

# Holes in the Mitten

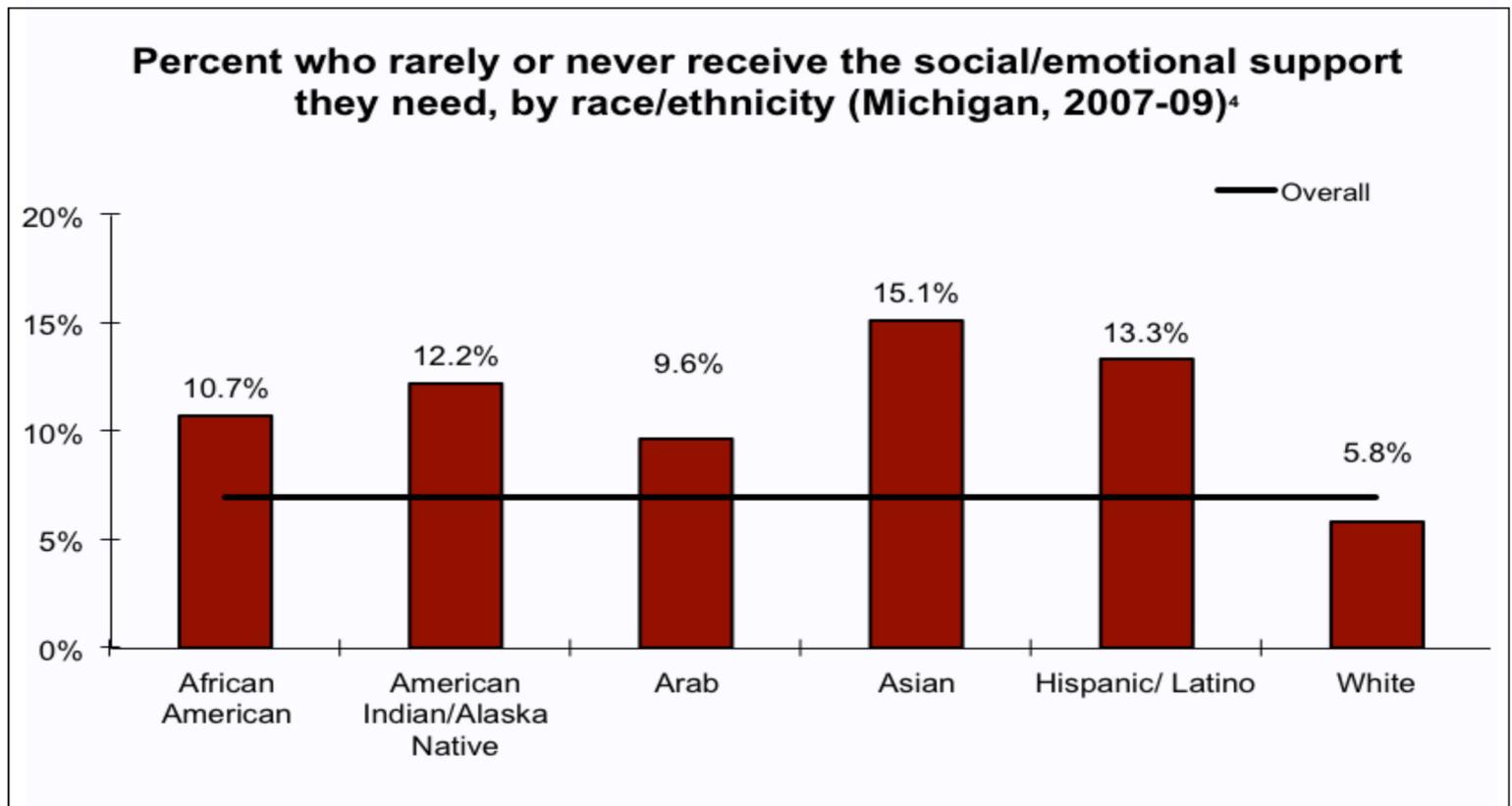
## Health Equity In Michigan: A Toolkit for Action Fact Sheet: Stress

### HOW DOES STRESS IMPACT HEALTH?

Stress is important to health. Some stress is helpful. When stressed, you release the hormone cortisol. In the short term, this helps you perform better and prepares your body to react quickly to a pressure-filled situation. Chronic stress, experienced constantly and over a long period of time, can have a negative effect on health. It can affect blood pressure, thyroid function, blood sugar level and weight gain. The more chronic stress an individual experiences, the greater the potential for poor health.

### HOW DOES DISCRIMINATION AFFECT STRESS?

Experiencing discrimination is a source of chronic stress. Racial, ethnic and other groups experience ongoing discrimination related to education, housing, employment, access to healthy foods and healthy environments. This puts them at greater risk for the illnesses associated with chronic stress. To achieve health equity for everyone, it is important to work to eliminate the conditions that expose these communities to stressful living and working environments.



### Holes in the Mitten: Addressing Michigan's Gaps in Health Equity

*Holes in the Mitten* is part of *Health Equity In Michigan: A Toolkit for Action* and aims to improve health equity in Michigan communities. The toolkit includes a video series, discussion guide, fact sheets, and other resources. The toolkit can be obtained through the Michigan Department of Community Health.

## Michigan facts by race and ethnicity

Indicator	African American	American Indian/ Alaska Native	Arab	Asian	Hispanic/ Latino	White	Total Michigan Population
Unemployment Rate (%) <sup>1</sup>	21.0%	NA	NA	11.9%	16.6%	12.2%	13.3%
Incarceration Rate, per 100,000 <sup>2</sup>	2262	NA	NA	NA	397	412	663
Persons not registered to vote (%) <sup>3</sup>	22.8%	NA	NA	18.7%	42.2%	22.4%	22.9%
Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied with Life (%) <sup>4</sup>	10.3%	6.9%	6.9%	2.2%	6.6%	5.7%	6.5%

Sources:  
 1) Local Area Unemployment Statistics, Bureau of Labor Statistic (2009)  
 2) Prison and Jail Inmates at Mid Year, US Dept. of Justice (2005)  
 3) Current Population Survey, US Census Bureau (2008)  
 4) Michigan BRFSS, MDCH (2007-2009)

## WHAT CAN BE DONE TO REDUCE STRESS?

### As an individual

- Try deep breathing when you feel stressed
- Talk to someone who provides positive solutions

### Working in your community

- Join your block club
- Volunteer on projects that benefit your community/child's school

### Learn more about how you can affect change in your community

- Communicate with policy makers about what is good in your community and what is needed to make your community a healthier place to live
- Share this information with your neighbors



## Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH)

The Health Disparities Reduction and Minority Health Section (HDRMHS) provides a persistent and continuing focus on eliminating health disparities in Michigan's populations of color. The five populations served by HDRMHS include African Americans, American Indians/Alaska Natives, Arab and Chaldean Americans, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics/Latinos.

The major functions of HDRMHS are: 1) To support and initiate programs, strategies, and health policies that address disease prevention, health service delivery, and applied research for populations of color; 2) To collaborate in the development of all MDCH programs and strategies that address prevention, health service delivery, and applied research for populations of color and 3) To facilitate an ongoing integration of culturally appropriate and linguistically appropriate health services into the public health system.

Michigan Department  
of Community Health



Rick Snyder, Governor  
Olga Dazzo, Director