



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Health Equity Support Pledge

[The PA Prostate Cancer Coalition] enthusiastically supports the efforts of the Pennsylvania Department of Health Office of Health Equity and the thousands of individuals on the frontlines across the commonwealth to create a state free of disparities in health and health care. We believe it is critically important to 1) reduce the disproportionately high burden of illness, injury and premature deaths that affect racial and ethnic minorities and other underserved populations and 2) create better health outcomes for all Americans.

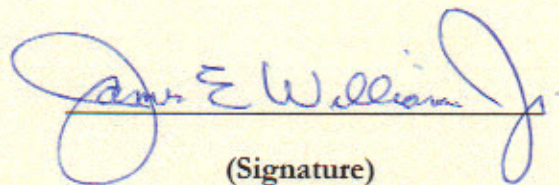
That's why we have signed a pledge to support the **Office of Health Equity**, so we can work with others in our communities to achieve health equity.

Data show that where a person lives, learns, works and plays affects their health. The disparities in health between different racial and ethnic groups and others impose a significant burden on the United States. The combined cost of health inequalities and premature deaths were estimated to be \$1.24 trillion between 2003 and 2006. [Source: Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies: Economic Burden of Health Inequalities in the United States]

With the help of other partners, including the federal government, the private sector and leaders here in our own community, we can work together to make sure that everyone has equal potential for good health. The state of Pennsylvania will be unable to significantly improve its overall health and productivity without meaningfully addressing health disparities experienced by significant segments of the population.

We know we have a problem. Together we can fix it.




(Signature)



Office of Health Equity: A Call for Action

Health **Equity** in All Policies

The Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) Office of Health Equity (OHE) has developed a Call for Action Plan that will advance health equity and reduce health disparities in Pennsylvania. This Call for Action outlines goals and actions that the OHE will take to create awareness, develop programs, involve community stakeholders, and create collaborative initiatives at all levels of the PA Department of Health.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), "health is a state of complete physical, social and mental well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." Health is a fundamental human right and an essential component of economic development, vital to a nation's economic growth and internal stability." As the sixth largest state in America, Pennsylvania is integral to the success of the nation. There is an economic and moral imperative to do all we can to improve the lives of all Commonwealth residents, whether they live in poor rural or urban communities

In order to implement this call for action, the OHE will pursue and focus on 5 key elements*:

1. Promoting the value and moral imperative of health and equity

Despite the seemingly insurmountable challenges public health officials face in 2016 (Zika virus, Opioid epidemic in Pennsylvania) we must not lose sight of the right that everyone has to live in communities that are safe, offer opportunities for physical activity and the purchase of nutritious food, and access to prevention-oriented health care. There is a moral as well as an economic imperative to promote health and wellness.

- a. Develop a newsletter to provide ongoing information on issues related to health equity and the resources available to enhance services to underserved populations.
- b. Create an updated report and provide health inequities in PA collecting data on specific issues and focusing on underserved populations. 5 Year report to be unveiled in 2017.
- c. Create awareness of the issues facing underserved populations and addressing the needs of those underserved because of race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, uninsured, disabilities, etc.
- d. Serve in a collaborative and advisory capacity to groups (DOH internal and external) engaged in activities related to the elimination of health inequities in Pennsylvania.

This action plan draws heavily from Health in All Policies: A Guide for State and Local Governments). Rudolph, L., Caplan, J., Ben-Moshe, K., & Dillon, L. (2013). Health in All Policies: A Guide for State and Local Governments. Washington, DC and Oakland, CA: American Public Health Association and Public Health Institute.

2. Seek intersectoral collaboration

To leverage scant resources, reduce duplication, and increase effectiveness the OHE will work internally as well as seeking out external agencies that align with the goals of the office with the full knowledge that we cannot solve the problems of the day without help.

- a. Ensure that DOH bureaus are working in concert with each other to advance health equity through strategy development and awareness activities. Examples include: health equity trainings, collaboration exploration discussions, and joint site visits.
- b. Meetings with other state departments to break down silos and develop collaborative initiatives.
- c. Develop trainings based on the needs of the different bureaus and geographical regions. Add supplemental trainings and materials as necessary.
- d. Collaborate with other Commonwealth agencies and community partners to develop trainings outside the expertise of the DOH.
- e. Incorporate federal resources, and gain best practices from other states.

3. Creating win-win opportunities with non-traditional partners

Many are needed to make health equity a reality. Engaging partners who do not traditionally focus in on health equity issues is critical to acquire the many resources that are needed to reduce health disparities.

- a. Engaging non-profit, health care, school district, city and municipal agencies in collaborative discussions.
- b. Develop strategies that encompass various needs and objectives of partners.
- c. Develop a fund development strategy that will augment state budget considerations.
- d. Promote efficacy of OHE through education and collaboration with state lawmakers.

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4. Engaging stakeholders in new and authentic ways

The OHE will join forces with many different organizations and individuals. It is vital that we have the buy-in and counsel from those most affected by the policies and programs that are targeted to them. We will engage advocates, adult and youth community members, and others in ways that will ensure full participation.

- a. Visit counties with the poorest health outcomes.
- b. Look beyond the data. Talk with affected community members to gain insight and ideas.
- c. Seek to build community capacity at the local level. Provide a mechanism for local communities to help solve community problems.

5. Impacting generations to come through sustainable policy and structural change

Health disparities, and health inequity derives from many years of unfair and unjust institutional policies and practices. OHE will focus efforts on sustainable, permanent practices and policies that will make equity permeate through future governmental decisions.

- a. OHE will work within the Department of Health to reassess internal policies and grantee contracts to infuse equity practices.
- b. Working intersectorally, OHE will endeavor to influence other agencies of the Commonwealth to incorporate equity into future policy and systems decisions.

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