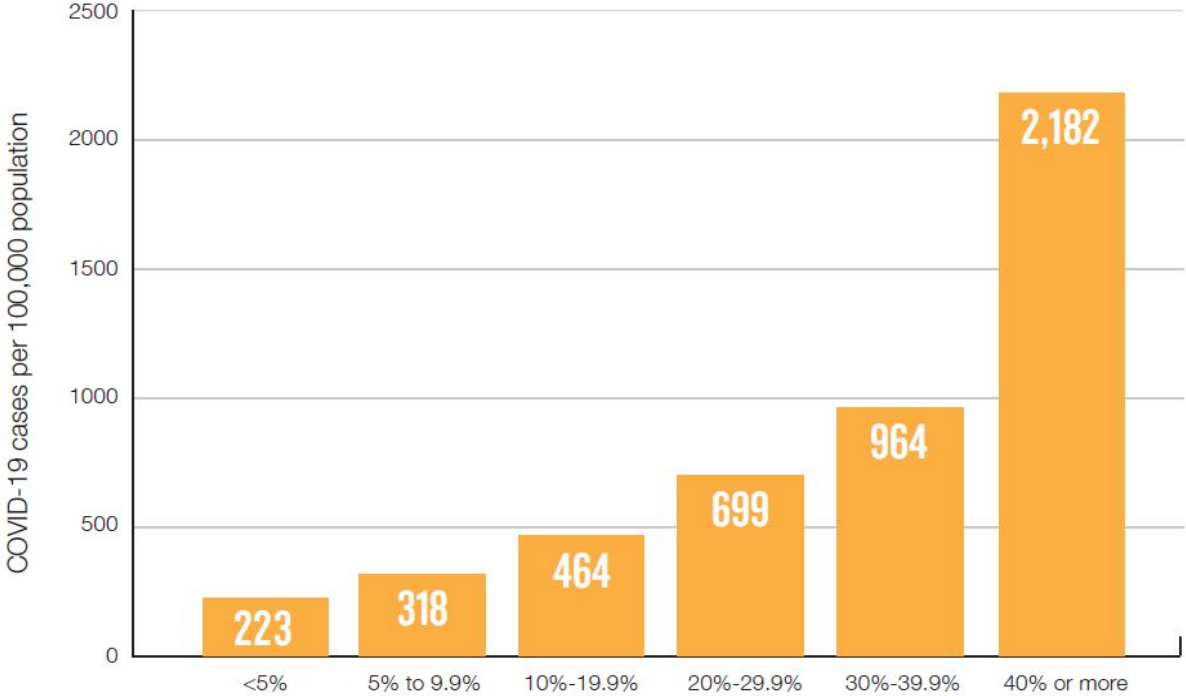
- 21% of NM parents unsure how to pay rent
- 38% of NM parents had difficulty paying for basic household expenses
- 31% of NM households with children were not eating enough
- 40% of NM parents with children under 5 with childcare disruptions in the past month because of COVID19

As of September, 2021

An aerial photograph of a deep, rugged canyon with a river flowing through its center. The canyon walls are dark and rocky, with sparse vegetation. The river is a narrow, winding path of water. In the background, there are rolling hills and mountains under a warm, orange and yellow sky, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall scene is vast and dramatic.

The health and economic impacts of COVID-19 were highly inequitable across lines of income, race, and gender.

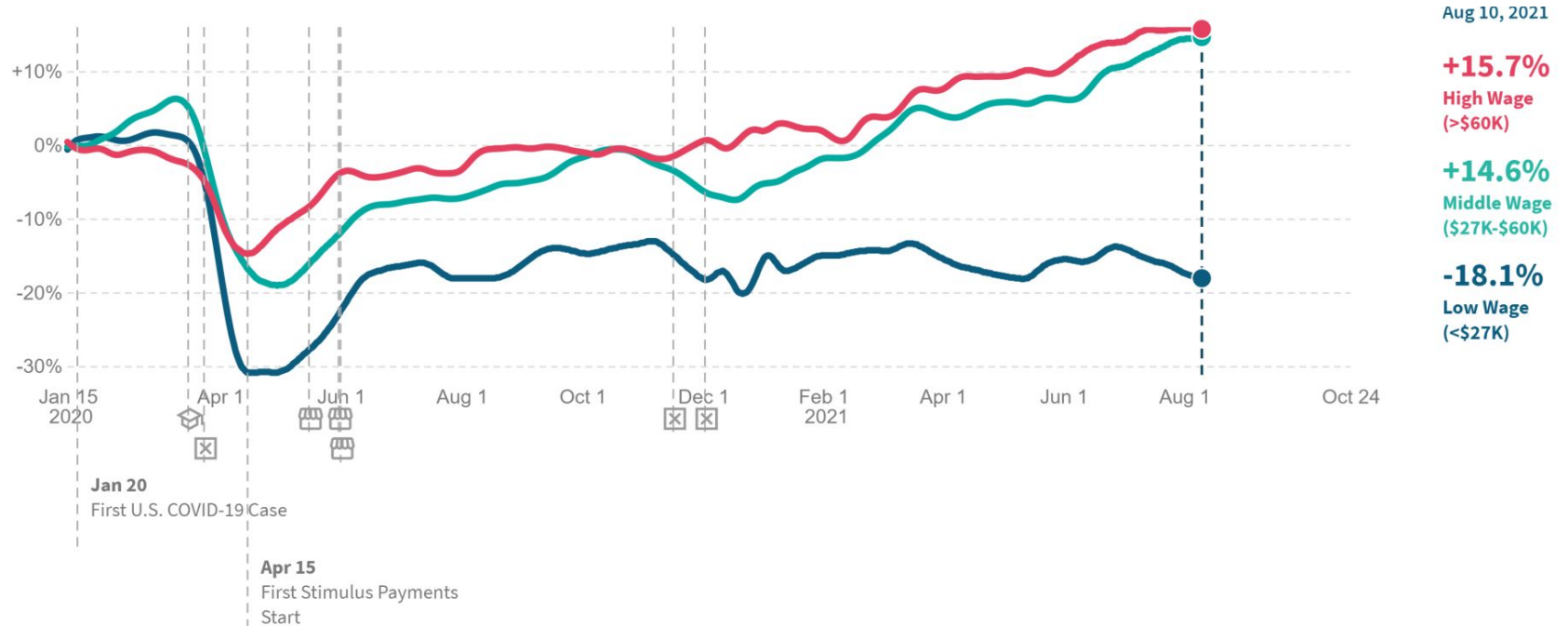
Lower-income New Mexicans were at a greater risk of contracting COVID-19



Source: New Mexico Human Services Department presentation to Legislative Health and Human Services Committee, Sept. 4, 2020

Low-wage workers hardest hit by COVID-19

Percent change in employment: In New Mexico, as of August 10 2021, employment rates among workers in the bottom wage quartile decreased by 18.1% compared to January 2020 (not seasonally adjusted)



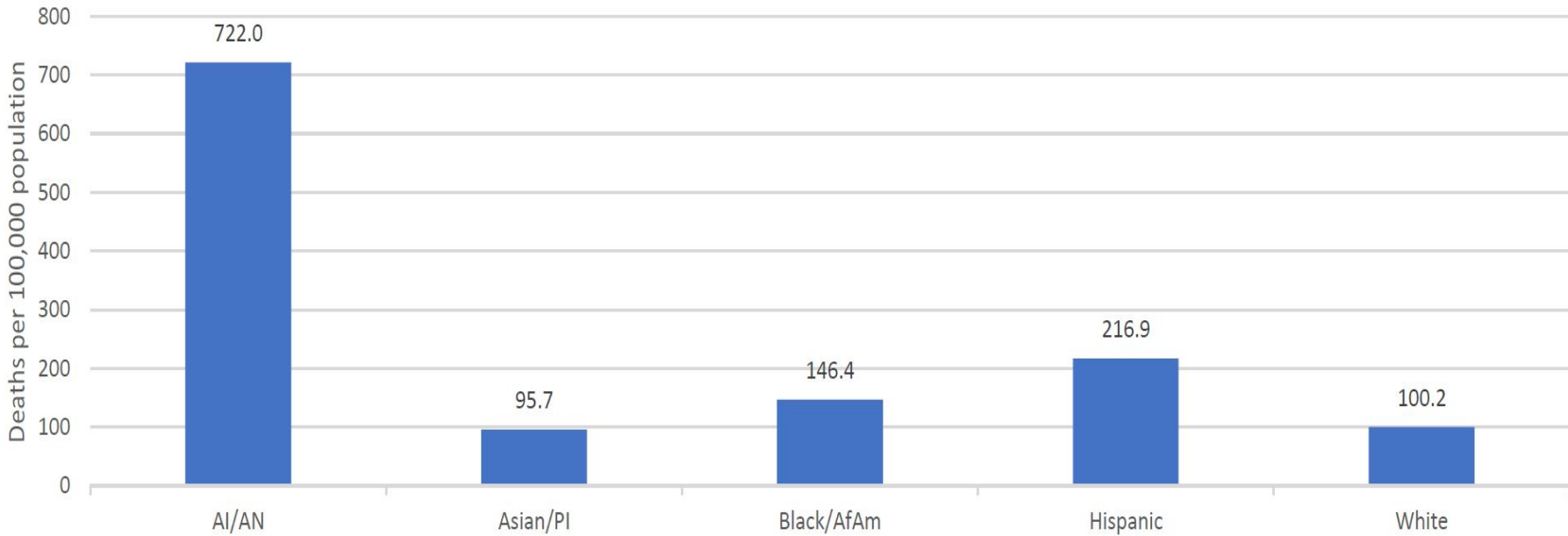
data source: Earnin, Intuit, Kronos, Paychex

A night landscape photograph. The foreground is dominated by large, reddish-brown, layered rock formations. Sparse green shrubs and a few small trees are scattered across the rocky terrain. In the middle ground, a vast, flat, arid landscape stretches out, dotted with small, distant lights. In the far distance, a city or town is visible, with a dense cluster of bright yellow and white lights. The sky is a deep, dark blue, filled with numerous small, bright stars. The overall scene is a mix of natural ruggedness and human-made light pollution.

**Pandemic and recession
impacts have not been
race neutral.**

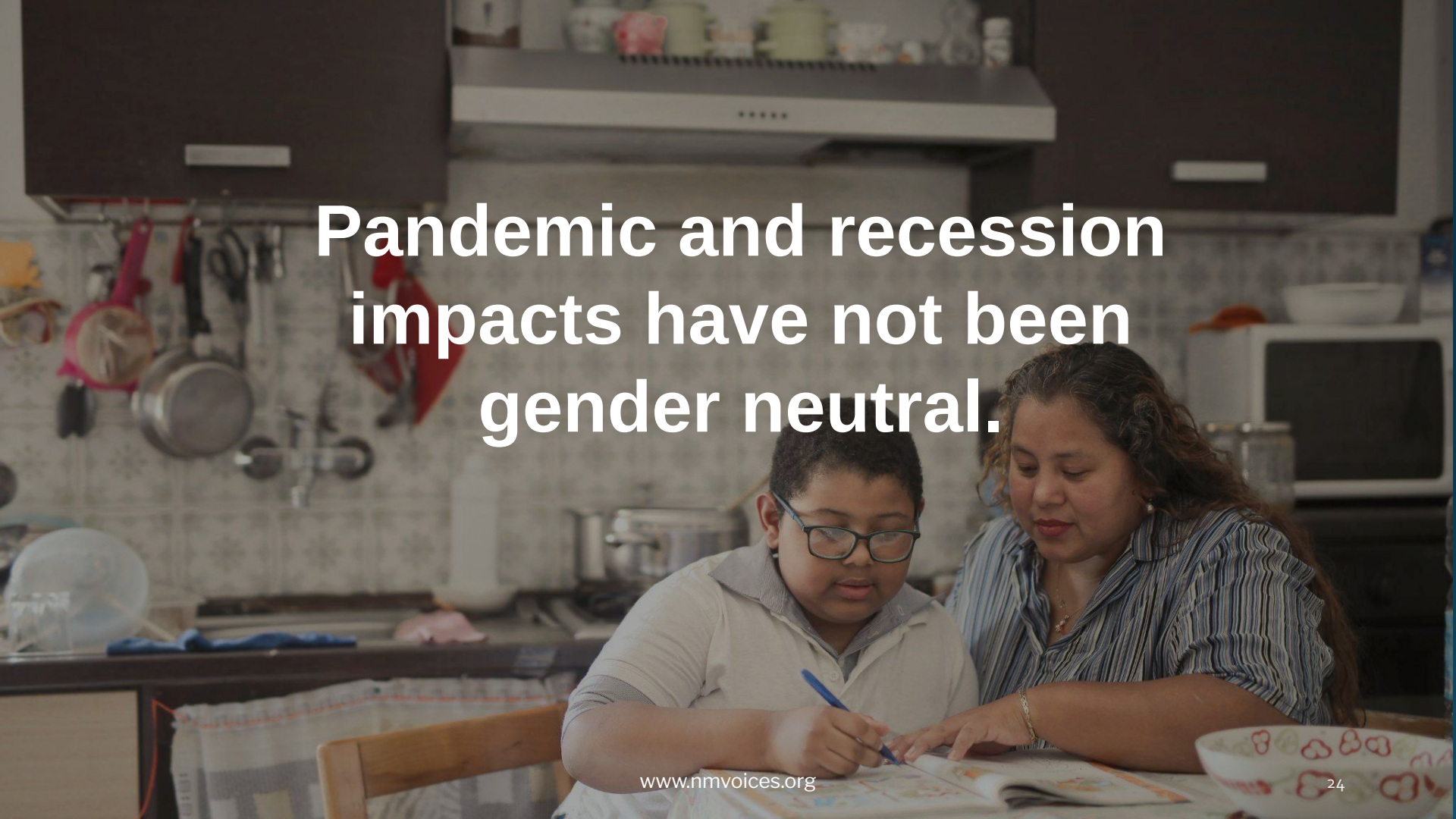
New Mexicans of color more likely to pass away from COVID19

Age-adjusted COVID mortality rate per 100,000 population by race and ethnicity



COVID-19 disproportionately harmed people of color

- Hispanic workers saw steepest employment losses and have the most ground to make up to reach pre-pandemic employment
- Asian women faced the worst change in unemployment during the recession
- Hispanic New Mexico parents more than twice as likely to have lost employment income than non-Hispanic, white New Mexicans
- Hispanic New Mexico parents more than three times as likely to be unsure how/if they can make next housing payment



**Pandemic and recession
impacts have not been
gender neutral.**

COVID-19 has caused gender inequities to grow, especially among parents

- **Women = 47% of NM workers; 64% of frontline workers**
- **More mothers than fathers have lost wages, decreased work hours, and exited the labor force**
- **Mothers with young children have reduced their work hours 4 to 5 times more than fathers**
- **Men gained 220,000 jobs in September, but women lost 26,000 jobs**

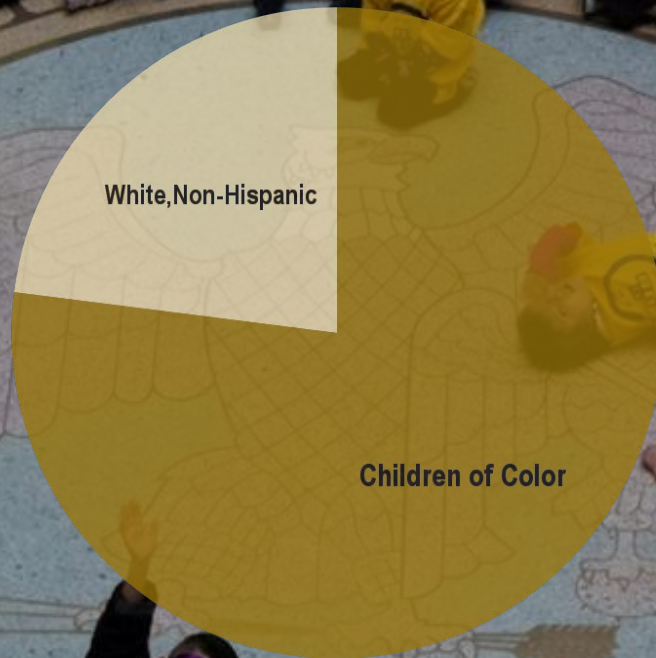
Inequities persist for BIPOC women

- Women's labor force participation rate lowest since 1988
- Even higher unemployment rates for Black women, Hispanic women, and other demographic groups
- The gender wage gap has increased especially for Hispanic, Native American, and Black women
- Immigration restrictions and language barriers make for higher hurdles for immigrant and refugee families

A photograph of a woman with long dark hair and a young girl with curly hair, both smiling warmly at each other. The woman is wearing a purple top, and the girl is wearing a blue denim-style top. They are outdoors, with a blurred background of greenery and a bright sky. The text "But there's good news too." is overlaid in white, bold font across the center of the image.

But there's good news too.

77% of NM kids are children of color.



Data show many bright spots

- Over time, women's educational and economic opportunities have grown
- Black, Asian, and Hispanic women have high rates of labor force participation
- Black, Hispanic, and Native American women most likely to lead their households
- 42% of our Native American children are bilingual
- Enrollment in health care and in high-quality early care and ed programs up
- Teen births down



**Policy matters, and
progress is possible.**

Policy improvements for families


- Paid sick leave
- Income tax cut for 70% of NM families with children
- Tax relief for working parents
- Food security investments
- Relief for immigrant families left out of federal relief
- Most family-friendly child care assistance program
- (ARPA) Federal Child Tax Credit expansions
- (ARPA) Major federal investments in child care, education, health, and housing systems relief



Moving forward

Prioritize women, children, and families of color in public policy

- Extend postpartum medicaid coverage
- Robustly support child care assistance, prek, and home visiting programs
- Provide strong safety net supports
- Combat food insecurity
- Fully fund and support classrooms and the programs that matter most for children of color
- Diversify and stabilize revenue

A silhouette of a woman holding a young child against a sunset sky. The woman is on the right, holding the child on her left. The sky is a mix of blue, orange, and purple, with some clouds. The overall mood is peaceful and hopeful.

“We will not march back to what was, but move to what shall be.”

Amanda Gorman, National Youth Poet Laureate, 2021

A photograph of four children running happily on a dirt path in a wooded area. The children are diverse in age and ethnicity. The text is overlaid on the image.

Thank you!

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