

## DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA: Gaps in Children's General Health Status

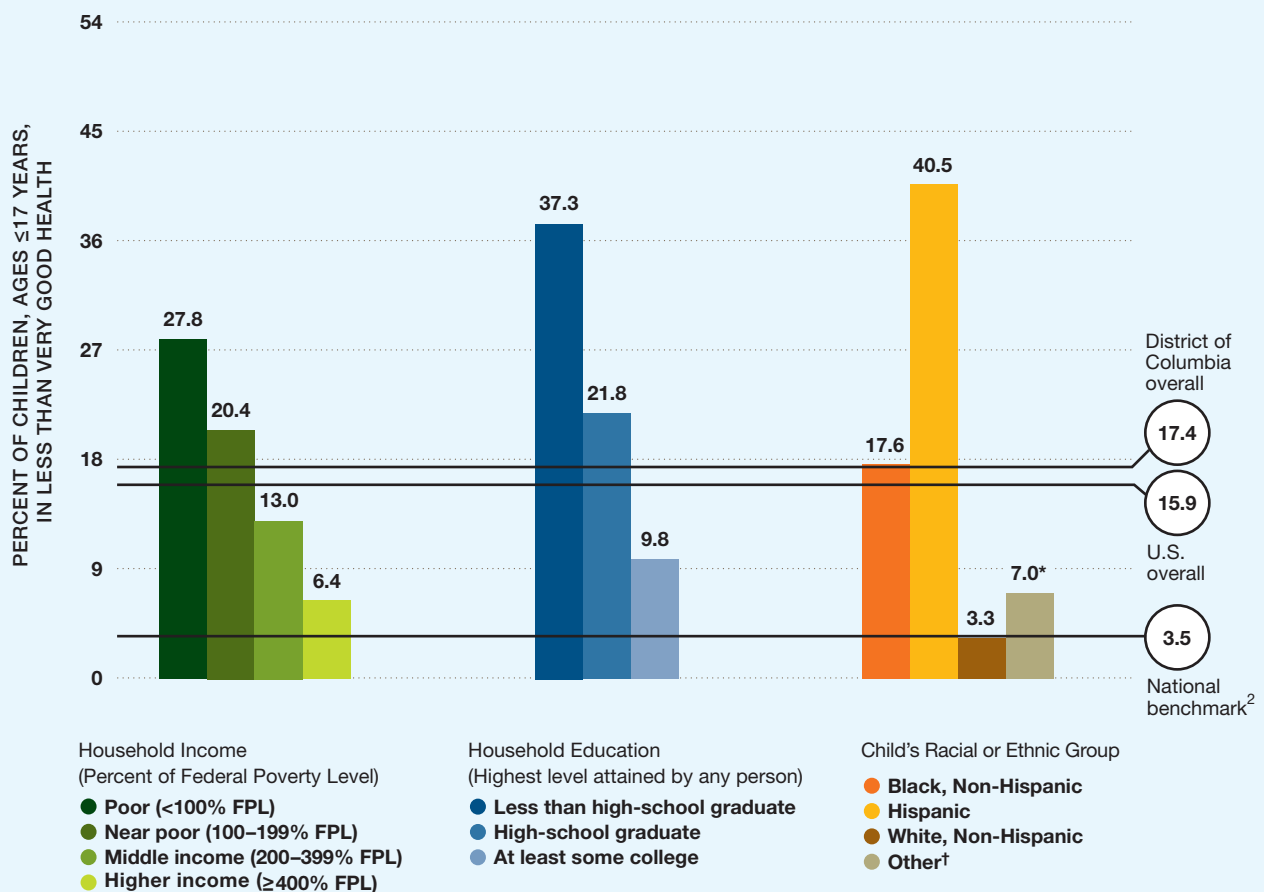
Within the District of Columbia, children's general health status<sup>1</sup> varies by family income and education and by racial or ethnic group. Children in the least-advantaged groups typically experience the worst health, but even children in middle-class families are less healthy than those with greater advantages.

- Children in poor families are over four times as likely and children in middle-income families are twice as likely to be in less than optimal health as children in higher-income families.
- Children in households where no one has completed high school are nearly four times as likely to be in less

than optimal health as children living with an adult who has completed some college.

- Hispanic children are over 12 times as likely and non-Hispanic black children are over five times as likely as non-Hispanic white children to be in less than optimal health.

Comparing the District of Columbia's experience against the national benchmark<sup>2</sup> reveals unrealized health potential among District of Columbia children in every income, education and racial or ethnic group, except non-Hispanic white children.



Prepared for the RWJF Commission to Build a Healthier America by the Center on Social Disparities in Health at the University of California, San Francisco.  
Source: 2003 National Survey of Children's Health.

1 Based on parental assessment and measured as poor, fair, good, very good or excellent. Health reported as less than very good was considered to be less than optimal.  
2 The national benchmark for children's general health status represents the level of health that should be attainable for all children in every state. The benchmark used here—3.5 percent of children with health that was less than very good, seen in Colorado—is the lowest statistically-reliable rate observed in any state among children whose families were not only higher income but also practiced healthy behaviors (i.e., non-smokers and at least one person who exercised regularly).

\* Rate has a relative standard error greater than 30 percent and is considered statistically unreliable.

† Defined as any other or more than one racial or ethnic group, including any group with fewer than 3 percent of children in the state in 2003.