

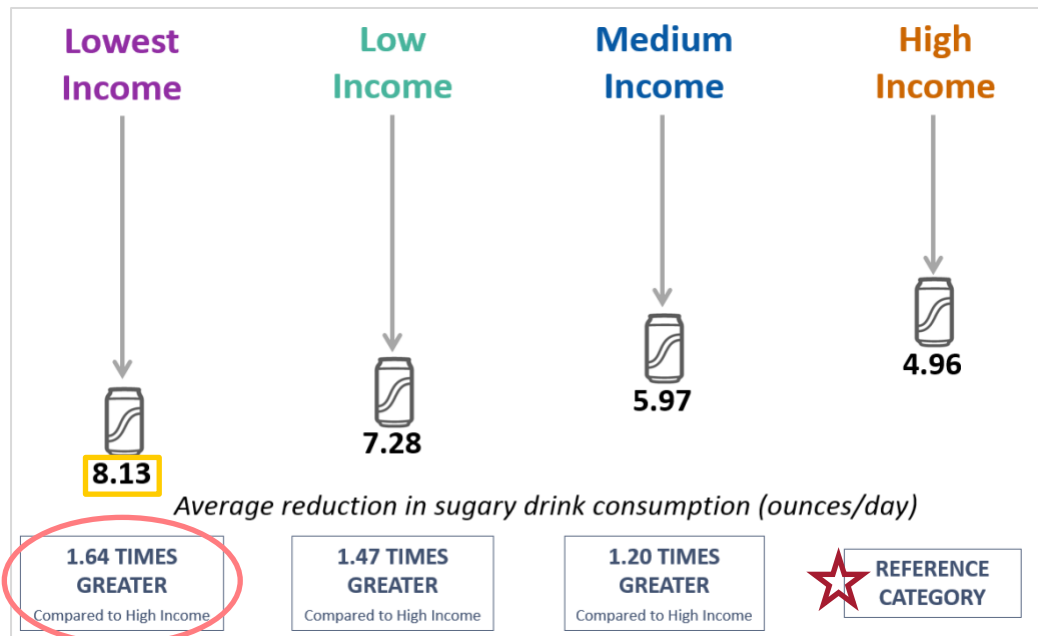
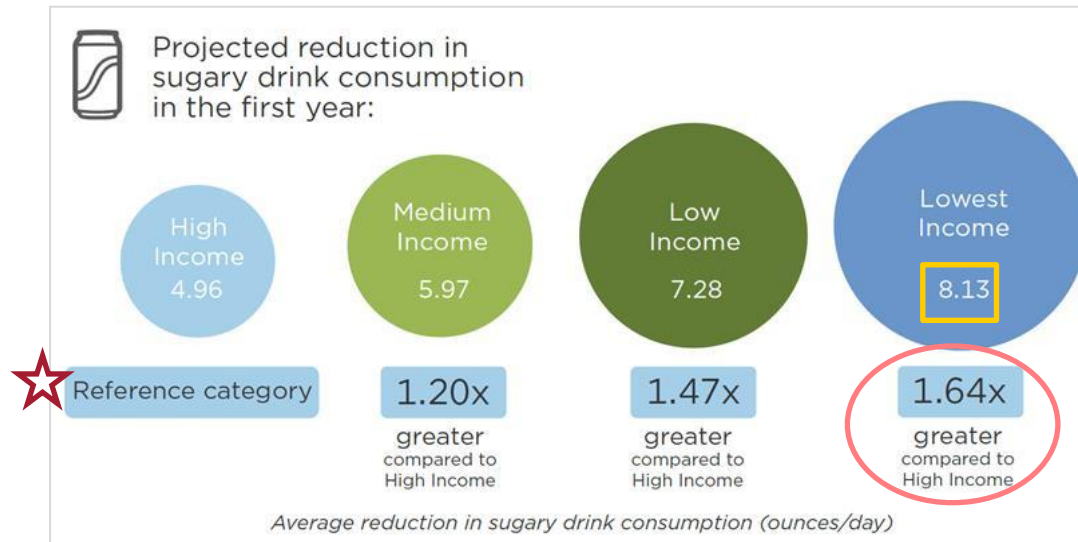
## Health Disparities Key Terms

Key Disparities Term	DEFINITIONS
<b>Health disparities</b>	Health disparities <sup>†</sup> are differences in health outcomes and their determinants between segments of the population, as defined by social, demographic, environmental, and geographic attributes. <sup>1</sup>
<b>Health inequities</b>	Health inequities are a subset of health disparities that are modifiable, associated with social disadvantage, and considered ethically unfair. <sup>1</sup>
<b>Health equity</b>	Health equity is attainment of the highest level of health for all people. Achieving health equity requires valuing everyone equally with focused and ongoing societal efforts to address avoidable inequalities, historical and contemporary injustices, and the elimination of health and health care disparities. <sup>1</sup>
<b>Social determinants of health</b>	Social determinants of health are conditions in the environments in which people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks. <sup>1</sup>
<b>Reference point</b>	The specific value of a rate, percentage, proportion, mean, or other quantitative measure from which a disparity is measured. <sup>2</sup> The selection of the reference point, or reference group, will determine the size and direction of the measure of disparity. Reference points can be selected using different criteria such as the rate of the largest group, rate of the group with the most favorable rate, or the rate for the total population.
<b>Absolute differences</b>	An absolute measure of disparity is the arithmetic difference between a group rate and a specified reference point (i.e. the mean value of a health indicator in one subgroup subtracted from the mean value of that health indicator in another subgroup). <sup>2,3</sup>
<b>Relative differences</b>	A relative measure of disparity expresses the percentage difference between rates in terms of the chosen reference point. A common relative measure is that of relative risk. <sup>2,3</sup>

<sup>†</sup> The CHOICES team will use 'health disparities' for this concept throughout the project, but another term commonly used for health disparities is health inequalities

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Division of Community Health. *A Practitioner's Guide for Advancing Health Equity: Community Strategies for Preventing Chronic Disease*. Atlanta, GA: US Department of Health and Human Services; 2013
- Keppel K, Pamuk E, Lynch J, et al. Methodological issues in measuring health disparities. *Vital and health statistics Series 2, Data evaluation and methods research*. 2005(141):1-16.
- World Health Organization. Health inequality monitoring: with a special focus on low- and middle-income countries. Lecture 4: Simple Measures of Health Inequality. [http://www.who.int/gho/health\\_equality/health\\_equality\\_handbook\\_4\\_SimpleMeasures.ppt](http://www.who.int/gho/health_equality/health_equality_handbook_4_SimpleMeasures.ppt)

### Examples of Disparities Graphics



**Absolute Reduction:** The difference in sugary drink consumption between a specific income group and the reference group.

$$\text{Absolute Reduction} = \text{Sugary drink consumption among lowest income group} - \text{Sugary drink consumption among reference group}$$

**Relative Reduction:** This expresses the ratio of the difference in sugary drink consumption for each income group compared to the reference group.

$$\text{Relative Reduction} = \frac{\text{Reduction in sugary drink consumption among low-income residents}}{\text{Reduction in sugary drink consumption among the reference group}}$$

**Reference Category:** The specific value of a rate, percentage, proportion, mean, or other quantitative measure from which a disparity is measured. It is often the rate of the largest group.