

A Health Equity Committee:

A Local Health Department's Effort to Address Health Inequities Riverside County, California

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Background:

Like many local health jurisdictions, the County of Riverside Department of Public Health (RCDOPH) has many grant-funded programs addressing specific issues among separate groups creating disjointed silos and a fragmented approach to health equity. Unifying the departments programs and services into a coordinated approach is the objective of the County of Riverside Department of Public Health, Health Equity Committee.

Since its 2008 inception, the work of the Health Equity Committee has broadened departmental thinking to include factors such as predatory lending practices, land use, institutional and historic racism and homophobia, crime, stress, and other issues linked to social justice and social determinants of health. The Committee has remained representative of diverse disciplines, job classifications, and cultural experiences.

How Have We Established Sustainable Committee Engagement?

Four Pillars of Success

- Advocacy for health and health education
- 1. Administrative support and promotion
- 2. Diverse expertise
- 3. Autonomy and empowerment
- 4. Productive Meetings



What Have Been Committee Successes?

- 3-Year Strategic Plan: The development of a 3-year strategic plan using the National Stakeholder Strategy for Achieving Health Equity as a framework to identify eight priority areas.
- Developing an Innovative Training Series: Using a 5-module training series developed by the Alameda County Department of Public Health California as a template, we developed a 6-module training series aimed at shifting the departmental culture around the issue of health inequities. For more in-depth information and discussion see our oral session #3170.0 on Monday October 29 at 10:30.



What Have Been Committee Challenges?

- Time and Resources: This has been a priority of RCDOPH, illustrated by the dedication of significant departmental resources.
- Topic Sensitivity and Importance: The ongoing discussion of sensitive issues such as culture, the history of race and racism in the United States, social justice, health equity, discrimination, and homophobia create challenges for some staff.



Where Do We Go From Here?

- Further expansion of departmental efforts at community collaboration and capacity building, and increased partnerships with sister departments and agencies.
- Assess the feasibility and effectiveness of instituting health equity planning in all policies.
- Evaluate the focus and effectiveness of all RCDOPH programmatic activities addressing health inequities and the impact of the department-wide training series.



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