

Healthcare Facilities and Delivery

Improving and expanding access to care

To ensure all people can pursue their best health, it is important that people can obtain high-quality care when and where they need it. Delivering high-quality care is essential for building community-centered healthcare delivery systems that close healthcare gaps and make services more accessible, responsible, and tailored to the specific needs of diverse and rural communities.

Priority Actions to Improve Access to Care

Delivering equitable high-quality healthcare services requires increasing access to preventative, primary, and specialty healthcare services, while addressing the unique needs of historically underserved populations.

Address Social Determinants of Health: It is vital that healthcare decision makers understand how health is influenced by factors other than medical treatment to ensure that healthcare facilities and delivery systems recognize the value of investing in solutions that address social determinants of health.

- Collaborate with the community to solicit and gather input from key stakeholder groups in the needs assessment and implementation processes.
- Foster partnerships between healthcare facilities and local government agencies to improve housing conditions and access to healthy food options for low-income communities.
- Encourage healthcare facilities and delivery system leaders to collaborate with local elected officials and community advocates to implement the CDC's [Health in All Policies](#) (HiAP) approach, integrating health considerations into policymaking across various sectors like transportation and education to improve community health.
- Advance investments in affordable housing through the collaboration of community leaders, organizations, and local elected officials.

Expand Inclusive and Accountable Board Governance: Board governance in healthcare facilities and delivery systems plays a vital role in promoting health equity, fostering a more equitable approach to developing policies and practices and bridging service gaps.

- Represent the diversity of the communities served to ensure their perspective and needs are considered when making decisions about healthcare policies and services.
- Set strategic goals and objectives that prioritize equitable care by developing policies and programs targeting health disparities and social determinants of health.
- Ensure healthcare providers are trained in cultural competence and implicit bias to promote equitable care for all patients.
- Regularly monitor, measure, and evaluate the impact of healthcare policies and services on health outcomes for different populations and make relevant adjustments for improvement.

Deliver High-Quality and Equitable Care: Equitable healthcare delivery ensures that all individuals have access to healthcare services and resources, regardless of their physical, financial, or geographical limitations.

- Promote cultural humility and competence among healthcare facility staff through targeted training.
- Provide transportation support and accommodation for individuals with disabilities.
- Expand language access via interpreters, multilingual materials, and culturally sensitive communication methods.

- Invest in expanding broadband infrastructure and partner with local officials to ensure high-speed internet access and affordable digital literacy programs for underserved and marginalized communities
- Promote the efficient utilization of telehealth services to increase patient adherence.
- Leverage AI-powered telehealth platforms to enable clinicians to streamline workflows, enhance collaboration, and improve patient care for vulnerable populations.
- Deploy mobile diagnostic tools, such as mobile labs, promoting the transformation of the system to a patient-centered, value-based model.
- Utilize community data to identify disparities in care and implement relevant interventions.
- Engage patients in shared decision-making, offer flexible scheduling, and support informed choices to expand access.

Support Healthcare Provider Wellness: Healthcare provider burnout marked by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced sense of personal accomplishment, can lead to workforce shortages that disproportionately impact marginalized communities. This necessitates action to promote health equity and prevent provider burnout.

- Provide resources and support for healthcare providers working in underserved communities, such as team-based care, mindfulness training, and promoting work-life integration.
- Prepare physicians and providers for stress management and burnout prevention in early stages of training such as medical school or residency.
- Maintain manageable patient-to-provider ratios to ensure healthcare providers can deliver quality care without being overwhelmed, reducing burnout and improving patient outcomes.

Key Community Resources*

- Read about the National Association of Community Health Center's Protocol for Responding to and Assessing Patient Assets, Risks, and Experiences, [PRAPARE](#), which is a social needs screening tool for community health center patients.
- Learn about [OASIS](#), a framework by which screening and referral of social determinant interventions may impact outcomes in the healthcare setting.
- Check out [Health Equity in Healthy People 2030](#), which outlines issues in health equity and provides diverse approaches.
- Access more information about Boston's interdisciplinary Health in All Policies Task Force [here](#), which aims to better equip City departments to address racial justice and health equity in their sectors.
- Consider the use of AI-powered telehealth platforms, such as [ThinkAndor®](#), which may enable clinicians to streamline workflows, enhance care collaboration, and improve patient care for vulnerable populations.
- See [The American Medical Association \(AMA\) AMA Steps Forward® Practice Innovation Strategies](#), which offers evidence-based approaches to helping understand and address physician burnout in health systems.

To learn more about drivers of inequity and practical solutions, go to [An Action Guide to Disrupt Inequitable Health Outcomes](#).