



1237 Ralph David Abernathy Blvd. SW  
Atlanta, Georgia 30310-1731  
Tel: 404.756.2680  
Fax: 404.756.2684  
Email: [info@SisterSong.net](mailto:info@SisterSong.net)  
Website: [www.SisterSong.net](http://www.SisterSong.net)

## **Racial Disparities Persists in Health Care**

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A study published online in *BMC Health Services Research* showed that the racial gap in preventive health screenings are possibly larger than reported in previous studies, according to the *Washington Post*. The research, which published in October 2006 and was funded by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, focused on mammograms, Pap smears and colon cancer screenings. It also used various types of data, including insurance claims, medical charts and records, and self-reports. Kevin Fiscella, lead researcher and an associate professor of family medicine and community and preventive medicine at the University of Rochester School of Medicine, said the study was initiated after a series of other surveys indicated that African American women underwent mammogram testing as often as white women, but racial disparities in breast cancer persisted. “That made us wonder, ‘Is this [other] data really accurate?’” he told the *Post*. “And if so, why are [black women] dying and being diagnosed at later stages?” He said there are many factors, including inaccurate self-report data. The study reported that 52.5% of whites who were eligible for a mammogram reported having one in the previous year, yet, claims data showed 45.1% actually received the test. In addition, approximately 45% of eligible non-white Hispanic and African American women reported having had mammograms. But claims data showed only 30.4% had the test done. The study also stated that community health centers and hospital clinics – healthcare services often used by minorities – more than likely underestimate the volume of screenings they provide, which also makes it difficult to track the delivery of preventive services.