

# Reducing Disparities in Use of Support and Advocacy Services for Medicare Beneficiaries

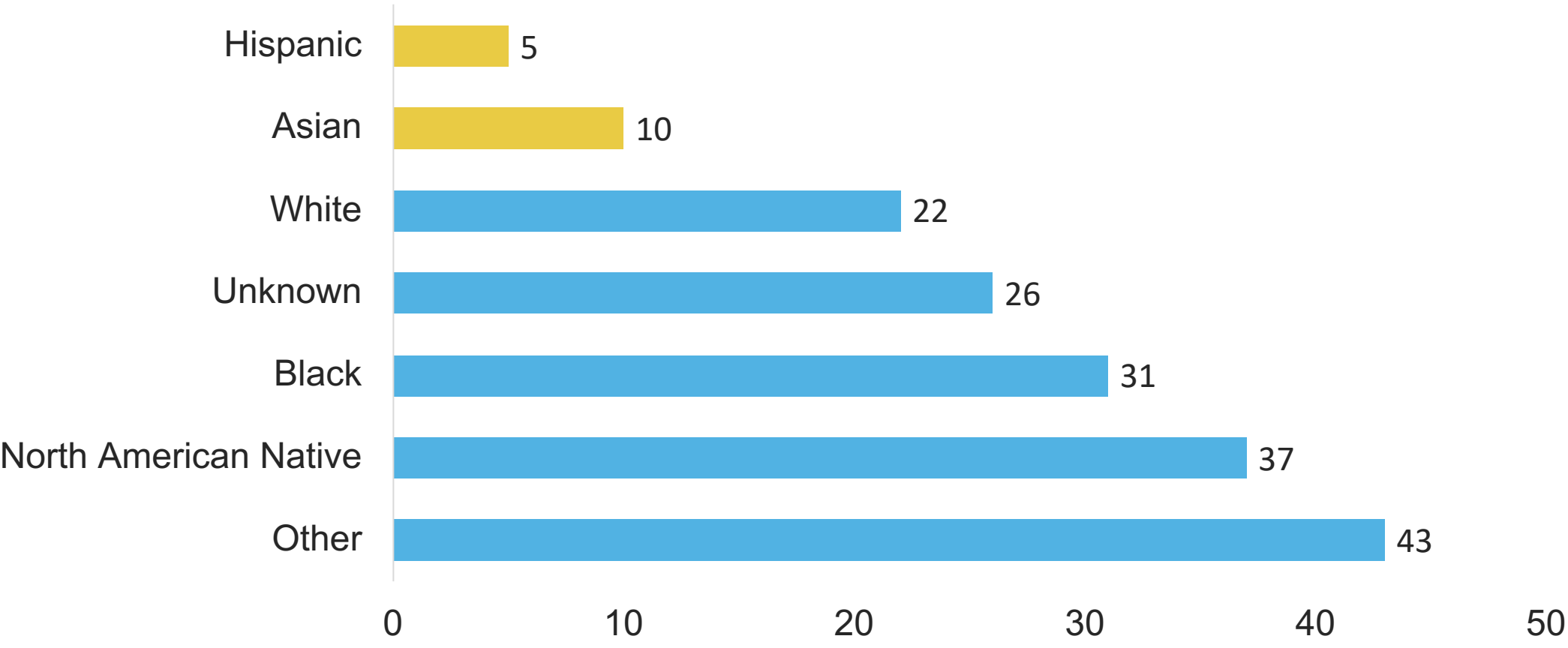
## Introduction

Beneficiary and Family Centered Care—Quality Improvement Organizations (BFCC-QIOs) help Medicare beneficiaries exercise their right to high-quality healthcare by providing case reviews when beneficiaries have a concern about their care.

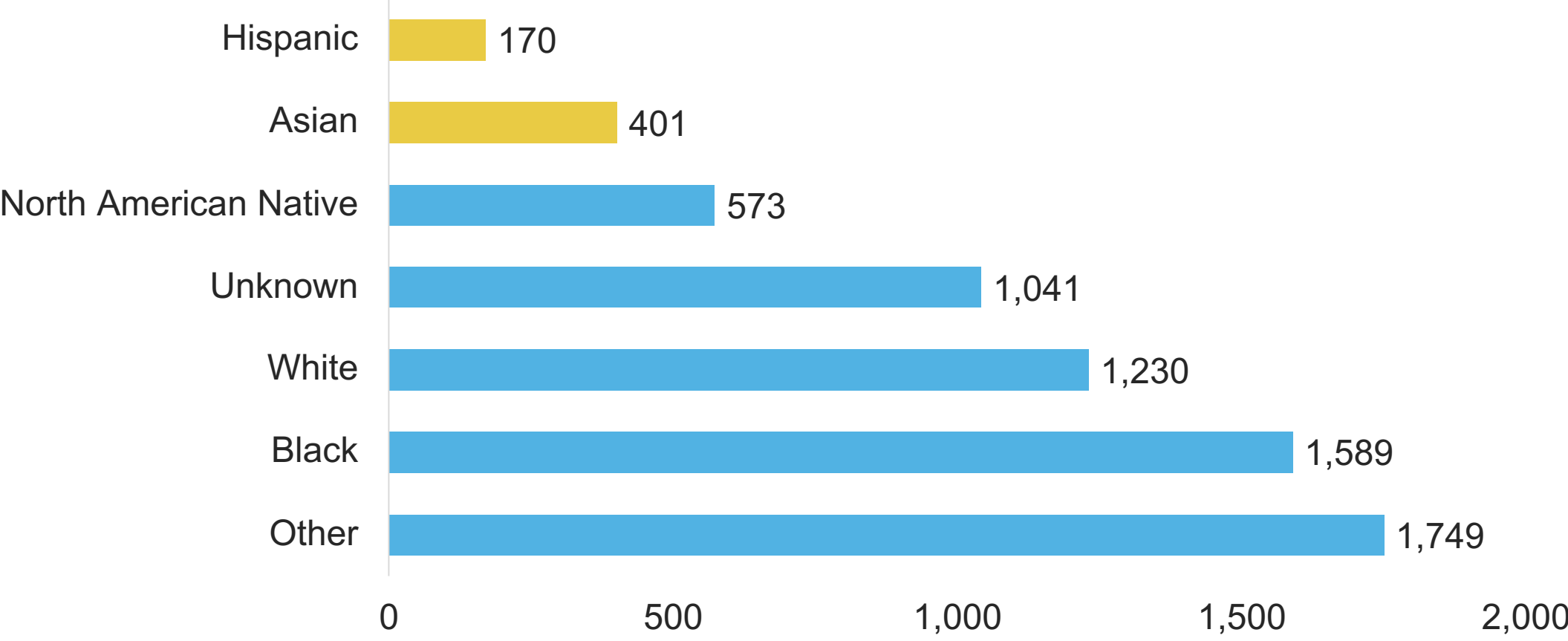
The BFCC National Coordinating and Oversight Review Center (NCORC) conducted analyses of characteristics of the Medicare beneficiaries who used BFCC-QIO services and identified that Hispanic and Asian beneficiaries used services at a lower rate than other racial and ethnic groups.

### Service Termination and Discharge Appeal Rates and Quality of Care Review Rates by Race and Ethnicity per 100,000 Beneficiaries, 2019–2022

Quality of Care Review Rates



Service Termination & Discharge Appeal Rate



## Data & Methods

The BFCC NCORC conducted semi-structured, qualitative interviews with leaders of community organizations serving Hispanic and Asian Medicare beneficiaries to understand:

- Why do Hispanic and Asian beneficiaries utilize BFCC-QIO services at relatively low rates compared to beneficiaries of other racial and ethnic backgrounds, including perceived facilitators and barriers to use of BFCC-QIO services or understanding of health information?
- What communication and outreach methods would be most effective at notifying them of their rights?

We conducted a total of 8 interviews with individuals representing 6 healthcare or advocacy organizations. We identified potential participant organizations through an online search and the BFCC NCORC stakeholder network.

## Key Findings and Highlights

### Facilitators to Use of BFCC-QIO Services



#### Caregivers & family

- Caregivers and family members can serve as potential resources for beneficiaries to assist with communication and decision-making.
- Many Hispanic beneficiaries live in multigenerational homes, and stakeholders frequently target caregivers and family members as primary points of contact to increase awareness of their services.



#### Simple, respectful messaging

- Messages for seniors must be clear and simple.
- Because many seniors are on fixed incomes, free services should be clearly labeled to increase the likelihood of use.
- Acknowledging seniors' (potentially negative) experiences with the healthcare system and reassuring them that they have a right to use services are important.



#### Trusted organization

- Trusted organizations named by stakeholders include nonprofit organizations, churches, schools, senior centers, healthcare facilities, libraries, and local groups.
- While stakeholders indicated that seniors prefer to receive information in person, they also find information through social media posts and family and trusted organizations in their preferred language.

### Barriers to Use of BFCC-QIO Services



#### Language & literacy barriers

- Stakeholders emphasize the importance of using materials with very simple vocabulary and providing them in their preferred language.
- Even when materials are provided in a preferred language, regional differences in dialect may impeded understanding.
- Paperwork with small font size, large amounts of text, or forms may be perceived as intimidating.



#### Complicated technology

- Although many seniors have mobile phones, some seniors are not comfortable using electronic devices or may not have access to a computer.
- Accessing services by phone may be discouraging if the system requires seniors to key in responses or lacks the option to speak with someone in their preferred language.



#### Cultural norms & experiences

- Cultural factors, such as taboos around aging, needing assistance, or dying and seeming ungrateful or difficult when asking for help, were noted as barriers to use of services.
- Stakeholders also remarked that there is a sense of fear among older adults that they may suffer consequences if they use services, either financially or otherwise.

## Discussion

Stakeholders shared many strategies to reach their community members and highlighted approaches to overcome cultural and logistic barriers. Many strategies could be adapted within the BFCC-QIO context to increase awareness of beneficiary protection services and reduce barriers that may be limiting use of BFCC-QIO services by Asian and Hispanic beneficiaries.

Have questions about the BFCC-QIO program?  
Scan the QR code to find the QIO in your State.

