

The health equity briefs

National Association of State Offices of Minority Health Newsletter

Congratulations to Leann Johnson 2024 Cheryl Boyce Leadership Award Recipient

The Cheryl Boyce Leadership Award recognizes exceptional individuals representing State Offices of Minority Health who demonstrate outstanding vision, innovation, creativity, and leadership in improving the health of racial and ethnic minority communities.



Leann Johnson, Administrator Oregon Office of Equity and Minority Health

Leann Johnson has served at the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) for over twenty-two years, with the last nine years as the Director of Equity and Inclusion. She has led her team through crises and transitions. Rather than faltering, the work has thrived, expanding from 22 to 80+ employees with an increase in the division's biennial budget from \$9 million to \$53 million during her tenure. Ms. Leann has demonstrated an incredible life of service to people, and this is reflected in her work for social justice, peace, freedom, and dignity for all people. Ms. Johnson has initiated a health equity lens using a global, national, and local scale, especially in equity, inclusion, and minority health.

Leann is responsible for leading a team of DEI professionals who are responsible for more than 33 functions and programs for Oregon Health Authority and the state of Oregon, all of which are related to policy and building equity in OHA and the health delivery system. Her policy efforts have spanned from public health policy to data collection and disaggregation, as well as from Medicaid to Civil Rights and incentivized equity metrics, to name a few. Through her leadership, the health equity definition for the state and the strategic goal to end health inequities were developed and adopted to steer health systems transformation for the state of Oregon. Leann is both an inspirational strategic visionary and a skilled tactician in DEI and minority health.

In all of her efforts, she has not neglected her responsibility to mentor the next generation of leaders to ensure their ability to be catalysts for systemic change. We extend our gratitude and congratulations to Ms. Leann Johnson on this tremendous recognition.



Antoniette Holt, Director Office of Minority Health, Indiana State Department of Health

Antoniette Holt was nominated for her impact on minority health policy through her trailblazing work to declare racism a public health crisis in Indiana. Her leadership raised awareness of how systemic racism negatively impacts health outcomes and sparked initiatives to address racial inequities.



Teresa Aseret-Manygoats, Bureau Chief, Chronic Disease & Health Promotion, Arizona Department of Health Services

Teresa Manygoat was nominated for her impact on minority health research, spearheading efforts to collect robust data illuminating health disparities in the state. Her advocacy for comprehensive, community-driven studies guides evidence-based policies and programs to confront inequities.

Congratulations to the nominees! Their steadfast commitment to advancing health equity and eliminating disparities is inspiring. We'd like to encourage you to email the nominees to learn about the work each was nominated for.

MAY 2024



Our Mission:

Promote and protect the health of racial and ethnic minority communities, tribal organizations and nations, by preventing disease and injury and assuring optimal health and well-being.

HIGHLIGHTS:

Congratulations to Leann Johnson, 2024 Cheryl Boyce Leadership Award Recipient!

Equity Work Around the States as compiled by the National Academy for State Health Policy

Join the PATIENTS Professors Academy - Applications Now Open

Terminology Report: Concepts for Advancing Health Equity

Recognizing Dedicated Regional Minority Analyst

New Toolkit Brings a Racial Equity Focus to Collaborative Community Health Efforts

Transnationalism, Culture, and Health among African Immigrants in the U.S

Advancing Health Equity Through Workforce Development, Office of Health Equity Partner Webinar Series

Save the Date: Measuring What Counts for Health Equity - NASOMH Quarterly Meeting - June 20, 2024

Empowering Communities Through Data-Driven Governance

Resources

May is . . .

- [National Stroke Awareness Month](#)
- [National Physical Fitness and Sports Month](#)
- [National Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month](#)
- [National Osteoporosis Awareness and Prevention Month](#)
- [National Arthritis Awareness Month](#)
- [National Celiac Disease Awareness Month](#)

EQUITY WORK AROUND THE STATES AS COMPILED BY THE NATIONAL ACADEMY FOR STATE HEALTH POLICY

- **Iowa** has a new super-agency under the Department of Health and Human Services. The Office of Health Equity is working to instill an understanding of health equity within the agency.
- **Oregon** is working to eliminate health disparities by 2030. The governor has asked all agencies to undergo a strategic planning process to align efforts.
- **Maryland** is expanding data collection to build on current work using existing health outcome data. The newly established Commission on Health Equity has adopted a health-in-all-policies approach and seeks to include data in its work.
- **North Dakota's** Community Engagement Unit is working to reduce health disparities in the state. They are working with the Office of Systems and Performance to design the new State Health Assessment, which will address the social drivers of health.
- **Minnesota** focuses on building equity into the walls and is guided by the communities most impacted by structural racism. Community and data remained intertwined, as community engagement is key to understanding the context around collected data, while data is also a signal to officials to connect with the community to understand their needs better.
- **Pennsylvania** includes health equity components in its MCO contracts. These include an incentive program for providers to close gaps in quality measures.
- **Alaska** is developing policies in preparation for greater efforts to advance health equity in the state.
- **Connecticut** is implementing a race, ethnicity, and language data collection law.

JOIN THE PATIENTS PROFESSORS ACADEMY - APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN

The **PATIENTS Professors Academy (PPA)** is now accepting applications for its free, online, 5-week program designed to empower patients and caregivers to make a difference in their communities and research.

Led by patient advisors and content experts, the PPA offers an interactive learning experience exploring how to leverage your lived experience to drive positive change. Through weekly sessions, you'll gain valuable insights and practical skills to amplify your voice and contribute meaningfully to healthcare initiatives.

To Learn more, check out this short video where two PPA graduates share their experiences and the benefits they gained from the program:

<https://youtu.be/3TTfdehnIU>.

Don't miss this opportunity to join a community of empowered patient advocates. Apply now by visiting <https://tinyurl.com/mv5xxx24>. Space is limited, so act quickly to secure your spot.

TERMINOLOGY REPORT: CONCEPTS FOR ADVANCING HEALTH EQUITY

During our March quarterly meeting, we polled members on the key terms and concepts their offices use related to health equity work, 16 responses were received:

75% use **Social Determinants of Health**. This broad concept encompasses economic, social, and environmental factors impacting health.

19% use **Systemic and Structural Determinants of Health**. This highlights root causes like systemic racism and discriminatory policies/structures.

13% use **Health-related Social Needs**. The focus is on non-medical factors like food, housing, and transportation needs.

One respondent specified **Colonial Determinants of Health**, emphasizing the impacts of colonialism.

One cited **Systemic Racism** as their framing.

While **Social Determinants of Health** appear to be the dominant umbrella term, the results reveal nuances in how offices conceptualize and label the multifaceted drivers of health inequities. Some focus more explicitly on systemic discrimination, colonial legacies, or downstream social needs.

This terminology diversity underscores the evolving nature of health equity concepts and priorities. As this field develops, achieving shared understanding across different framings will be necessary for aligned efforts.

RECOGNIZING A DEDICATED REGIONAL ANALYST



And Then a SHERO comes along...

Many of us are familiar with
Mariah Carey's hit song.

However, few of us understand the meaning until
someone calls out the HERO or SHERO in you.

For those of us in Region 5 and, frankly,
across the country, we know that person to be
Ms. Mildred Hunter.

She is our Encourager, Ambassador, and
Opportunity Seeker and Educator.

Always guiding us on how to
"Make a Way out of No Way" and to
"Never Give up and Never Give in,"
Ms. Mildred Hunter's perseverance is
a beacon of inspiration for us all.

She stands as a watchman on the wall, always
scanning the horizon to anticipate the next
mountain we will conquer, instilling a sense of
reassurance in us all.

She knows what it takes to get the job done; after
all, she has been engaged in the work of health
equity since the early 90's
cutting the path and paving the way.

She sees in us what we don't see in ourselves...
the next generation of health equity leaders.

She is unapologetically and authentically
who she has always been.

She is our Shero

*By Angela Dawson, MS, MRC, PC
Executive Director
Ohio Commission on Minority Health*

Mildred Hunter serves as the esteemed Regional Minority Health Analyst for Region 5, encompassing the states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. The Office of Minority Health (OMH) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has strategically placed 10 Regional Minority Health Analysts nationwide. These highly skilled professionals are essential in advancing the OMH's mission to improve minority health and reduce pervasive health disparities.

As a Regional Analyst, Mildred's work is comprehensive and impactful. She tirelessly collaborates with state offices of minority health, other federal agencies, community organizations, academic institutions, and key stakeholders throughout Region 5. Her multifaceted responsibilities include raising awareness of racial and ethnic minority health issues and regionally promoting OMH's policies, programs, and initiatives. Mildred's efforts in fostering vital partnerships and implementing targeted strategies have accelerated the reduction of health disparities affecting racial and ethnic minority populations. She provides invaluable technical assistance to organizations seeking OMH grant funding opportunities focused on minority health initiatives. Mildred's diligent monitoring and evaluation of regional efforts ensure progress is made in closing persistent gaps. Furthermore, she serves as a critical regional liaison, staying well-informed on emerging public health issues impacting minority communities in her region.

Mildred's expertise, leadership, and unwavering dedication are not just assets, but beacons of hope in advancing health equity across her Region. Her contributions are not just crucial, but instrumental in achieving meaningful and lasting change.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Mildred and all the Regional Minority Health Analysts for their daily tireless efforts to fulfill the OMH's mission. Their work not only strengthens partnerships and amplifies impact but also brings us closer to realizing the vision of health equity for all.

HHS REGIONAL MINORITY HEALTH ANALYSTS

The Regional Minority Health Analysts work in the Office of Regional Health Operations to foster and strengthen relationships among federal, state, territory, tribal and community stakeholders by working collectively to improve minority health, eliminate health disparities and advance health equity.

Region 1: [Georgia Simpson](#)

Region 2: [Marline Vignier](#)

Region 3: [Jalisa Smith](#)

Region 4: [Roshunda Ivory](#)

Region 5: [Mildred Hunter](#)

Region 6: [Ella Ewert-Pierce](#)

Region 7: [Corstella Johnson](#)

Region 8: [June Homdayjanakul](#)

Region 9: Vacant

Region 10: Vacant



New Toolkit Brings a Racial Equity Focus to Collaborative Community Health Efforts

Advancing health equity requires an honest look at the systemic racial disparities that exist in our communities. However, embedding racial equity into public health initiatives is an ongoing journey without a clear final destination. It involves personal growth, strengthening cross-racial relationships, and restructuring policies and power dynamics. That's why the Collective Impact Forum has released a powerful new resource - the **Racial Equity Toolkit**. Developed by equity experts Dominique Samari and Paul Schmitz, this comprehensive guide provides a framework for operationalizing racial equity throughout collective impact work focused on adolescent health and well-being.

The toolkit takes backbone organizations, partners, and community stakeholders through thought-provoking exercises, candid discussions, and self-reflective activities designed to:

- Deepen self-awareness of racial identities, lived experiences, and unconscious biases
- Build trust and mutual understanding among a racially diverse collaborative
- Analyze existing strategies, processes, and power structures through an equity lens
- Co-create targeted plans to drive equitable systems change and close health disparities

By positioning racial equity as a core principle and analytic lens, our collaborative adolescent health initiatives can develop solutions tailored to the needs and backgrounds of the youth and communities we serve.

The **Racial Equity Toolkit** is now available from the Collective Impact Forum at collectiveimpactforum.org.

TRANSNATIONALISM, CULTURE, AND HEALTH AMONG AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE U.S

The webinar titled "Transnationalism, Culture, and Health among African Immigrants in the U.S." was presented by Dr. Kelechi Ibe-Lamberts, PhD, MCHES, from the University of Illinois at Chicago's School of Public Health.

In this presentation, Dr. Ibe-Lamberts discussed the impact of transnationalism, culture, and health on African immigrants in the United States. The webinar explored the unique challenges and experiences faced by this population, including cultural barriers, acculturation processes, and health disparities.

Dr. Ibe-Lamberts shared insights from her research and expertise in this field, shedding light on the complexities of navigating multiple cultural identities and their influence on health behaviors and outcomes among African immigrant communities.

For further questions or comments regarding the webinar, contact Dr. Kelechi Ibe-Lamberts at klamber4@uic.edu.

The recording of the webinar can be found [here](#).

Advancing Health Equity Through Workforce Development Office of Health Equity Partner Webinar Series

The Office of Health Equity Partner Webinar Series continues on Wednesday, **June 5th, from 3:00 to 4:30 p.m. EDT**. It will focus on cultivating a diverse and culturally responsive public health workforce to advance health equity.

Achieving health equity requires having public health professionals who reflect the communities they serve and can deliver culturally competent care. Join [the CDC's Office of Health Equity \(OHE\)](#) and partners to learn strategies for workforce development initiatives aimed at this goal.

The webinar will highlight the [Lewis/Ferguson Internships and Fellowships Programs](#), which provide training opportunities for underrepresented students and professionals. It will also give an overview of the [CDC's Foundations of Health Equity Self-Guided Training Plan](#), a valuable resource for developing health equity competencies.

In addition to OHE representatives, the webinar features subject matter experts from:

- [National Association of County and City Health Officials \(NACCHO\)](#)
- [Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health \(ASPPH\)](#)
- [Shelby County Health Department, Tennessee](#)
- [CDC's Rapid Response Research and Surveillance Branch](#)

Register in advance to attend this informative online event. After registering, you'll receive a confirmation email with details on how to join the webinar. The live webinar will have Web CART captioning for accessibility. If you require other reasonable accommodations to participate, please contact OHE@cdc.gov at least ten business days before the event. You can also email questions about the webinar.

SAVE THE DATE: MEASURING WHAT COUNTS FOR HEALTH EQUITY JUNE 20, 2024



Join us for NASOMH's virtual quarterly meeting on **June 20, 2024, at 4:00 PM EST** for an exciting discussion with special guest Dr. Somava Saha on *Measuring What Counts for Health Equity*.

Description: The Well-being In the Nation (WIN) measures, developed at the request of the National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics through a grassroots to grasstops effort, are our nation's first set of federal-nonfederal measures with substantial community voice and centers well-being, equity and racial justice across sectors. These measures, which offer validated data and tools for communities and agencies leading equitable population health efforts, have the potential to drive significant change in your state. A new set of measures is about to be released, focusing on what matters for racial justice and intergenerational well-being.

We look forward to your participation and an enriching dialogue! If you have any questions, please contact Veronica Halloway at veronica@nasomh.org.

Registration link will be forthcoming soon.

Presenter: *Somava Saha is the President and CEO of Well-being and Equity in the World (WE in the World) and the Executive Lead of the Well Being In the Nation (WIN) Network. She will be joining us to share her insights and expertise on promoting well-being and equity globally.*

Empowering Communities Through Data-Driven Governance

A new article from the Brookings Institution highlights the importance of community-led data infrastructure in promoting local, equitable governance and driving policy change. The authors argue that giving communities ownership and control over their data can foster more inclusive decision-making processes and address systemic inequalities.

The article emphasizes the need for a paradigm shift in how data is collected, analyzed, and used. Rather than relying solely on top-down approaches, a community-led data infrastructure would enable residents to define their narratives and priorities based on their lived experiences.

Through this approach, communities can surface issues that may be overlooked by traditional data sources and develop targeted solutions that address their unique challenges. The authors provide examples of successful community-driven initiatives, such as using crowdsourced data to identify environmental justice concerns and inform policy decisions.

Ultimately, the article calls for greater investment in building communities' capacity to leverage data for their empowerment. By supporting community-led data efforts, we can promote more equitable governance, amplify marginalized voices, and drive meaningful policy changes that truly serve the needs of all residents.

The full article is available on the [Brookings website](https://www.brookings.edu/).

RESOURCES

The Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF) provides valuable public health resources, including updates and alerts on emerging health issues, preventive measures, and community-specific recommendations for Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities.

The Kaiser Family Foundation's "Monthly Update on Health Disparities" keeps you informed in valuable insights and data on racial and ethnic health inequities in the US through comprehensive reports covering the latest news, research, and policy developments related to disparities in health conditions, access to care, and social determinants of health.

The Cross-Cultural Health Care Program (XCULTURE) provides a comprehensive collection of "**Language Access Resources**" to help healthcare organizations overcome language barriers and promote effective communication with patients from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Health Info Translations has over 2,800 free, easy-to-read health education materials translated in 15+ languages to promote wellness for populations who may not speak English. These carefully translated resources cover topics like chronic diseases, nutrition, and childcare and are an invaluable resource for communicating vital health information to diverse communities.

New Environmental Risk Score Tool: the Community Commons Data Platform now offers an Environmental Risk Score metric to help assess environmental health hazards in communities across the United States.



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