Fostering Community Health
A Preventive Approach to Reducing Disparities in Health and Safety

Health Disparities

Differences in the incidence, prevalence, mortality, and burden of diseases and other adverse health conditions that exist among specific populations.

National Institutes of Health

What Leads to the Greatest Disparities?

- poverty
- location
- ethnicity
The same injuries and illnesses only more so

The Trajectory of Health Disparities

- Root Factors
- Screening/Diagnosis
- Treatment

Prevention
Medical Care Alone Cannot Reduce Disparities

- Not the primary determinant of health
- Treats one person at a time
- Often comes late; can’t always restore health

Root Factors are Pathways to Environmental & Behavioral Factors

Root Factors: Poverty, Discrimination, Oppression

Pathways
Causes of Death

- Heart Disease
- Cancer
- Stroke
- Diabetes
- Injuries & Violence

Let’s take a step back... Actual Causes of Death

Making Links to Actual Causes of Death

- Diet & Activity Patterns
- Tobacco
- Alcohol & Drugs

Heart Disease
Cancer
Stroke
Diabetes
Injuries & Violence
“It is unreasonable to expect that people will change their behavior easily when so many forces in the social, cultural, and physical environment conspire against such change.”

Institute of Medicine
Let’s take another step back...

Elements of Community Health

- Equitable Opportunity
- Place
- People

Community Health Factors

- Racial justice
- Jobs & local ownership
- Education
Community Health Factors

PEOPLE
- Social Networks & trust
- Participation & willingness to act for the common good
- Acceptable behaviors & attitudes

PLACE
- Getting around
- Housing
- Look, feel & safety
- Air, water, soil
- What’s sold & how it’s promoted
- Arts & culture
- Parks & open space

Prevention Strengthens Treatment Outcomes

- Healthy eating and activity habits are critical for prevention and disease management.
- Reliable, affordable, and accessible transportation system transports people to screening and treatment appointments.
- Literacy improves the ability to read and understand prescription labels.
- Strong social networks are associated with people looking out for each other and taking care of each other during treatment and recovery.
“The determinants of health are beyond the capacity of any one practitioner or discipline to manage… We must collaborate to survive, as disciplines and as professionals attempting to help our communities and each other.”

–Mitchel and Crittenden,
Washington Public Health Fall 2000