

New Insights on Health Equity: Moving From Dialog to Action

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Abstract: In the US, a person's social and economic position determines personal health and longevity to a large degree. Throughout the lifespan, socioeconomic status determines both opportunity and environment, thereby powerfully affecting an individual's ability to practice healthy behaviors. Much of our public health interventions to address health inequities focus on health care access and quality rather than socioeconomic conditions. Progress in improving the health of all our state's residents requires that we address social inequality as part of our interventions to eliminate health inequities. Many public health grants direct us to reduce or eliminate health inequities, yet scant guidance exists on how to go about this work or even what the work entails. The presenters have reviewed key points from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Community Guide to Preventive Services to better understand how social determinants drive health inequities. They critically examined its current interventions aimed at multiple levels of the social ecological model and various intervention points along the chronic disease prevention spectrum. Health inequities emerged as a cross-cutting issue for chronic diseases and their risk factors. The presenters intend to: (1) discuss working definitions of common terms and distinguish between health equity and health disparities; (2) recommend a framework for identifying promising practices in achieving health equity; and (3) identify health indicators to measure progress. The presentation will be interactive using "hands on" activities to help participants see how to apply knowledge to practice.