



On Nov. 9 during IFDHE's Region 4 Health Equity Innovation Summit in Atlanta, AHA members collaborated to devise strategies for integrating health equity within their hospitals and health systems. Region 4 includes members from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee and Puerto Rico. 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 health equity within their communities and organizations.

The idea of innovation was summarized into two categories: necessitating attentive listening, courage and risk taking; and a shift in thinking to refine existing concepts. Yolanda Robles, President and CEO of CulturaLink, emphasized the idea that innovation requires a foundation of cultural humility: "*seek to understand before you are understood.*"

Around 60 members were in attendance for this convening and represented various hospitals and health systems, including Grady Health System, Louisiana Hospital Association, Florida Hospital Association, East Alabama Medical Center, Morehouse School of Medicine 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 Vonetta Daniels, executive director at CINQCARE; Yolanda Robles, President and CEO of CulturaLink; and Yolanda Wimberly, M.D., senior vice president, inaugural chief health equity officer at Grady Health System.

Here's what was discussed:

- The key to fostering innovation requires different perspectives, collaborating, adapting, and refining. Problems cannot be solved with the same consciousness that created them.
- The mindset for innovation must shift from ideas to implementation.
- Cultivating meaningful relationships within the community that is being served fosters an environment of trust.



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:



Level 1

To provide care that is culturally competent and centered around their needs, it is crucial to understand their health priorities through effective questioning and communication.



Level 2

The advancement of health equity requires demonstrating best practices, setting up an accountability structure and establishing common knowledge around what health equity means.



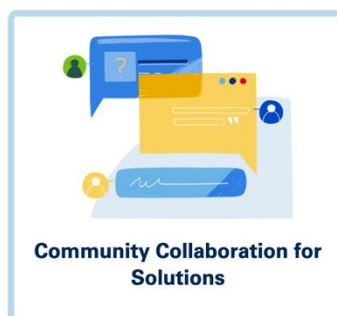
Level 3

To enhance health care outcomes and equity, it's crucial to develop a mandated National Health Information Exchange infrastructure with interoperable data sharing, and train staff on the collection of the social determinants of health codes (Z codes).



Level 4

Accountability for diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives should be embedded into the leadership's assessments, goals and metrics.



Level 5

Investing in patient navigators and community leaders can bridge the gap between hospitals and the communities they serve.



Level 6

Systemic and shared accountability requires buy-in from senior leadership and support from all levels within an organization.