

Health Equity Strategy and Innovation Division

MISSION AND CORE FUNCTIONS

Overview

Minnesota is consistently ranked among the healthiest states in the nation; but our state is also home to some of the greatest health inequities in the country. People of color, American Indians, people with disabilities, people living in rural areas, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and others face barriers that are often rooted in decades of systemic inequities.

The Health Equity Strategy and Innovation Division works to address differences in health status that are systemic, avoidable, unfair, and unjust. We work across MDH and with community partners to advance health equity to ensure all communities are thriving and have what they need to be healthy.



Our mission

Our mission is to **connect, strengthen, and amplify** health equity efforts within MDH and across the state of Minnesota.



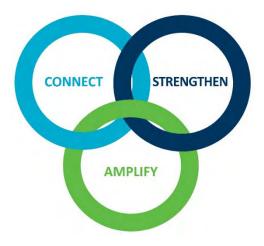
We are a **network hub** – leading, connecting, and strengthening networks of health equity leaders and partners across MDH and Minnesota communities.



We provide **strategic leadership** in advancing health equity and strengthen policies and systems to eliminate inequities.



We **amplify the work of communities** most impacted by health inequities and support them to drive their own solutions.



Our core functions

We live out our mission through four core functions. These core functions provide leadership for improving relationships and partnerships, strengthening capacity for advancing health equity, and embedding health equity principles and practices throughout the agency.

Community engagement and partnership



We use a regional and relational approach to connect partners, strengthen community capacity, and amplify the interconnected work of communities. We also work to strengthen MDH capacity for authentic community engagement.

This work includes:

- Minnesota Health Equity Networks
- Equity-centered training and technical assistance
- Ongoing community engagement and relationship-building
- COVID-19 Community Coordinator partnerships (through June 2026)

Equitable grantmaking and capacity strengthening



We amplify community-driven strategies to address health inequities, strengthen grantee capacity, and connect grantees to resources and support. We also strengthen MDH grantmaking policies and systems. This work includes:

- Eliminating Health Disparities Initiative (EHDI) grants
- Community Solutions for Healthy Child Development grants and community council
- Customized grantee support and technical assistance
- Internal systems change to advance compliance-driven, equitable grantmaking

Policy and systems change



We work with partners across the agency to transform policies and systems that perpetuate health inequities. This includes policy and budget development and strategic planning, as well as initiatives such as:

- Coordination of the Health Equity Advisory and Leadership (HEAL) Council
- Implementation of the Minnesota Olmstead Plan to advance disability equity
- Equity review of agency policies and practices

Health equity communications



We connect staff and community partners to strengthen relationships and build trust, strengthen capacity to advance health equity through resources and information, and amplify the voices and work of communities.

- Equity-centered communication technical assistance
- Health equity webpages, newsletter, and internal and external communications
- Strategic communications planning and implementation

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