



HEALTH EQUITY STARTS HERE

# Optimizing Health for All

Health equity is important because it means that all individuals have access to the resources and opportunities needed to achieve their full health potential, regardless of socioeconomic, racial, geographic, or disability-related disparities. By addressing the root causes of health inequities, such as discrimination, unequal access to care and barriers faced by individuals with disabilities, communities can reduce preventable diseases and improve overall well-being. For example, [the expansion of telehealth services](#) has been a significant public health win, improving access to care for people with mobility or transportation challenges and those in rural areas. Promoting health equity fosters healthier populations, reduces health care costs and builds more resilient societies.

## ADVANCING HEALTH EQUITY STARTS WITH...

### YOU

#### Voting with equity in mind

Voting is an important way to make sure everyone's voice is heard and to support policies and solutions that improve public health. Talk to friends and neighbors about the importance of civic participation. [Support candidates and policies that prioritize health equity](#) and work to address systemic inequities.

#### Creating and engaging in conversation

Hosting informal discussions about equity with family, friends, or coworkers can be a powerful way to spark awareness and inspire action. [Create a safe space to share ideas](#), learn from different perspectives and build momentum for advancing equity in everyday life.

### COMMUNITY / NEIGHBORHOOD

#### Involving communities in health equity initiatives

To advance health equity, members of your community should be provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the planning process of programs, solutions and policies aimed at advancing equity. [Community members can play an important role](#) in identifying local health needs, strengths and the resources needed to improve health.



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## Optimizing Health for All Cont'd

### Being direct

For communities to thrive, local organizations and public [health professionals must be clear and direct](#) when working toward health equity. This means naming the specific groups affected by inequities and clearly outlining the actions needed to close health gaps. Being direct helps ensure that people in need receive the resources and support necessary to improve their health. It also prevents misunderstandings or vague plans that could unintentionally make health disparities worse.

### CITY / STATE

#### Adopting a “Health in All Policies” approach

[Look for ways to work across different sectors](#), like education and housing. This involves improving vulnerable populations’ access to healthy foods, safe housing, reliable transportation, quality education, equitable employment, safe green spaces and opportunities for economic development.

#### Measuring and evaluating progress on reducing health disparities

We need to [track how health gaps are closing over time](#). This means collecting data to see if people have better access to health care, if health outcomes are improving, and if barriers to care like poverty or accessibility are being reduced. By measuring these things, we can see what’s working and make better decisions to create equal opportunities for everyone to thrive.

### NATION

#### Addressing racism and racial implicit bias

The nation must take a unified approach to identify and effectively address racism and racial implicit bias. Many organizations, including state public health associations, have [declared racism a public health crisis](#). However, health agencies at all levels—local, state and national—must explicitly acknowledge and address the racially discriminatory policies that have created and continue to enable health inequities. By taking coordinated action across the country, we can work to dismantle systemic racism.

#### Improving access to quality health care

Access to health care remains a burden for many people. Proper prioritization and funding to close health care coverage gaps, including the price of drugs, is essential to ensure that people can get the care they need when a public health issue arises.



The American Public Health Association serves as a convener, catalyst and advocate to build capacity in the public health community. We champion optimal, equitable health and well-being for all. We promote best practices and share the latest public health research and information. With our broad-based member community and 150-year perspective, we influence federal policy to improve the public’s health. Learn more at [APHA.org](https://www.apha.org).