

Public Health and Social Justice

(Adopted August 9, 2019)

The core mission of public health is to improve the health of all populations. A [social justice](#) approach to public health challenges the public health community to acknowledge and confront underlying root causes, and recognize that [racism](#), [socioeconomic inequality](#), [gender discrimination](#), ableism, and all other forms of discrimination have negative consequences on health. According to a large body of public health literature, in order to improve the health of a population the root causes need to be addressed.

Health inequities are, “types of health differences that are closely linked with social, economic, and/or environmental disadvantages. Health inequity negatively affect groups of people who have regularly experienced greater obstacles to healthcare due to discrimination or exclusion based on race, ethnicity, language, religion, socioeconomic status, gender, age, mental health, cognitive, sensory or physical disability, sexual orientation, or gender identities.” Health inequities are avoidable, unnecessary and unjust.

Public health frameworks must promote health and health equity, not only addressing physical, mental, and emotional health, but the conditions in which we live, learn, work and play.

Our health is determined by access to social and economic opportunities; the resources and supports available in our homes, neighborhoods, and communities; the quality of our schooling; the safety of our workplaces; the cleanliness of our water, food, and air; and the nature of our social interactions and relationships.

Achieving a just and health equitable community means reducing and eliminating unjust and avoidable disparities in health by working to improve the conditions, resources and opportunities needed for best health of marginalized groups. NHPHA will merge into its policy practices and advocacy work a social justice frame that will work to ensure that health, economic and social policies and practices result in equitable and sustainable improvements in health for everyone in New Hampshire. The Association will foster cross sector collaboration to shape practices that are aimed at improving public health outcomes that are inclusive and equitable. It will play an active role supporting and collaborating on health equity promotion projects in New Hampshire; i.e. actively work with DHHS and partners in the NH State Health Improvement Plan, 2020-2027;

NHPHA supports policies that:

- When and where appropriate combine health and health equity criteria into community planning and decision making and into broad public health system plans;
- Address structural inequities to combat the “isms” and increase equality of opportunity for all;
- Build trust with the consumers of service and improve service outcome, by promoting the enhancement of skills and capacity of the public health workforce to identify and address disparities and systemic-level barriers such as stigma, racism, ableism, and lack of cultural competence;
- Standardize, collect and analyze data to better identify and address disparities;
- Promote an all-inclusive, evidence-based public health approach to influence social and health policies (See other NHPHA position statements for specific areas such as injury prevention, nutrition, health services, environment);
- Support the promotion of optimal emotional, physical and intellectual development across the lifespan;

2018 Outstanding Affiliate of the Year of the American Public Health Association

- Support programs that improve education and employment opportunities for all NH residents, especially historically marginalized and oppressed communities;

Resources

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National Prevention Council, National Prevention Strategy, Washington, DC: US Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General, 2011.

<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/priorities/prevention/strategy/>

Gostin, LO and Powers, M., *What Does Social Justice Require for The Public's Health? Public Health Ethics and Policy Imperatives*, *Health Aff* July 2006 vol. 25 no. 4 1053-1060.

<http://content.healthaffairs.org/content/25/4/1053.full>

National Association of County and City Health Officials, *Roots of Health Inequity: A Web-Based Course for the Public Health Workforce* <http://www.rootsofhealthinequity.org/>

National Stakeholder Strategy for Achieving Health Equity

<http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/npa/templates/content.aspx?lvl=1&lvlid=33&ID=286>

On Social Determinants from Healthy People 2020

<http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/social-determinants-health>

Public Health Awakened, Organizing for Health, Equity and Justice, <http://www.publichealthawakened.com>, 2018

<https://www.healthypeople.gov/2010/hp2020/advisory/SocietalDeterminantsHealth.htm>

County Health Rankings Report, 2018; The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) collaborates with the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute (UWPHI) to bring this program to cities, counties, and states across the nation

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Healthy People 2020 Draft. 2009, U.S. Government Printing Office

American Public Health Association, Policy and Advocacy Section; www.apha.org ; Public Health and Social Justice; 2019

Health Care and the Competitive Advantage of Racial Equity: How Advancing Racial Equity Can Create Business Value, R. DeSouza, L. Iyer; FSG, Reimagining Social Change-Policy Link, 2019