



Innovation requires stepping into unknown areas, asking difficult questions and prioritizing the voice of the community. It is the small ideas that inspire others and foster change. On Oct.10 during IFDHE's Region 8 Health Equity Innovation Summit in Salt Lake City, Utah, AHA members convened to strategize ways to integrate health equity at their hospitals and health systems.

Region 8 includes members from Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming. This one-day event brought together C-suite hospital leaders, community members and patient advocates to explore regional challenges and co-develop solutions to accelerate diversity, inclusion and health equity. The session was engaging and incorporative of diverse perspectives and experiences.

Around 30 members were in attendance for this convening and were representative of various hospitals and health systems, including Denver Health, Utah Hospital Association, St. Luke's Health System and more.



A fireside chat moderated by Leon D. Caldwell, IFDHE's senior director, health equity strategies and innovation, included discussion on the true meaning of innovation and how it's essential to advancing health equity.

Speakers included Lorena Zimmer, chief impact officer at Denver Health; Charles (Ty) Reidhead, M.D., Phoenix area director at Indian Health Service; and Tiffany Capeles, vice president, chief equity officer at Intermountain Healthcare.

Here's what was discussed:

- Humility is a characteristic that hospital leaders should possess when they are involved in conversations about creating equity — even if means admitting they don't have all the answers or solutions.
- Sharing data is key to identifying existing disparities and closing the equity gap. Hospitals can partner with one another to synthesize the data and figure out a starting point to eliminate health disparities.
- Innovation doesn't have to mean a large, new idea — it can be small ideas that eventually grow into something larger and brighter.



Attendees were guided through an interactive session to accelerate health equity, using each of the six levers as a framework.

Top Takeaway from Each Lever:



Lever 1

Culturally appropriate care begins with fostering an environment of cultural humility between hospital employees, patients, and the community.



Lever 2

To improve employee retention of historically marginalized employees, hospitals should enforce a zero-tolerance policy and adopt a core mission that supports organizational diversity, inclusion and health equity.



Lever 3

Eliminating health disparities requires collecting and defining data about social determinants of health and synthesizing the information to target key areas that need attention.



Lever 4

To increase diverse thought leadership and improved health outcomes, it is beneficial to have trustees involved in smaller community organizations that focus on a particular mission or demographic.



Lever 5

Achieving health equity in communities require collaborating with community stakeholders and leaders to build trust and develop strong relationships.



Lever 6

Each department in hospitals and health systems need to have a clear understanding of what they are trying to achieve and how to measure those goals to advance equity in their daily work.