

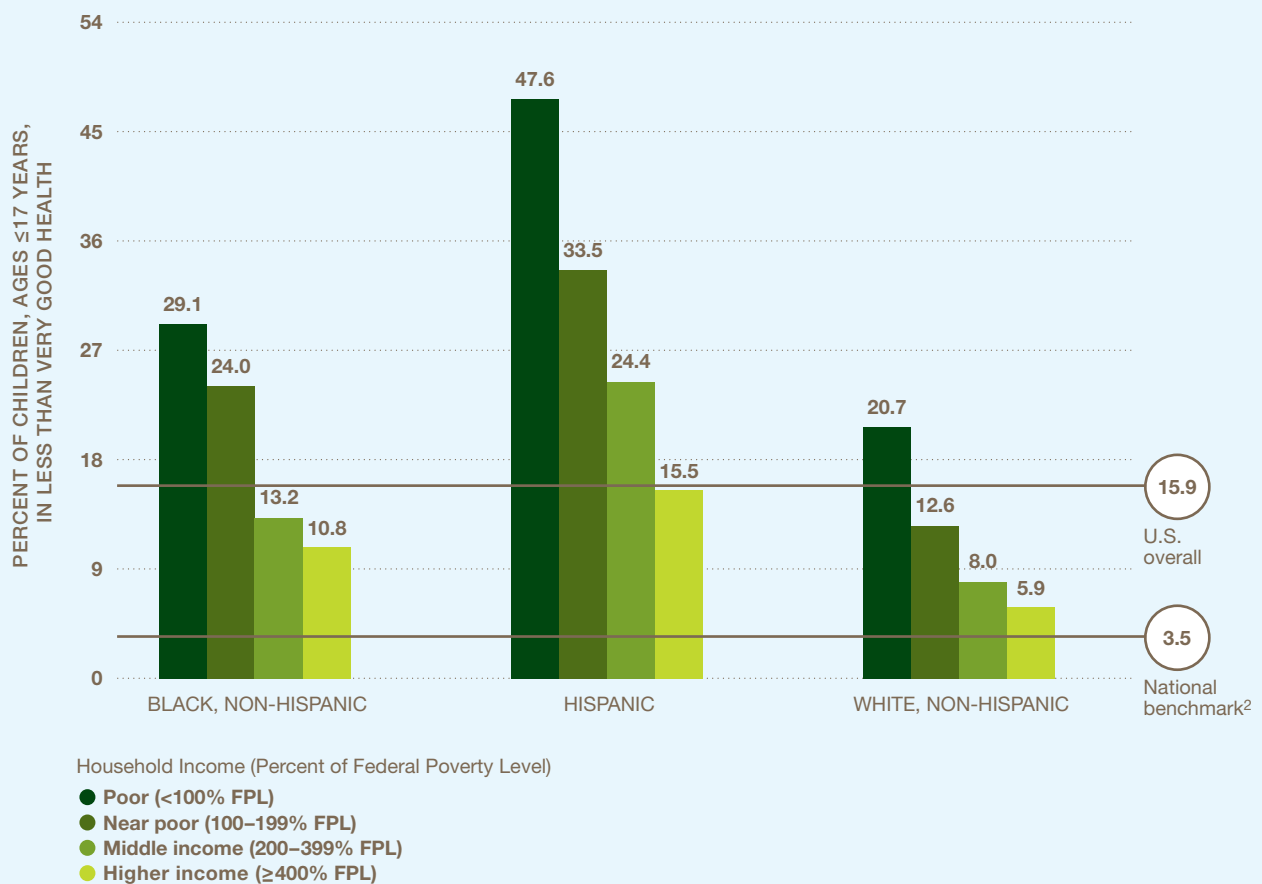
Income Is Linked With Health Regardless of Racial or Ethnic Group

Gaps in children's health by income do not simply reflect differences by race or ethnicity; nor do they simply reflect differences between the rich and the poor. Both income and racial or ethnic group matter.

- Within each racial or ethnic group, a steep income gradient is evident. Children's general health status¹ improves as family income increases. Among non-Hispanic whites, for example, children in poor, near-poor or middle-income households were 3.5, 2.1 and 1.4 times as likely to be in less than very good health as children in higher-income households.

- At each level of income, non-Hispanic black and Hispanic children fared worse than non-Hispanic whites.

The extent of unrealized health potential is even greater when considering the level of children's health that should be attainable. At every income level in every racial or ethnic group, the percentage of children in less than optimal health was higher than the national benchmark² for children's general health status.



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 optimal, 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). Rates with relative standard errors of 30 percent or less were considered to be statistically reliable.