HEALTH EQUITY IN PUBLIC SERVICE
A COLLABORATIVE OPPORTUNITY

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Public Service Perspectives
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TODAY’S OBJECTIVES

✓ Define health equity terminology and intersectionality of terms.

✓ Provide an overview of the Social Determinants of Health (SDoH) and impact on population level health

✓ Explore the value of cross-sector collaboration for improved health outcomes.
HEALTH DISPARITIES

**Differences** in the presence of Disease, Health Outcomes

**Differences** in Access to Health Care and many other Variables

**Differences** are Unnecessary Avoidable issues due to Social and Economic Status
Preventable Differences in the presence of disease, health outcomes, or access to health care between population groups.

These differences are often referred to as a “Disparity”, “Inequity”, or “Inequality”.

Prevention is the Key!
HEALTH DISPARITIES

• Health differences closely linked with social, economic, and/or environmental disadvantage

• Health Disparities adversely affect groups of people who have systematically experienced greater obstacles to health
HEALTH DISPARITIES

- Racial or Ethnic group/Immigration Status
- Religion; Socioeconomic/Class Status
- Gender; Age
- Mental Health; Cognitive, Sensory
- Physical Disability
- Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity
- Geographic Location
- Characteristics historically linked to discrimination or exclusion
HEALTH EQUITY

• Everyone has the **OPPORTUNITY** to obtain their full health potential

• **No one** is disadvantaged from achieving this potential because of their social position or other socially determined circumstance

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2023)
[https://www.cdc.gov/healthequity/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/healthequity/index.html)
TAKEING A CLOSER LOOK....

EQUALITY

• Giving everyone the same thing

• It only works if everyone starts from the same place

EQUITY

• Access to the same opportunities

• We must first have equity before we can enjoy equality
EQUITY
HEALTH EQUITY

- Achieving the highest level of health for all people
- Focused societal efforts to address inequalities by equalizing the conditions for health for all groups
- Especially for those who have experienced socioeconomic disadvantage or historical injustices.

https://www.cdc.gov/healthequity/index.html
**Equality**

The assumption is that everyone benefits from the same supports. This is equal treatment.

**Equity**

Everyone gets the supports they need (this is the concept of “affirmative action”), thus producing equity.

**Justice**

All 3 can see the game without supports or accommodations because the cause(s) of the inequity was addressed. The systemic barrier has been removed.
Social Determinants of Health

- Education Access and Quality
- Health Care Access and Quality
- Economic Stability
- Neighborhood and Built Environment
- Social and Community Context
IMPACT OF SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

Social determinants of health have tremendous affect on an individual’s health regardless of age, race, or ethnicity.

- **Economic Stability:** Employment, Income, Expenses, Debt, Medical Bills, Support
- **Neighborhood & Physical Environment:** Housing, Transportation, Safety, Parks, Playgrounds, Walkability
- **Education:** Literacy, Language, Higher Education, Vocational Training, Early Childhood Education
- **Food:** Hunger, Access to Healthy Options
- **Community & Social Context:** Social Integration, Community Engagement, Support Systems, Discrimination
- **Health Care Systems:** Health Coverage, Provider Availability, Provider Linguistic & Cultural Competency, Quality of Care

**Health Outcomes:** Mortality, Life Expectancy, Health Care Expenditures, Health Status, Functional Limitations

THE LAYERS OF INEQUITY

- Being in a disadvantaged group is associated with having a lower level of educational attainment

- Having a lower level of educational attainment is associated with worse health status

- Typically, the lower a group’s social position, the worse the average health status of its members
MONEY

POWER

RESOURCES
Experiences of **DISCRIMINATION** or **HISTORICAL TRAUMA** are also important social determinants of health for certain populations such as African Americans and Indigenous Peoples.
RACE, PLACE, HEALTH…

- Blatant discriminatory policies of our nation’s past have made it impossible for certain populations/groups of Americans to obtain optimal health

- Racial bias affects health

- Role of racism, discrimination, and bias have perpetuated generational cycles of poor health and risky behaviors
TRUTH IS… RACE MATTERS

We must confront and acknowledge history to eliminate health disparities and address health equity.

Blatant discriminatory policies of our nation’s past have made it impossible for certain populations/groups of Americans to obtain optimal health.

Legacy of our history DID NOT DISAPPEAR with signing of laws.

Role of racism, discrimination, and bias have perpetuated generational cycles of poor health and risky behaviors.
SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH (SDOH)

• These conditions determine a person’s chances of maintaining good health and/or poor health

• Sometimes referred to “the causes of the causes” or “root causes”

• How social and economic structures shape the health of populations
KEEP THIS IN MIND…

• View an individual as more than just a system of organs/physical body

• Health is more a function of lifestyles linked to living and working conditions then of HEALTHCARE

• Health does not occur in a vacuum
SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH (SDOH)

• Complex, integrated, and overlapping social structures and economic systems

• Linked to lack of opportunity and lack of resources
SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH MATTER

Helps us understand why some groups of people are healthier than others

Improve individual and community health

Advance health equity

EVERYONE deserves an equal opportunity to make the choices that lead to good health
SOCIAl JUSTICE

ACHIEVING HEALTH EQUITY

• Addressing social determinants of health is a primary approach to achieving health equity

• Focus on the most commonly occurring problems (data driven)
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

✓ Racial bias impacts health
  ✓ Engage in racial equity learning and conversations

✓ Dismantle current systems of inequity
  ✓ Root causes of inequities not just manifestation

✓ Get out into the communities we serve
  ✓ Engage with stakeholders/partners
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

✓ Every social policy should consider the impact of health

✓ Understand how environmental policies impact health

✓ Understand how legislative/judicial policies impact health

✓ Utilize law as a public health tool (statutes, regulations)
COLLABORATIVE OPPORTUNITY

✓ Health is not just about the medical field

✓ Not limited to a single domain

✓ A shift in perspective
Elements of a Healthy Community

- Transportation Options
- Access to Care
- Affordable Quality Housing
- Community Safety
- Economic Opportunity
- Educational Opportunity
- Environmental Quality
- Quality Affordable Food
- Community Design
- Parks and Recreation
- Social/Cultural Cohesion
- Social Justice

Health Equity Resiliency

http://vitalysthealth.org/the-wheel/
I am struck by the challenge of engaging in partnership in a group: Is it possible for us to collectively develop deep, trusting, reciprocal relationships among ourselves and with our faculty partners? How will we navigate our various positionalities and identities, and our radically different experiences and kinds of expertise?

Sophia Abbott
RESOURCES

- https://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/healthdisparities/
- https://www.cdc.gov/socialdeterminants/index.htm
- https://www.who.int/social_determinants/en/
- https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/county-health-rankings-measures
- https://www.equityliteracy.org/

Ohio Prevention Conference: Social Determinants of Health
November 16, 2023 – The Hilton Columbus/Polaris
https://osucosw.catalog.instructure.com/courses/2023-opc-general-reg
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“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”
—Martin Luther King Jr.

THANK YOU!