Hello PASPDI members,
I hope everyone enjoyed their long weekend and took a much needed break from studying. We all deserved it.

In honor of the month of June, I would like to highlight a major event in our world history: Juneteenth. Juneteenth is June 19th, and it is also known as Freedom Day. The significance of this holiday celebrates the emancipation of enslaved African Americans in Galveston, Texas on June 19th, 1865. This day comes two and a half years after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, 1862 by President Abraham Lincoln. However, years later, we are still experiencing disparities within our healthcare system regarding people of color.

For this month, I would also like to discuss the disparities seen among the LGBTQ community in honor of Pride Month. Health disparities among the LGBTQ community are seen across all races and ethnicities. Research suggests that LGBTQ individuals face health disparities such as high suicide rate, substance use, and mental health disorders (2). However, these disparities are exacerbated for people of color, due to factors of low rates of health insurance, discrimination, and a lack of understanding and competency within the health care system (3).

Below are 18 figures from the Center for American Progress regarding health disparities seen in the LGBTQ community:
These figures prove a constant and disproportionate pattern of disparities among the LGBTQ population. People of color who also belong to the LGBTQ community are faced with several levels of discrimination, which they often have to navigate to ensure they receive the proper health care. According to the National Coalition for LGBT Health, “a black gay man faces disparities common to the African-American community as well as those suffered by the LGBT community, and a transgender Spanish-speaking woman, regardless of her sexual orientation, must navigate multiple instances of discrimination based on language, ethnicity, and gender (3).”

In order to reduce the health disparities seen, it has been recommended for the Department of Health and Human Services to establish a dedicated office for health and wellbeing to address such health concerns in this community (3). Cultural competencies and training should be provided to current and future health care and non-healthcare providers (3). Lastly, ensuring health care coverage is obtained will help reduce some of the disparities seen within the population.

Thank you so much for reading this journal and learning more about our future patients. Please do not forget about our event on June 8th to discuss this issue further.

References: