Working for Social Justice: Transforming Public Health Practice to Achieve Health Equity

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Outline

- Health Equity Framework
- Internal Capacity Building Strategies
  - Strategic Plan for Health Equity
  - Leadership Development Programs
  - PH 101
  - Institutional Racism dialogues
- Lessons learned
10 Things to know about Health*

- Health is more than health care
- Health is tied to distribution of resources
- Racism imposes an added burden
- The choices we make are shaped by choices we have
- High demand + low control = chronic stress
- Chronic stress can be deadly
- Inequality – economic and political is bad for health
- Social Policy is health policy
- Health inequities are not natural
- We all pay the price for poor health

*Unnatural Causes
“Health inequities are differences in health status and mortality rates across population groups that are systemic, avoidable, unfair, and unjust.”

-Margaret Whitehead
Life Expectancy at Birth, Oakland Flats & Hills, 2003-2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Oakland Flats</th>
<th>Oakland Hills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Races</td>
<td>76.5</td>
<td>82.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AfrAmer</td>
<td>70.5</td>
<td>77.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>84.2</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>86.2</td>
<td>85.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>76.6</td>
<td>82.3</td>
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How is the ACPHD Moving Upstream?

- Community Capacity Building/youth development
- Local Policy agenda
- Internal Capacity Building
Community Capacity Building/Empowerment

“Aims to strengthen characteristics of communities to plan, develop, implement & maintain effective community programs that positively affect broader community conditions that determine health and well being”

-adapted from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation
Community Capacity Building
Place-based

Build social, economic and political power in communities to advocate for equal distribution of resources.

Goals:

- Win concrete improvements in residents' lives
- Build skills of residents to speak & act effectively on their behalf
- Engage residents to influence decisions made by those in power
- Build strong local neighborhood groups that can mobilize community for action
Create local policy agenda targeting the social determinants of health in order to inform decision making and catalyze all civic players and residents into action.

- Understanding *historical forces*
- *Working across multiple sectors* of government and society
- *Meaningful public participation*
- *Strengthen the social fabric of neighborhoods*
Internal Capacity Building Goals

- Improve practice to eradicate health inequities
- Ensure staff understanding of public health
- Create a shared vision and unified direction for health equity
- Develop present and future leaders
- Raise staff awareness and commitment towards a common goal
Internal Capacity Building Activities

- Sharing the vision
- Leadership and Professional Development Programs
- PH 101 staff training
- Institutional Racism discussions
- Strategic Plan focused on Social Justice
Social Justice

- **Social justice** demands an equitable distribution of collective goods, institutional resources (e.g. social wealth), and life course opportunities.

- **Social justice** calls for democracy—the empowerment of all social members along with democratic and transparent structures to forward social goals.

-National Association of County and City Health Officials
Leadership and Professional Development

ACPHD
- Strategic planning
  - PH 101
  - Social justice dialogues

AC Training Center
- 360 evaluation
- Leadership development

Center for Health Leadership and Practice
- Mentorship program

Center Strategic Facilitation
- Technology of Participation (ToP)

Center for Public Health Practice at UCB
- Negotiation training
- Financial training
- Risk communication training
Leadership Development and Succession Planning

Goal:
Ensure current and future leaders are prepared with knowledge, tools and skills for challenges they will face in guiding the ACPHD towards providing the most effective and highest quality public health programs and services to Alameda County residents.
Management Development Program

- Senior managers
- Selection by Division Directors
- Participated in strategic planning
Leadership Development Fellows

- Eligibility - all staff
- Selection characteristics
- Participate in Strategic planning
- One year +
- Trainings
Leadership Development Fellows

Leadership Fellows Program

Social Justice Dialogues - Ingham Cty, MI

- Institutional racism
- Gender exploitation & discrimination
- Class exploitation
Social Justice Dialogues

- Dialogue process: A facilitated process designed to elicit, gather, and synthesize the collective wisdom of a group of people in answering a specific question, through the broadest possible participation and achieving the broadest possible ownership of the resulting decisions.

-from the Ingham County Health Department, MI
Focus Questions

Institutional Racism
• As an organization, what do we need to do to eliminate *institutional racism* as a root cause of health inequity?

SES and Class Exploitation
• As an organization, what do we need to do to eliminate *SES and class exploitation* as a root cause of health inequity?

Gender Discrimination and Exploitation
• As an organization, what do we need to do to eliminate *gender discrimination and exploitation* as a root cause of health inequity?
**Why Public Health 101?**

- Ensure that all staff have an understanding of the past, present and future of Public Health
- Prepare ACPHD to address ongoing challenges
- Ensure that ACPHD staff have common language and understanding of the issues Public Health is facing
- Engage all ACPHD staff in developing strategies to address health inequities
- Continue improving the quality of services provided to Alameda County residents
Public Health 101

Module 1:
PH History; Public Health System Core Functions & 10 Essential Services

Module 2:
Cultural Competency and Cultural Humility

Module 3:
Undoing Racism

Module 4:
Health Status/Inequities Social Determinants of Health

Module 5:
Community Capacity Building
Public Health 101

- **Module 1**: History of Public Health and PH-related Social Justice efforts

- **Module 2**: Core Functions and 10 Essential Services
Module 2: Cultural Competency, Cultural Humility, and Undoing Racism

Example of Cultural Competency Exercises:

How do we experience culture?

In what ways have you seen cultural competency practiced in the PHD?
Module III: Undoing Racism

What is this thing called race?

RACE

the power of an illusion

Courtesy of California Newsreel
Example of Undoing Racism Exercise:

Everyone turn to one person next to you. Think back to the very first time that you became aware of the concept of “race.” Try to remember where you were and what you felt. Tell your partner about this experience.
Institutional Racism discussions

- Leadership, senior managers, leadership and management fellows ~ 100 people
- CAPE goal: to undo racism at individual, interpersonal and institutional levels to achieve social justice by:
  - Raising consciousness
  - Improving practice
  - Empowering communities
Insensitive Racism
Manager's Retreat

Racism Dialogues for Staff and Community
- Show the 3 films to all new hires
- Share with school-age kids

Effect Legislation Process to Address Racism
- Be part of the legislative process to change the current laws which perpetuate racism

Improve Hiring Process
- Strive for staff diversity to match county diversity
- Speed up hiring process to allow more people ability to access jobs

Examine Policies for Racism
- Examine our policies to see if they perpetuate racism
Module 5: Community Capacity Building

“Strengthen characteristics of communities to plan, develop, implement, & maintain effective community programs that positively affect broader community conditions that determine health and well being.”

-adapted from the Kellogg Foundation
Why Build Community Capacity?

- Commitment to eliminate health disparities
- Upstream public health practice addresses root causes
- Partnership with community residents ensures sustainability of efforts
Example of Community Capacity Building Exercise:

### Approaches to Working in the Community: A Spectrum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question:</th>
<th>TRADITIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY:</th>
<th>COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Give a person a fish...</td>
<td>Teach a person to fish ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What aspect of people does this type of service address?</td>
<td>Addresses the <em>problems</em> that people have</td>
<td>Focuses on the <em>assets &amp; abilities</em> that people have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is the unit of service for this type of service?</td>
<td>Focuses on the needs of <em>individuals</em></td>
<td>Addresses issues of the <em>community</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who determines what needs should be addressed?</td>
<td>Clients’ <em>needs are identified by the service-providing institution</em></td>
<td><em>Issues of the community are identified by the members</em></td>
</tr>
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Internal Capacity Building: Participatory Strategic Plan on Health Equity

Goal: Create strategic plan that addresses root causes of health inequity in Alameda County.
Strategic Planning Process

- Two-year process
- Focus on reducing health inequities
- Uses a social justice framework
- Looks 5 years into the future
## Broad Array of Stakeholders

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Internal</th>
<th>External</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Development Fellows</td>
<td>Community residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Team</td>
<td>Board of Supervisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>CBO’s and other community partners</td>
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<tr>
<td>All-Staff</td>
<td>AC Public Health Commission</td>
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Strategic Plan: Data Collection

- All-staff survey
- Social Justice dialogues
- Group discussions - staff, the PH Commission, youth
- Interviews with the Board of Supervisors and key stakeholders
- Community Forums
External Data Collection

- 6 English-speaking forums in 5 supervisorial districts (237 participants)
- 1 forum in Spanish (44 participants)
- Key Informant Interviews (10 with Board of Supervisors and agency directors)
Internal Data Collection

- Social Justice Dialogues (n=20); Group Discussions (n=50)
  - Institutional Racism
  - Gender and Class Exploitation
  - SWOT

- All-Staff Survey
  - Vision
  - Analysis of Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)
  - Recommendations

All-Staff Survey was filled out by 340 staff (About 57%)
Strategic Planning Retreats

- Reviewed findings
- Visioning & consensus building workshop to create strategic directions & goals
Strategic Directions

1. Transforming our organizational culture and aligning our daily work to achieve health equity.

2. Enhancing Public Health communications internally and externally.

3. Ensuring organizational accountability through measurable outcomes and community involvement.
Strategic Directions (cont)

4. Supporting the development of a productive, creative, and accountable workforce.

5. Advocating for policies that address social conditions impacting health.

6. Cultivating and expanding partnerships that are community-driven and innovative.
Strategic Plan: Next Steps

- Share strategic goals with all staff/community
- Divisions level dialogues and work plans
- Use Unnatural Causes as tool
- Create Department wide objectives
- Monitoring and evaluation – Results Based Accountability model
Lessons Learned

- Small steps
- Interpersonal and institutional “isms” need to be addressed
- Conflicts will occur
- Building staff capacity is essential
Changes

- Increased organizational infrastructure and support for “isms” and health equity work
  - Strategic Plan
  - Leadership with a social justice perspective

- Increased:
  - Understanding of cumulative historical impacts
  - Ability to dialogue using common language

- Increased support and commitment
  - Residents, leadership, staff, Board of Supervisors

- Increased activities throughout the department
Contact Information

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Alameda County Public Health Department

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