

COVID-19

Racism's New Chapter

Taison D. Bell, MD, MBA



Outline and Objectives

- Outline the disproportionate impact COVID-19 has had on Black, Hispanic, and Indigenous communities
- Explain Social Determinants of Health and how they lead to worse outcomes for COVID-19
- Argue that Social Determinants of Health are really just an approachable way to discuss systemic racism
- Health Equity as the path forward

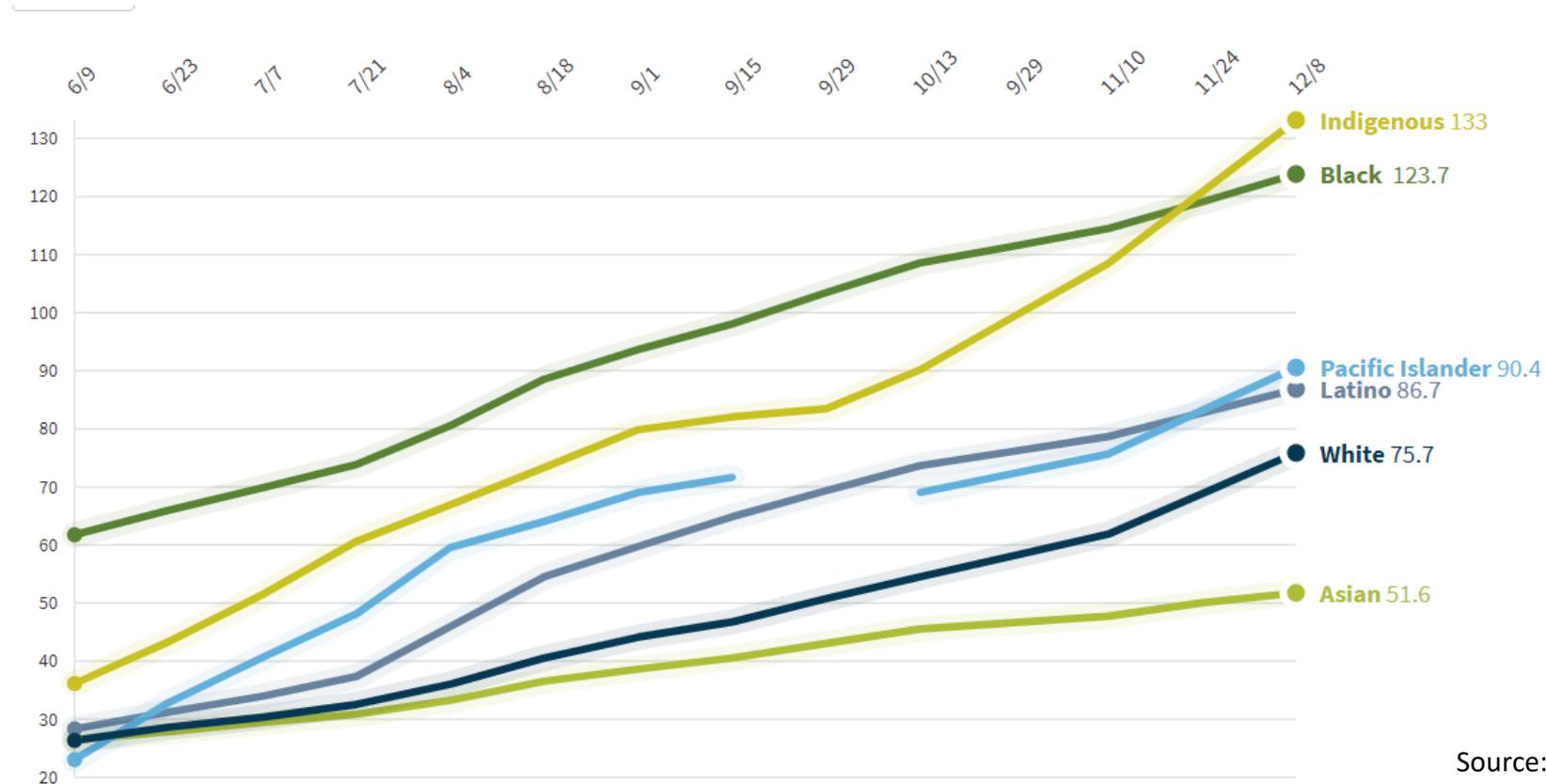


“When White folks catch a cold, Black folks get pneumonia”

- Christine Taylor (my Great-grandmother)

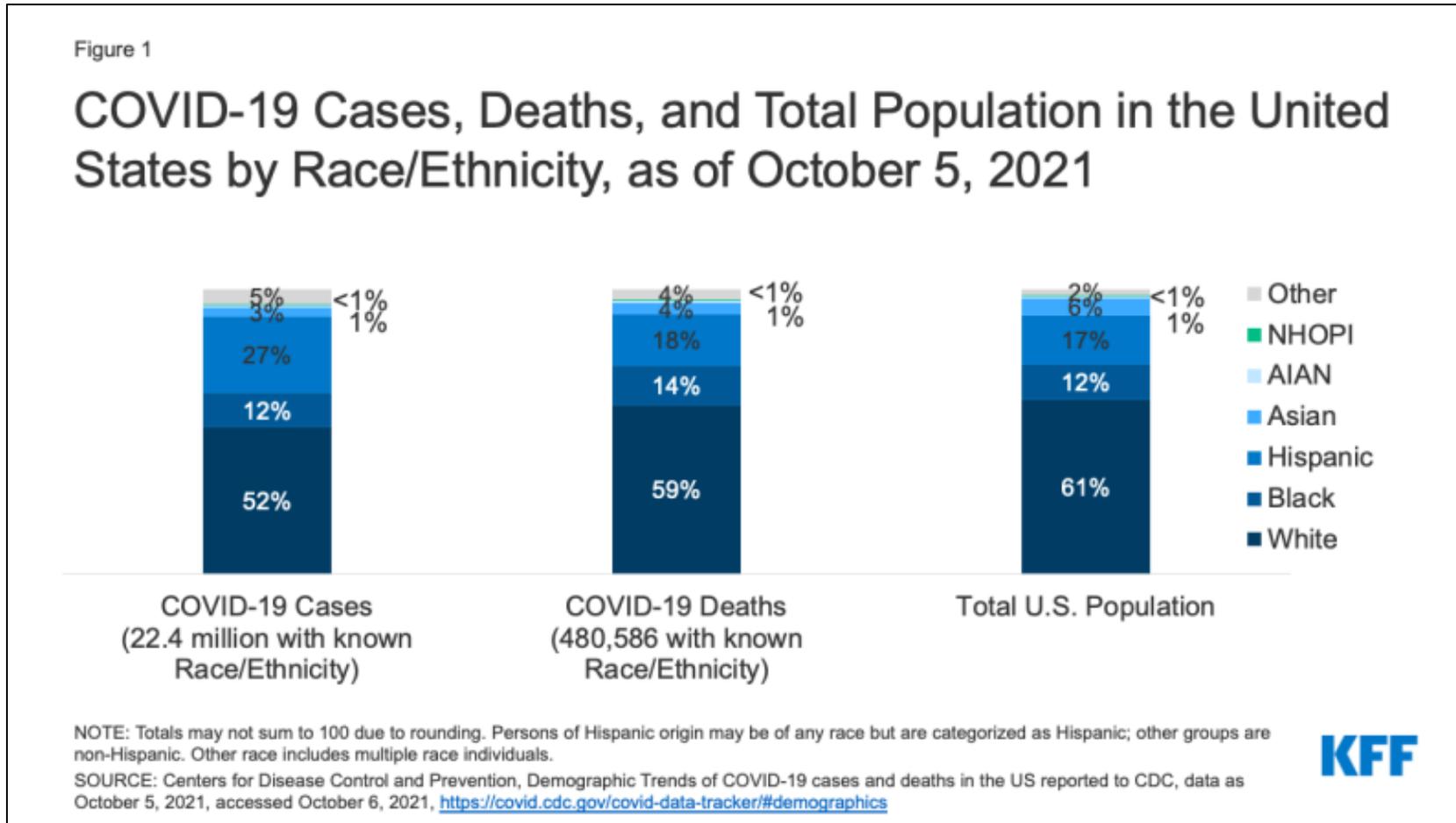
Early COVID-19 Deaths by Race and Ethnicity

Actual Mortality Rate: U.S. COVID-19 Deaths per 100,000, By Race/Ethnicity

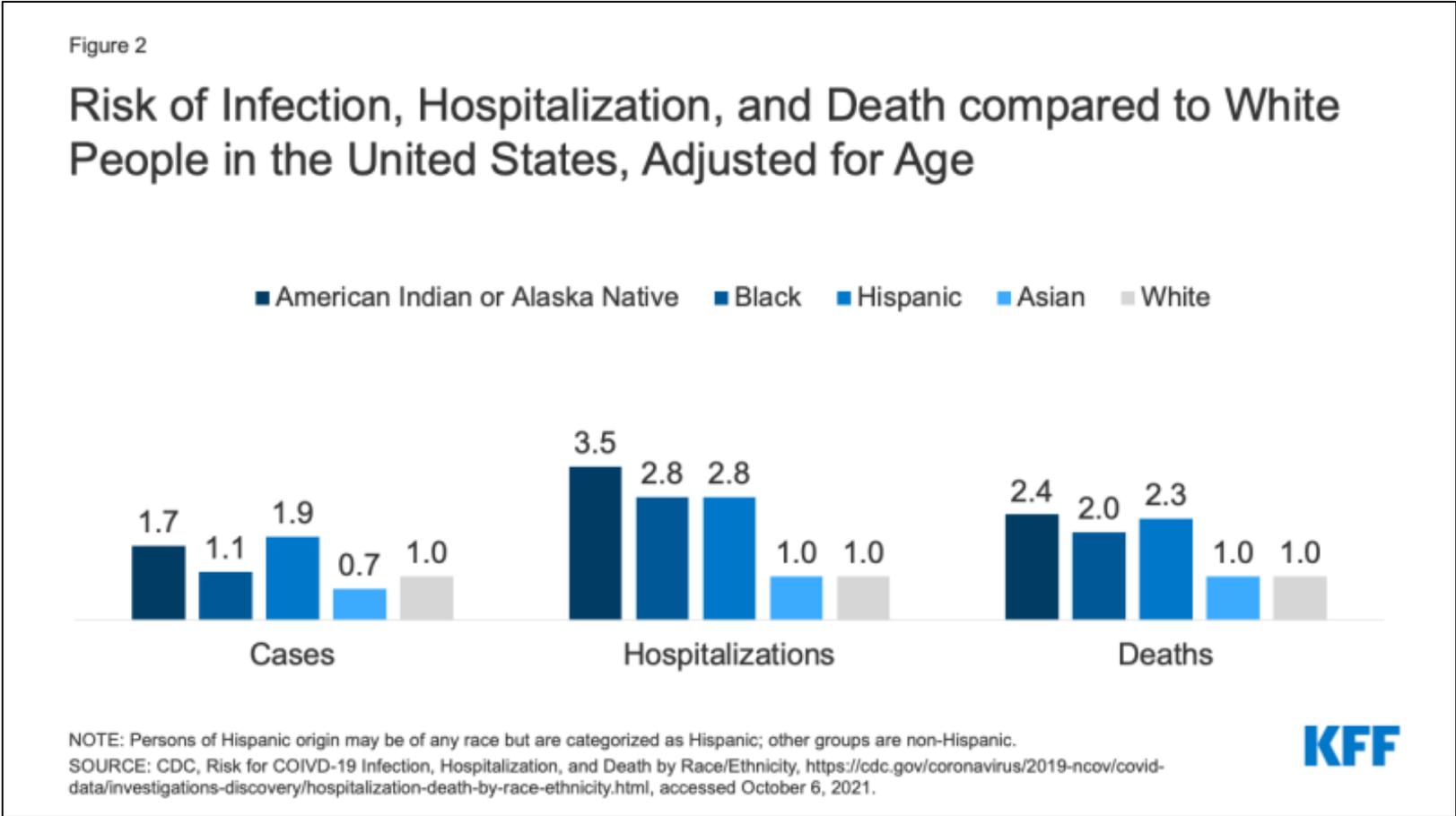


Source: American Public Media

On Surface the Mortality Gap has Narrowed



Adjusted for Age



“The Covid-19 outbreak is proof the virus doesn’t care who you are or where you come from.”

- Láolú Senbanjo (New York Times)



CDC COVID-19 Descriptive Analysis

Hospitalizations were **6** times higher
and deaths **12** times higher for COVID-19 patients
with reported underlying conditions*

MOST FREQUENTLY REPORTED UNDERLYING CONDITIONS

CARDIOVASCULAR
DISEASE



DIABETES



CHRONIC LUNG
DISEASE



*compared to those with no reported underlying health conditions

CDC.GOV

bit.ly/MMWR61520

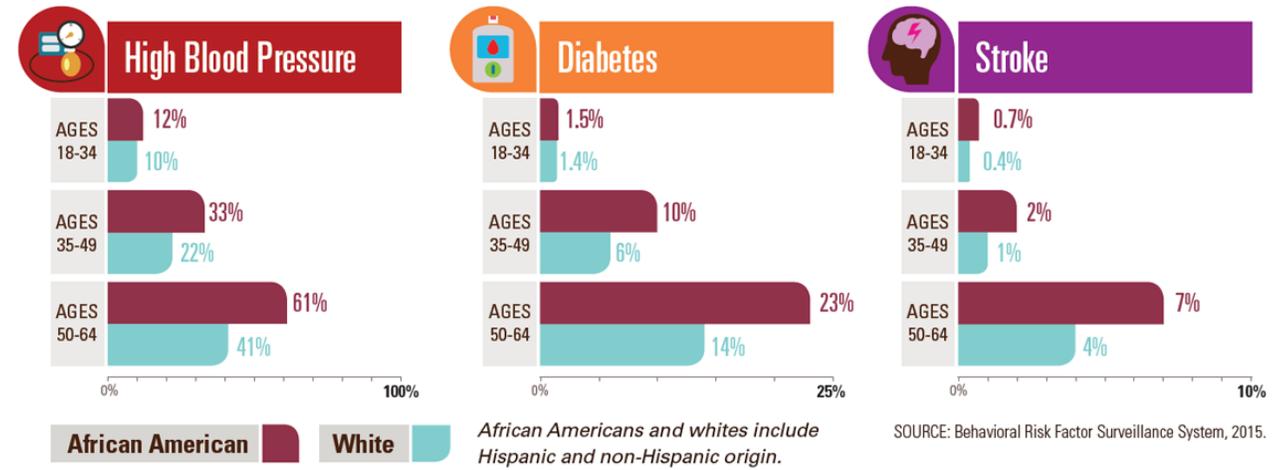
MMWR

Source: MMWR Weekly/June 19, 2020

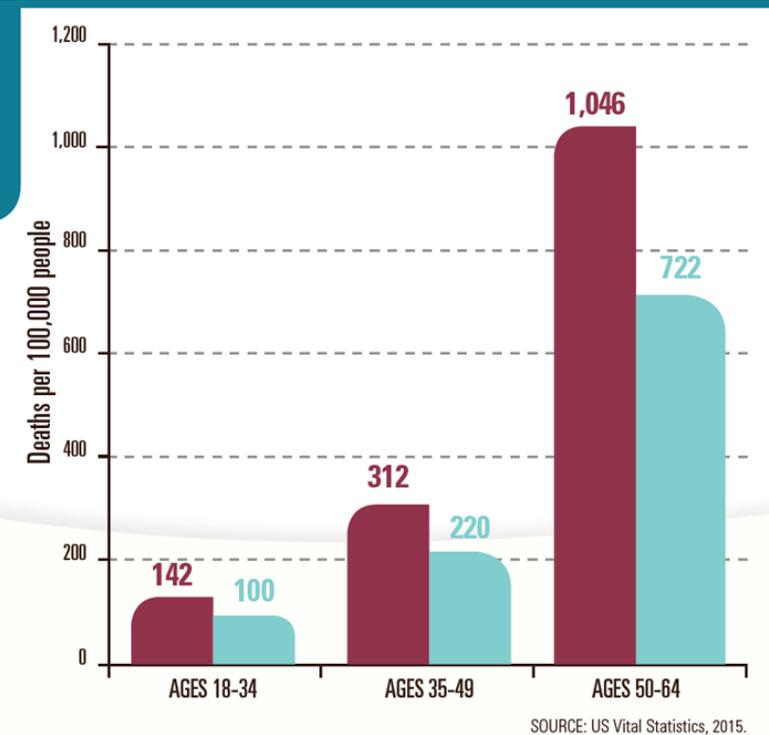
Health Disparity

- Nearly half of Black Americans have a chronic condition compared to 39% of the general population

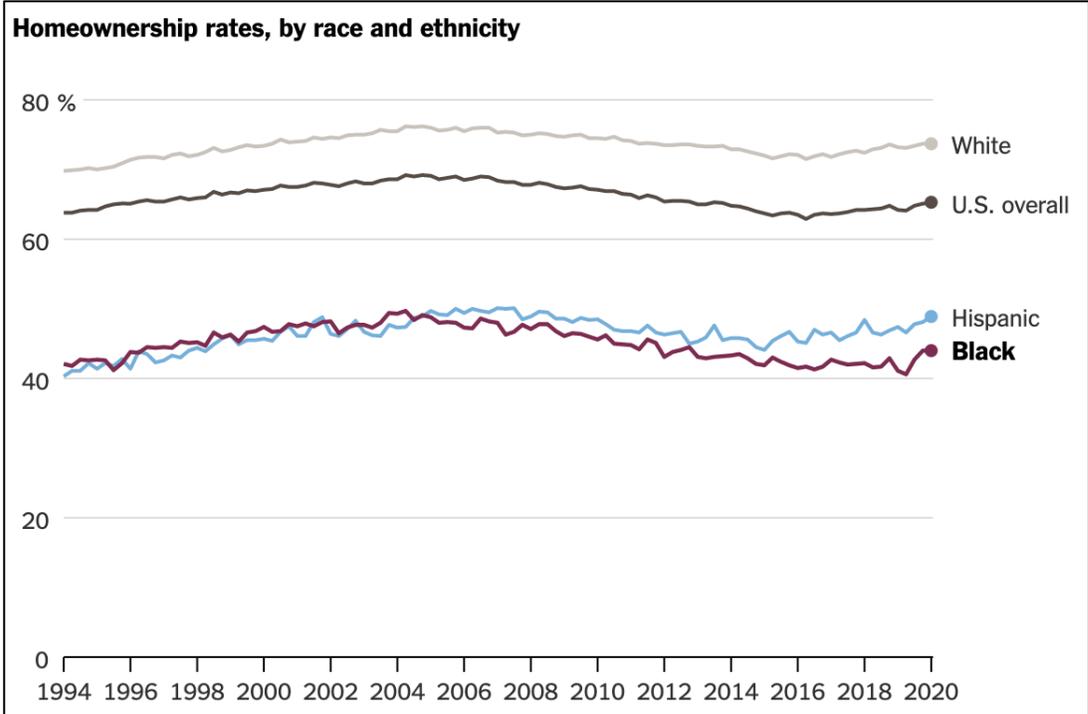
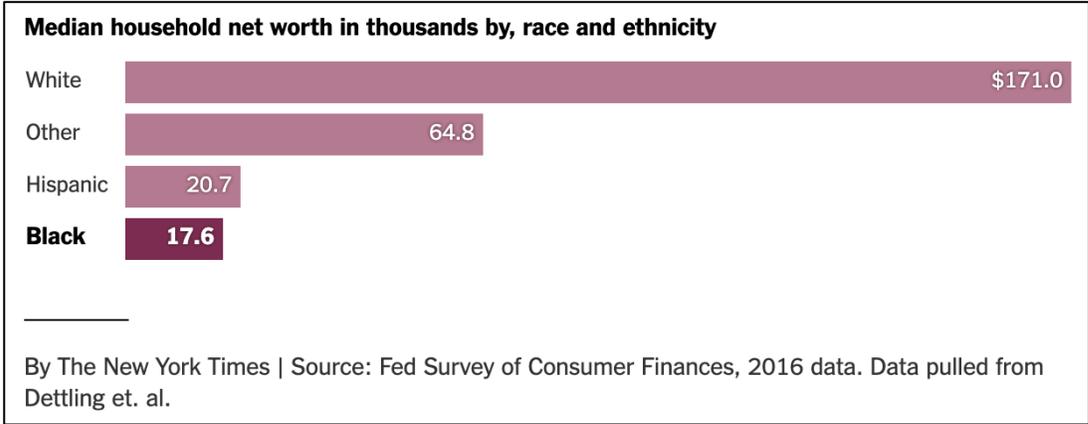
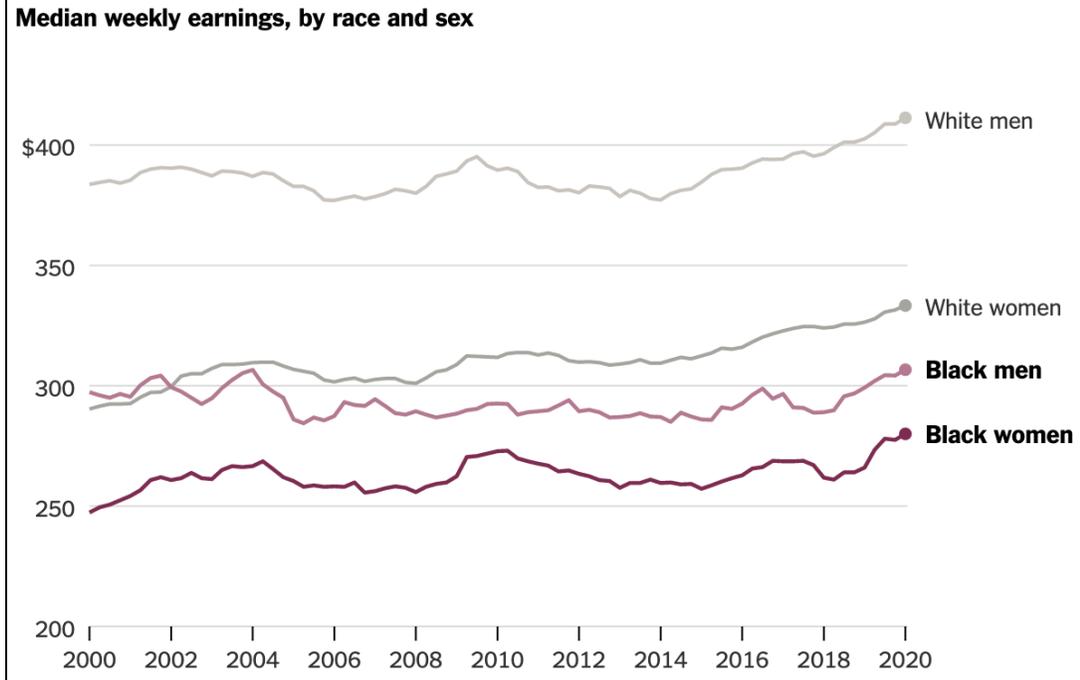
Uninsured Rate by Race/Ethnicity	
Racial/Ethnic Group	Uninsured Rate
AAPI	7.2%
White	7.8%
Black	11.4%
Hispanic	20%



African Americans are more likely to die at early ages from all causes.



Wealth Disparity



Essential Workers

- Black Americans make up ~13% of the general pop.
- Black Americans are over-represented among many essential jobs

Black workers are more likely than other workers to be in front-line jobs

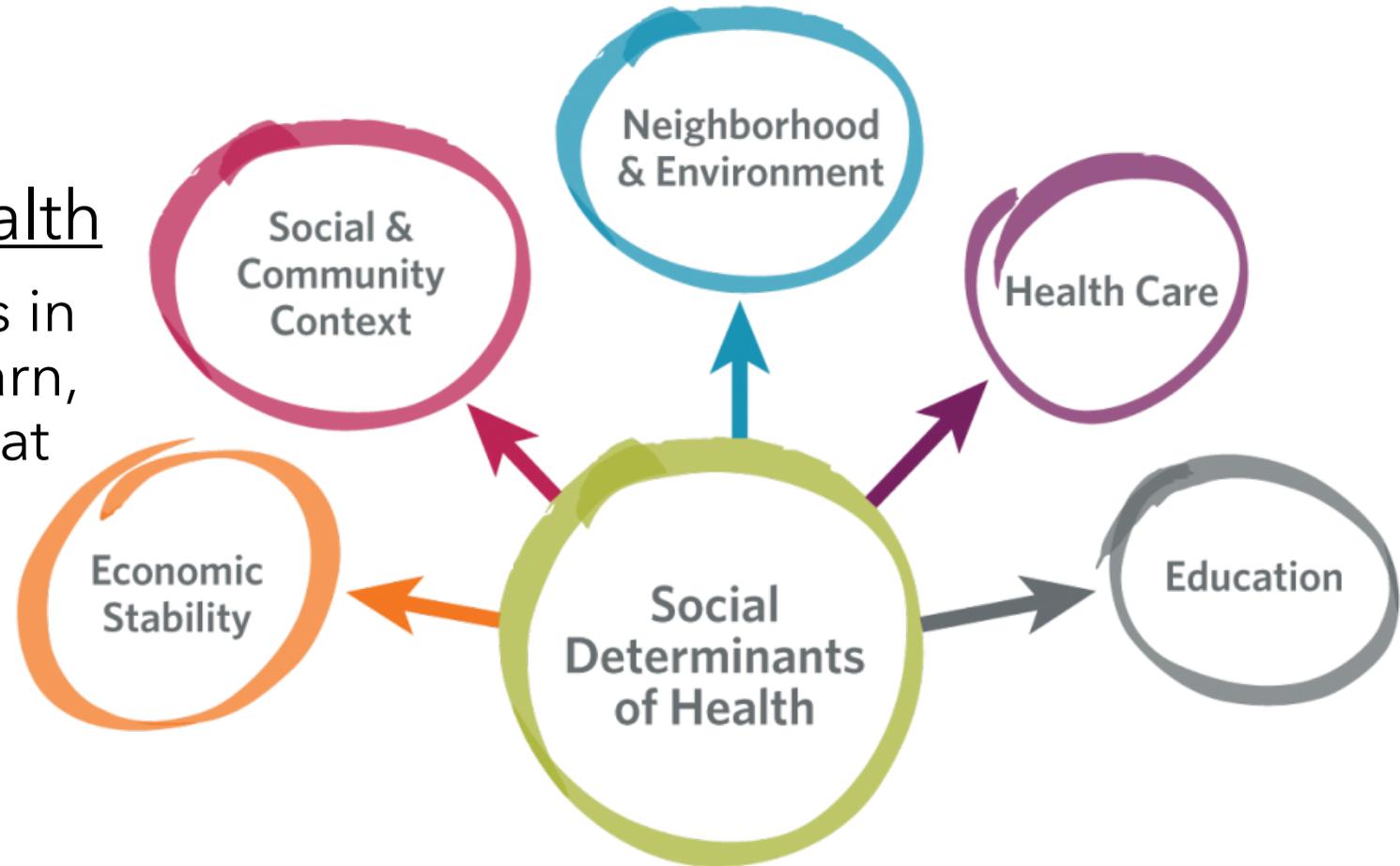
Black workers as a share of all workers in a given industry

	Black workers' share of workers in the industry
<i>Front-line workers</i>	17.0%
<i>All workers</i>	11.9%
<i>Grocery, convenience & drugstore workers</i>	14.2%
<i>Public transit workers</i>	26.0%
<i>Trucking, warehouse & postal service workers</i>	18.2%
<i>Building cleaning services workers</i>	12.6%
<i>Health care workers</i>	17.5%
<i>Child care & social services workers</i>	19.3%

Why the difference?

Social Determinants of Health

Conditions in the environments in which people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks





“I can't believe what you say...
because I see what you do.”

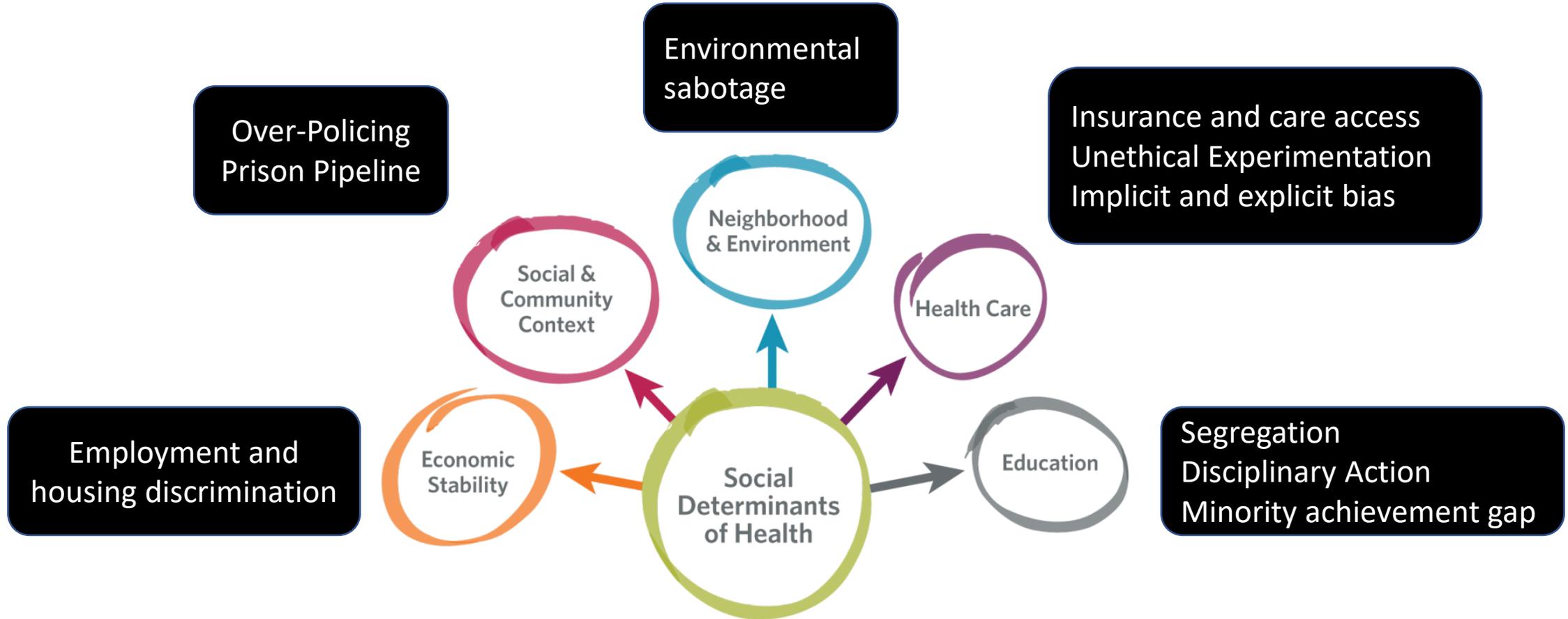
- James Baldwin

Definitions

Race is a social construct (not biological fact) based on a belief that there are “inherited” physical and behavioral differences between groups of people

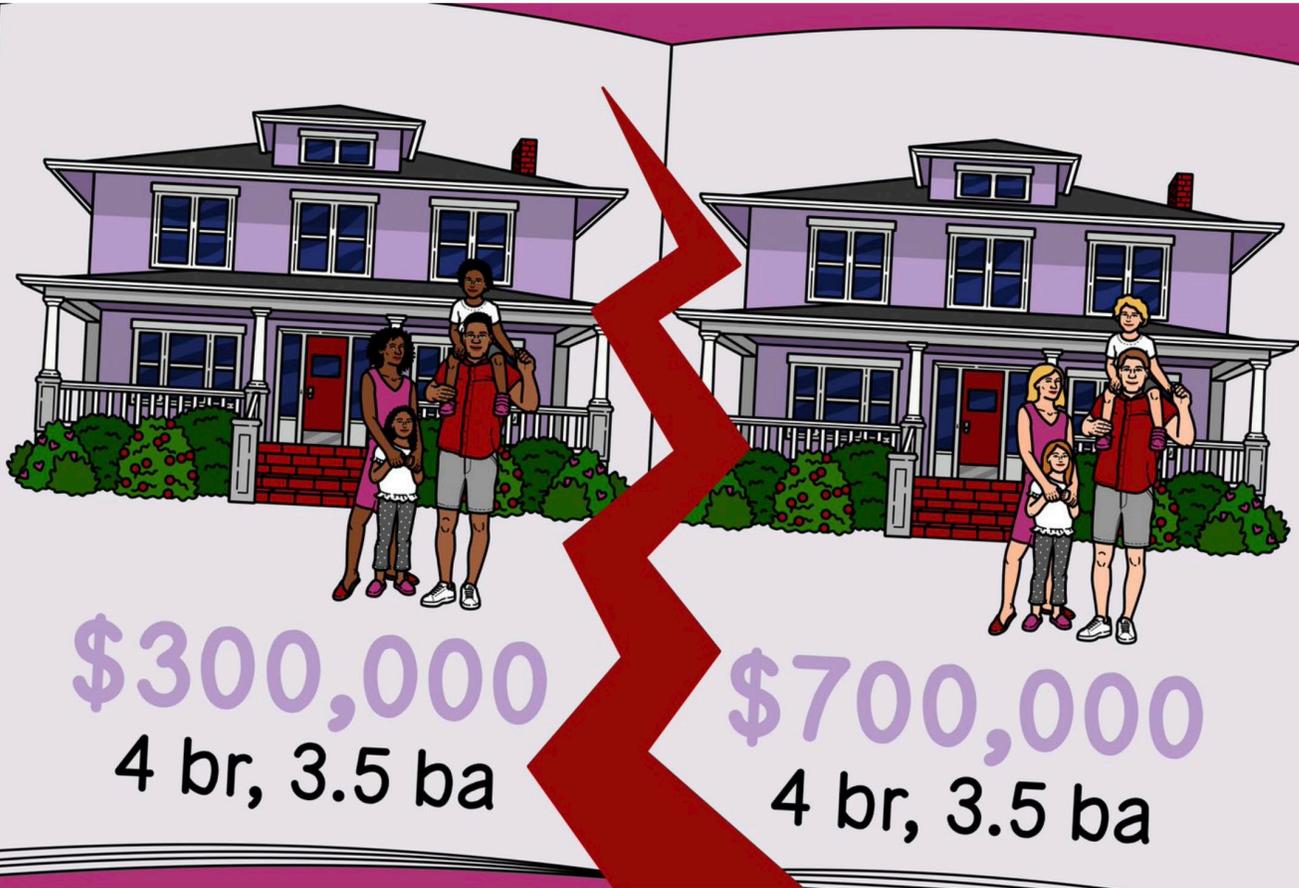
Racism involves one group having the power to use racial preference to discriminate with policies, practices, and institutions that are designed to favor them over another group

SDH are a Direct Result of Systemic Racism



Being Black lowers the value of my home: The legacy of redlining

If I picked up my home and moved it 20 miles west to a White neighborhood, it would be worth much more



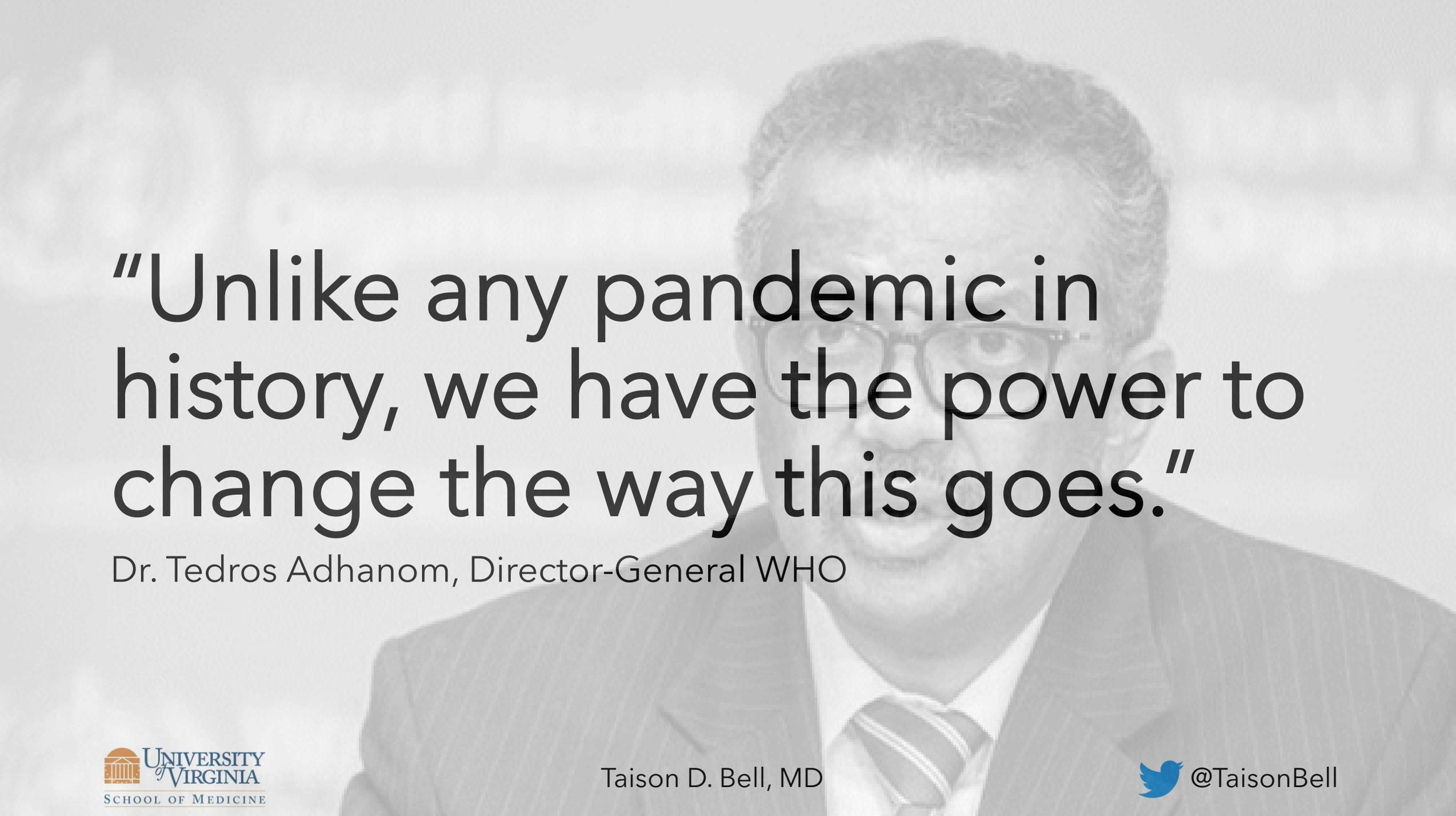
- Federal housing policies led to color-code maps to determine if loans would be backed by the Fed
- Black neighborhoods were colored red and not backed → loan denials or extremely high lending rates
- Demand for real estate in predominantly Black communities is artificially suppressed
- Homes in Black communities are undervalued by as much as 65%

Source: Michelle Singletary, Washington Post

Environmental Consequences



- Half of the 9m people who live near hazardous waste sites are people of color
- Black Americans are more likely than White Americans to live near landfills and industrial plants
- Black Americans are three times more likely than White Americans to die from exposure to air pollution



“Unlike any pandemic in history, we have the power to change the way this goes.”

Dr. Tedros Adhanom, Director-General WHO

Change our Focus



Equity requires deeper questioning

 **Scott Gottlieb, MD** ✓
@ScottGottliebMD

My @WSJ Op Ed - Leverage pharmacies to distribute Covid vaccines more quickly and broadly. Society has a responsibility to help the most vulnerable, and the collective good depends on maximizing number of vaccinations. These two goals are not in conflict.

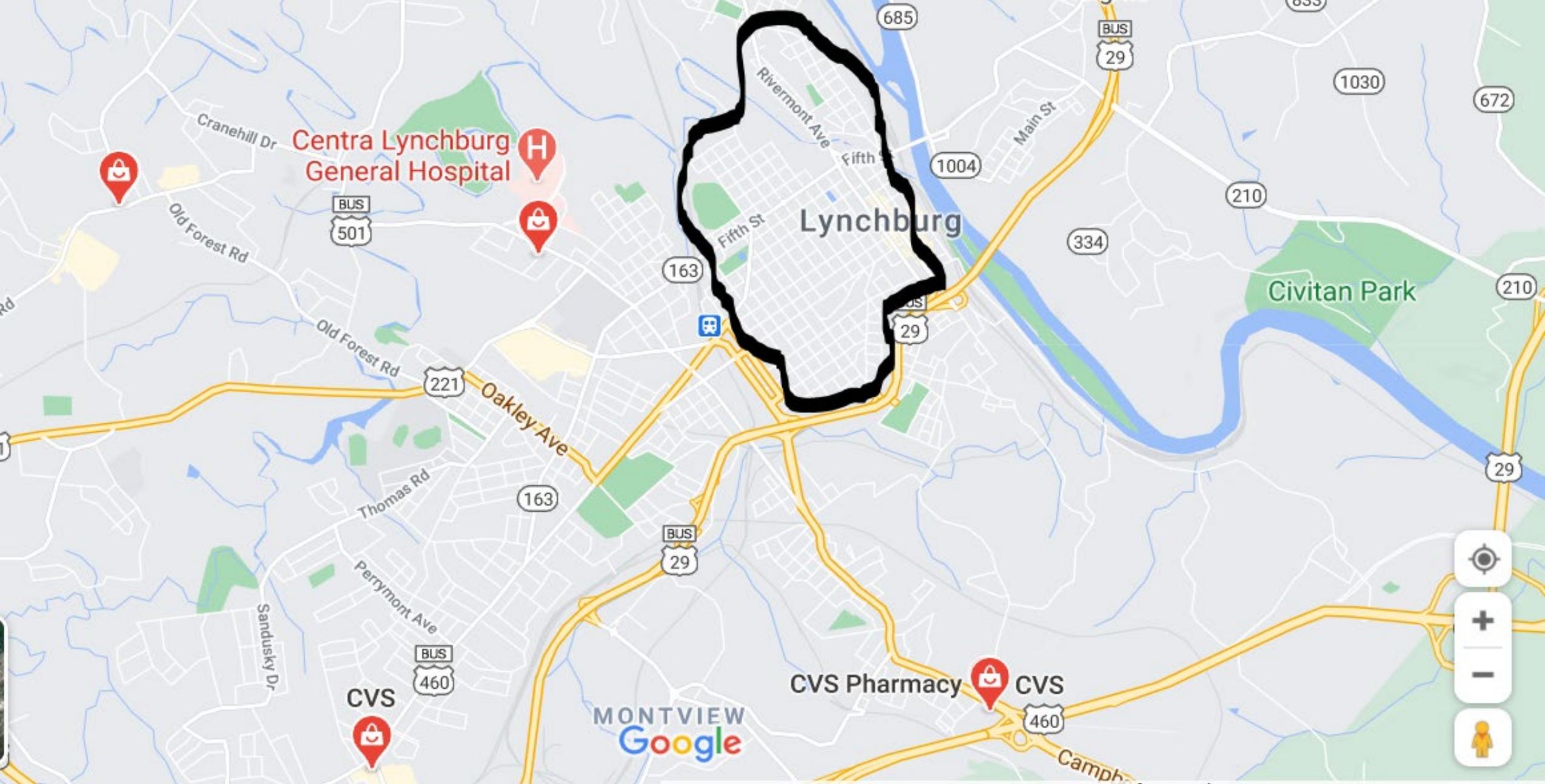


The growth of "pharmacy deserts"

 Jennifer A. Kingson





Summary

- COVID-19 has had a disproportionate impact on the Black community and other communities of color
- Social determinant of health are strongly linked to poor outcomes due to COVID-19
- Structural racism is a root cause for differences in SDH
- From a health perspective, correcting this injustice involves dismantling racist policies/institutions and using an equity focus