PARTNERS for **ADVANCING HEALTH EQUITY**

The Partners for Advancing Health Equity Collaborative hosted an interactive session, *Defining Our Collective Health Equity Goals,* on April 12, 2022. The P4HE Collaborative used **MURAL** as a tool to collect the ideas and questions of participants from academia, community organizations, policy groups, and the private sector. Through this interdisciplinary exchange of perspectives, participants reflected on core tenets and the future of health equity research and practice. Together the group shared their views on a widely used definition of health equity and what is needed in frameworks that address inequities. Participants provided input on the type of support, resources, and tools the Collaborative could develop and use to assist them in their work. This report provides a synthesis of key takeaways, solutions, and action steps identified through the session.

Session Objectives

- Lay the foundation to build relationships and connect Collaborative members.
- Foster Collaborative members' framing of health equity.
- Build awareness of tools that can be used to support collaboration and application to health equity.
- Ideate on resources and tools that the Collaborative could provide to members.

Session Voices

The session engaged 37 active participants from academia, community organizations, policy groups, and the private sector. Attendees participated through Mural, Zoom chat, and voice discussion. The session featured opening remarks by Andrew Anderson, PhD, from the Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. It was facilitated by Kristefer Stojanovski, PhD, from Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, Courtney Barthle, Senior Director, Poverty Solutions at ICF, and Jackie Rhodes, Senior Manager, Workforce Innovations and Poverty Solutions at ICF.

Defining and Framing Health Equity

During the session participants reflected on a common definition of health equity (definition below) by examining how the definition serves us in framing and addressing health equity and exploring what is missing.

"Health Equity means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. This requires removing obstacles to health such as poverty, discrimination, and their consequences, including powerlessness and lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education and housing, safe environments, and health care."

Participants engaged with the definition and shared ideas on what was missing and how it could be enhanced. Key considerations included the following.

Framing Health Equity: What is missing from the definition? How should it be enhanced?

ACKNOWLEDING ROOT CAUSES
Fundamental problems such as racism, historical exclusion of certain voices, and oppressive structures need to be addressed.

TAILORED APPLICATION
Everyone starts at different phases and levels of health. The definition should acknlowegde that each person must be evaluated individually in order to break down health disparities.

DEFINING "HEALTHY"
Healthy is a varying term that must be appropriately applied to the context of a person's holistic state.

PERSON CENTERED
Marginalized communities must be centered in the definition; their stories and voices will improve the efficacy of goals set forth.

CREATE OPPORTUNITIES
The definition should focus on more than just access, but also the importance of creating opportunities for all individuals and communities.

After the discussion surrounding definitions of health equity, participants engaged in dialogue offering suggestions for building – or leveraging existing – frameworks(s) to address health inequities. We outline the main themes below from that conversation:

Strategies for leveraging and building frameworks to address health inequities

Focus on Accountability & Outcomes

Identify who is accountable for processes and outcomes.
Build a mechanism to measure outcomes.

Uplift existing frameworks

Review frameworks in use in other systems or local communities and consider their use or incorporation.

Incorporate & prioritize diverse perspectives

Ensure frameworks are human-centered and place-based.
Recognize interdisciplinary perspectives and lived experiences.

Disrupt the status quo

Think beyond today and consider possibilties. "…Build a framework that is built on radical love and justice so it's not just science for science's sake."

Account for the influence and impact of structures & politics

Identify structures and processes that can support equity.
Incorporate opportunities for leaders.

During the discussion around definitions of health equity, participants also conversed about the types of levers to pull across a diversity of sectors to support health equity. We outline the main themes and supporting notes from participants.

Levers to pull to support health equity

Put community voices at the center

"The academic research sector needs to better reward and value applied research and research in service of the community."

"Allow time for creating shared language, shared vision, and identifying ways for all participants to gain."

Improve accessibility and ensure funding focuses on collaboration

"...Remove barriers to funding for smaller [community-based organizations] or CBOs with less resources or 'know how' in applying for grants."

"Move away from competing for funds and into a space of collaboration and love."

Take an asset-based, future focused approach

"Consider using an asset-based approach, one that focuses on capacity building and uplifting the existing resources in the community and leverages expertise and community-informed solutions."

"The research exists, we know and are aware of the disparities within health/public health in this country. How do we now implement preventions/interventions? And how do we make it sustainable?"

Informing Our Future: Resources and Tools

The last part of the interactive session asked participants to share suggestions for how the P4HE Collaborative can best support their work and enhance nationwide efforts around health equity work. Main themes are shared below.

Resources and Tools the P4HE Collaborative can Provide

Curate and share resources that offer a grounding on critical subjects related to health equity

Develop, host, and facilitate learning engagements and listening sessions

Provide targeted, scaffolded training, tools, and resources that build skills

Build community and create space for networking and connection

Training, tools, and resources the P4HE Collaborative could provide include those that build skills on topics such as:

- Storytelling for impact
- Sustainability planning
- Bridging research and practice/implementation
- Visualizing data and incorporating data into decision-making
- Practicing and scaling of equity and equity principles
- Case studies of successful partnership and collaboration strategies

Future Action

The P4HE Team will take the information gathered through this session and use it to build out specific offerings and resources that are responsive to the needs of the Collaborative and the field of health equity . These may include:

Future Action for the P4HE Collaborative
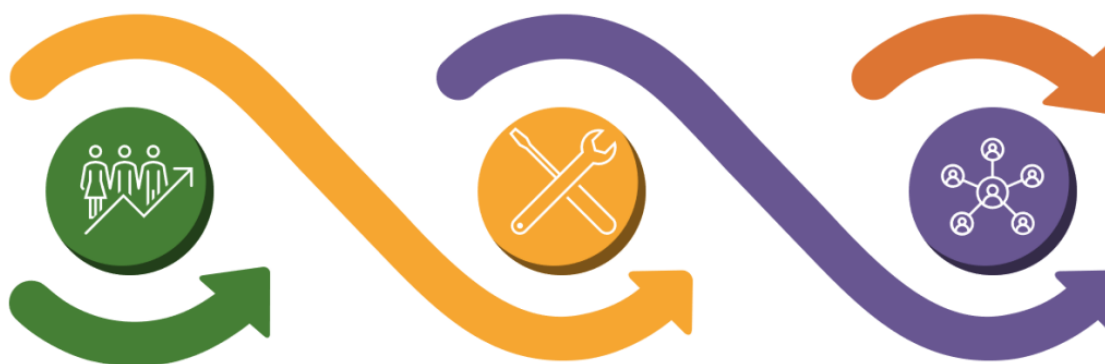
Further opportunities for learning, through webinars or other modalities.

Develop resources, including toolkits and practice guides.

Provide opportunities for connections and networking for Collaborative members.

To learn more about these issues, or Partners for Health Equity's calls to action, a resource library including full recordings of all P4HE webinars can be found on the P4HE website.

6

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