

# MOVING TOWARDS HEALTH EQUITY



Institute for a Healthier Community



## Background

Achieving good health requires more than just good health care or healthy behavior. And, while the Affordable Care Act has led to expansions in health insurance coverage, greater access does not translate into ‘Health for All.’ From an ethical and population health perspective, health is relative: a community is only as health as its least healthy member.

The Providence Institute for a Healthier Community is guided by these same fundamental principals—*Healthy Body, Healthy Relationships, Healthy Communities, Created Together*. Prioritizing health equity also resonates with Providence’s core values of respect, compassion, justice, excellence and stewardship, and the vision that “Together, we answer the call of every person we serve; Know me, care for me, ease my way.”

## Defining Health Equity and Health Disparity

**Health equity** is attainment of the highest level of health for *all* people. Achieving health equity requires valuing everyone equally with focused and ongoing societal efforts to address avoidable inequalities, historical and contemporary injustices, and the elimination of health and **healthcare disparities**.

—*Healthy People 2020*

**Health disparity** is a particular type of health difference that is closely linked with social, economic, and/or environmental disadvantage. Health disparities adversely affect groups of people who have systematically experienced greater obstacles to health based on their racial or ethnic group; religion; socioeconomic status; gender; age; mental health; cogni-

tive, sensory or physical disability; sexual orientation or gender identity; geographic location; or other characteristics historically linked to discrimination or exclusion.—*Healthy People 2020 National Stakeholder Strategy for Achieving Health*

## Moving Forward Together— A Big Idea

We are in a climate of change nationally and locally, that calls on all sectors of communities to better engage opportunities and resources for the most disadvantaged populations. In this climate of renewed interest we are inspired to influence health and well-being in a more comprehensive, meaningful, and inclusive way, and to go deeper to address the root causes of health inequities—in health care and well beyond healthcare.

Health Equity is a big idea that takes a commitment to open, honest discussions that explore beliefs, practices and internal messages at the individual and organizational level. A commitment to move forward-and to prioritize issues we can practically address.

## Our Aim

- To engage ourselves and others in conversations about problems and solutions of health disparities
- To raise awareness, exchange ideas and information that advances health equity
- To connect and coordinate efforts with partners and individuals from all sectors who share common goals to reduce or eliminate health disparities



## Moving Towards Health Equity: Our Work

Providence NWR Mission and Healthy Communities Committee - Providing Strategic Oversight. A natural fit, we are also guided by the committee's goals to develop partnerships and work collaboratively to promote initiatives that positively impact the health and well-being of the population; and to seek out and support efforts to increase access for those whose economic status, culture, ethnicity, race, age sexual orientation or religious belief present barriers to care. Together, we are moving towards developing better strategies to engage and enhance our connections to the communities we serve.

- from Committee Charter



Center For  
**Health Priority  
 and Progress**

### Listening and Empowerment

**Creating a community voice** that defines an Index of Health and Well-being for Snohomish County. Includes tailored conversations with a range of community voices, in trusted environments. Communities include; Latino and Latina adults, Families/residents in affordable housing, Seniors, Youth, Minority Achievers Program alumni, members of our tribal communities, military families, and more.

**Empowering Snohomish County teens** to transform their community through civic participation, the Youth Council is a community-based partnership with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Snohomish County, the Seattle CityClub. The Youth Council meets monthly to work towards making a positive impact on issues that matter to kids and teens in Snohomish County.



Center For  
**Health Education  
 and Healing**

### Collaborate, Link, and Improve Access

**Collaborative clearinghouse**—open sourced and co-created with our community; making it easier to find and access health and wellbeing information, tools, and connect with our many local community assets. Includes a broad array of wellbeing dimensions; security and basic needs, social connections, mental health, work life, and the neighborhoods we live in.

The collaborative clearinghouse includes content devoted to health equity and provides connections to—

**Resources, events and networks** that can support programs or agency efforts to reduce inequities in their communities.



Center For  
**Community Health  
 Transformation**

### Transformational Partnerships

**Housing and Advocacy** is part of our role as an active board member with the Snohomish County Partnership to End Homelessness.

PIHC has also joined a Choice Neighborhoods Initiative Planning Partner and Advisory Board--also known as the Hawthorne Transformation Council assist in the revitalization of the Baker Heights housing project and the Hawthorne Neighborhood of Everett.

#### **Backbone Support: SCHLC Health Initiatives**

Initiatives include **Gear Up and Go**, **Advance Care Planning** and **LiveHealthy2020**. Live Healthy 2020 brings together a broad cross-section of partners representing diverse communities with one common agenda - to improve the health and economic vitality of Snohomish County by improving nutrition, increasing physical activity, enhancing mental and emotional health, and fostering civic health and connectivity by the year 2020 and beyond.



Center For  
**Workplace  
 Health**

### Economic Development

#### **Health Economic Burden and Impacts Report**

A countywide benchmark analysis of the full employer cost of health and is a joint effort between our Center for Workforce Health, the Economic Alliance of Snohomish County and the Integrated Benefits Institute (IBI). This study will provide an estimate of the current impact and potential gains in business performance, profits, job creation and tax revenues in Snohomish County.