Co-Designing for Health Equity

A SUMMARY DOCUMENT TO ADVANCE HEALTH EQUITY

IFDHE
AHA Institute for Diversity and Health Equity

American Hospital Association™
Advancing Health in America

ABOUT

HEALTH EQUITY INNOVATION SUMMIT

Earlier this year, the American Hospital Association (AHA) convened hospital and health system leaders at the 2024 State Hospital Association (SHA) Innovation Summit to co-design health equity solutions leveraging the AHA's Health Equity Roadmap as the guiding framework.

This solutions brief highlights the collective insights of a wide range of participants and the solutions that surfaced during the discussions. It is designed for hospitals and health systems to take the necessary steps to create the system changes needed to eliminate health disparities and advance health equity.

Disclaimer: The specific ideas captured within this solutions brief are reflective of the perspectives of the participants who attended the Health Equity Summit and do not necessarily reflect the official viewpoints or positions of the AHA and the Institute for Diversity and Health Equity (IFDHE).
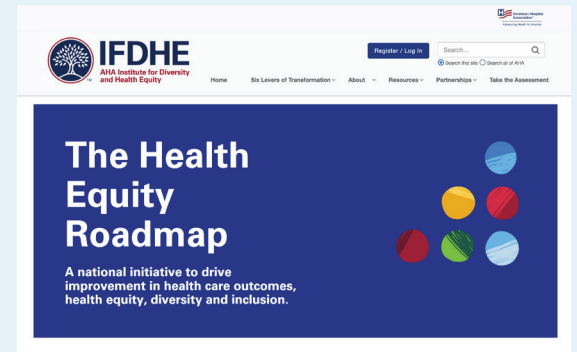
A COMPANION TO THE HEALTH EQUITY ROADMAP

The Health Equity Roadmap is an innovative framework to help hospitals and health systems chart their own paths toward transformation — thus becoming more equitable and inclusive organizations. The AHA's vision is of a just society of healthy communities, where all individuals reach their highest potential for health. Through its Institute for Diversity and Heath Equity, the AHA seeks to eliminate structural barriers that compromise diversity, equity and inclusion in hospitals and health care systems.

IFDHE operationalizes AHA's vision through transformative action, focusing on the production and dissemination of evidence-based interventions, provision of design-thinking opportunities, and the development of tools and resources for the field.

The Health Equity Transformation Model — the Health Equity Roadmap's theoretical underpinning — provides six "Levers of Transformation," key performance indicators and a self-assessment tool for tracking progress.

Visit **equity.aha.org** to learn more about the Health Equity Roadmap.

THE SIX LEVERS OF TRANSFORMATION

- Culturally Appropriate Patient Care
- Equitable and Inclusive Organizational Policies
- Collection and Use of Data to Drive Action
- Diverse Representation in Leadership and Governance
- Community Collaboration for Solutions
- Systemic and Shared Accountability

2024 STATE HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION (SHA) INNOVATION SUMMIT

Chicago

About 30 SHA leaders who focus on health equity and DEI initiatives in their respective states convened in-person in Chicago on March 5. This one-day event brought participants together to explore solutions to accelerate health equity within communities and health care organizations in their respective states.

The day kicked off with opening remarks from AHA leaders — Michelle Hood, AHA executive vice president and chief operating officer and Joy A. Lewis, AHA senior vice president, health equity strategies and IFDHE executive director. The AHA emphasized the crucial role of hospitals in promoting health equity and addressing long-standing health disparities. There was strong acknowledgement that the IFDHE-led A^2 Health Equity group (a networking group for state, metro and regional hospital association leaders who work on health equity and DEI initiatives) is vital for collaboration and ideation around sustainable solutions to advance the AHA's mission of a just society of healthy communities, where all individuals reach their highest potential for health.

A fireside chat, facilitated by Joy A. Lewis, examined ways to apply innovative approaches when designing solutions to eliminate health disparities. The panelists were Lisa Harries, assistant vice president of health equity and policy at Illinois Health and Hospital Association and Essey Yirdaw, senior director of data analytics and health equity at Colorado Hospital Association.

HERE IS WHAT WAS DISCUSSED THROUGHOUT THE DAY:

- Innovation is trying something different and seeing if it works — there is no standard approach to it.

- Language matters in the health equity space and hospitals must be willing to adapt to meet the language needs and preferences of the communities they serve.

- Oftentimes, we hear hospital and health system leaders talk about health equity, DEI and social drivers of health interchangeably. While there may be overlap among the terms, leaders should be careful not to approach or discuss each topic as if they are the same.
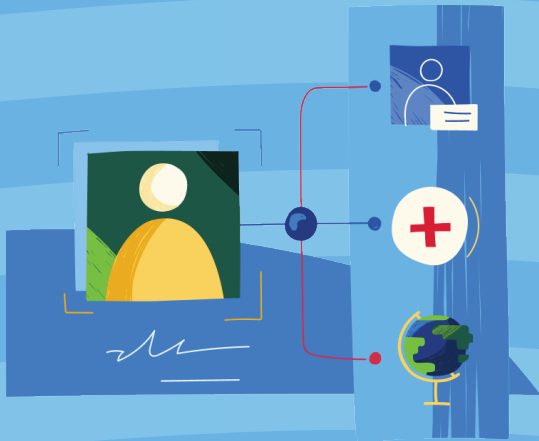

HEALTH EQUITY ROADMAP LEVER DISCUSSION THEMES

Attendees were guided through a human-centered design session to develop innovative health equity solutions, using the levers of the Health Equity Roadmap as a framework.

Key takeaways from the discussions are summarized in the pages that follow.

Culturally Appropriate Patient Care

Practicing cultural humility and activities that improve culturally appropriate care, such as language access and health literacy.

MAJOR THEMES:

Identify partners for collaboration.

- Leverage partnerships with academic institutions to create curriculums that incorporate culturally appropriate patient care.
- Partner with organizations working with underserved populations to improve access to care for patients.

### Prioritize voices and experiences of patients and families.

- When developing clinical care plans, be mindful that the voices of patients and the care team should be given equal consideration.
- Enhance the quality of care by integrating patient stories when developing care processes.
- Ensure that intake documentation is inclusive of all patient types.

Employ staff and providers who share cultural similarities with the patient population they serve, while establishing a safe and comfortable environment for staff and providers.

- Create and implement an equitable culture for staff to elevate concerns.
- Prioritize the hiring of diverse staff in leadership and board positions.

Collection and Use of Data to Drive Action
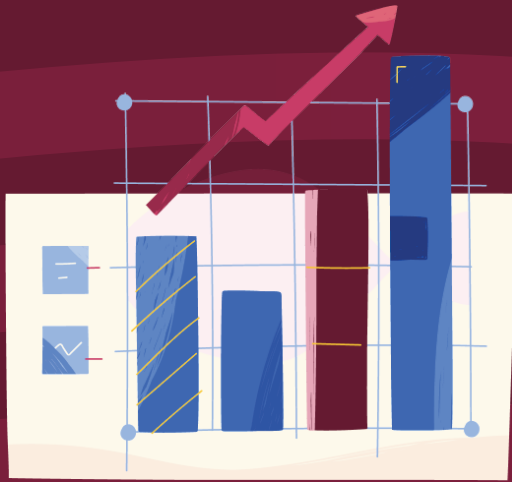
Using quantitative and qualitative data to inform, design and evaluate improvement strategies.

MAJOR THEMES:

Stratify patient data by race and ethnicity to better inform clinical care.

- Create custom dashboards to track health equity measures.
- Utilize electronic medical records to integrate data collection across the health equity measures created for the organization.
- Collect and track social drivers of health data.

Partner with community organizations to align goals and create joint efforts to improve data collection methodologies.

- Initiate a statewide health equity committee with hospital/health system leaders and community partnerships focusing on equitable data practices.
- Compile repositories of promising practices around data collection and use.

Streamline data collection practices to increase efficiency and effectiveness among hospital and health care workers.

- Implement quality measures that assess the accuracy of the data collection process.
- Provide training and resources to standardize measurement of health equity and community health quality measures.

Diverse Representation in Executive Leadership and Governance

Creating pathways that lead to diversifying leadership ranks to reflect the populations and communities served.

MAJOR THEMES:

Create policies and pathways to diversify staff and leadership.

- Implement mentorship programs and succession planning for new leaders.
- Mandate implicit bias training for all staff and leadership.
- Promote trustee education on organizational health equity and DEI priorities.

Implement diversity and equity training at the board level.

- Educate trustees on the financial benefits of developing a more diverse board.
- Identify champions on the board to serve as mentors for leadership.
- Bring voices of diverse individuals to board meetings to weigh in on strategic initiatives.

Promote support for trustee education and training on health equity and DEI.

- Provide education for C-suite on recruiting diverse leadership members.
- Implement diversity thresholds for committee and council nominations.
- Customize education and resources to states to ensure political feasibility.

Community Collaborations for Solutions

Advancing health equity and fostering healthy communities by investing in strong hospital-community partnerships.

MAJOR THEMES:

Allocate roles and responsibilities among community partners, organizations and hospitals to enhance collaboration.

- Assess the community partnership landscape.
- Identify community leaders for direct engagement in health equity initiatives.

Evaluate the relationship between hospitals and community organizations to create solutions that develop stronger relationships and ties to the community.

- Prioritize shared strategic initiatives to scale up community partnerships.
- Identify leaders within the community to help guide projects based upon subject matter expertise.

Organize convenings with community partners to advocate for and address community inequities.

- Work with state/metro/regional hospital associations to advocate for policies that support the hospital and the community's needs.
- Utilize social risk platforms (ZIP code-level data).
- Identify effective strategies to target specific issues within the communities and hospitals.

MEMBER TESTIMONIALS

"At my table, we discussed the importance of data collection and how to use it. I learned the value of spreading equity at each level of an association and how to take data and turn it into something actionable."

Eden Cunningham

Director, patient safety and quality

D.C. Hospital Association

"Today's summit gave me an opportunity to look at the problem differently and add to the change we are looking for in health equity. Small things eventually add up to a substantial change that we want, and that makes a difference."

Sarah Scranton

Vice president, safety and quality

Michigan Hospital Association

Meeting Takeaways for Heath Care Leaders

1

IDENTIFY WHAT RESONATES.

Personal connections drive purpose. Reflect on one personal story about yourself or someone you care about who has been affected by health inequities or DEI challenges. Consider sharing with your networks to help impact change for future care processes.

- **Great Storytelling Connects Employees to Their Work**
  Harvard Business Review

2

LEVERAGE NETWORKS AND EARLY ADOPTERS.

Reach out to leaders who are willing to be early adopters in the work. Identify opportunities for leaders to network in and outside the organization to gather promising practices from the field.

- **How to Start a Cultural Transformation**
  Simon Sinek

3

MIND YOUR ORGANIZATION'S ENERGY.

Determine which areas of the organization you can directly control, and which areas require indirect influence. Start by addressing issues where you can quickly generate momentum and develop long-term strategies to address more complex issues.

- **Wicked-Problem Solvers:**
 *Harvard Business Review*

4

DREAM BIG, START SMALL.

Big dreams inspire people and draw them into a cause. Balance that with small steps that create momentum and show that progress is possible. And of course, don't forget to celebrate your progress along the way!

- **The Power of Small Wins:**
  Harvard Business Review

HEALTH EQUITY RESOURCES

Visit **equity.aha.org** to access our health equity resources.
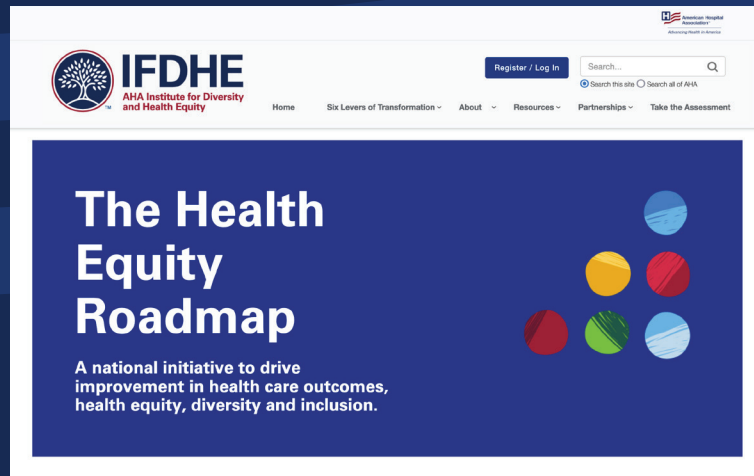
HEALTH EQUITY ROADMAP

The Health Equity Roadmap is a framework to help hospitals and health systems chart their own paths toward transformation to become more equitable and inclusive organizations. ➡ **Visit the Roadmap**

A² HEALTH EQUITY COMMUNITY

The A² Health Equity community is designed for AHA and state, regional and metro hospital association staff responsible for advancing advancing health equity and DEI. This group provides a platform for said leaders to collaborate across organizations and join in discussions, share learnings and promising practices. ➡ **A² Health Equity Interest Form**

HEALTH EQUITY RESOURCE SERIES

The Health Equity Resource Series consists of toolkits designed to share evidence-based practices across four foundational pillars: data practices, cultural humility, DEI in leadership and governance, and sustainable community partnerships. ➡ **Visit the Resource Series**

HEALTH EQUITY INFLUENCERS ROUNDTABLE

This collective space is for those who influence and implement their organizational equity agenda, including chief diversity and chief health equity officers. Join for professional development webinars, in-person events, moral support and self-care strategies. ➡ **Sign up for the Roundtable**

HEALTH EQUITY INNOVATION SUMMITS FOR HOSPITAL ASSOCIATIONS

The state-level Health Equity Innovation Summits are designed for state hospital associations to partner and co-host health equity summits with the American Hospital Association's Institute for Diversity and Health Equity.

➡ **Custom Innovation Summits**

THANK YOU

We are all on the journey to position hospitals and health systems as contributors to a just society. The Health Equity Innovation Summits, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, are designed as a collaborative space to develop solutions to implement the Health Equity Roadmap.

On behalf of the American Hospital Association, we thank you for your contribution toward advancing health equity. The **Institute for Diversity and Health Equity** is committed to providing tools and resources to advance health equity and dismantling structural barriers that create disparities.

Thank you for your commitment to advancing health equity in your communities!