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ADVANCING HEALTH EQUITY



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The Alliance of Community Health Plans (ACHP) is committed to improving health equity by reducing barriers in the health care system.

## An Integrated Approach

Recognizing that health inequities result from a complex combination of clinical, economic, environmental, and other social drivers, ACHP developed an actionable framework that deploys equity-focused interventions at three distinct levels or “action loops”.

**Individual Level:** Developing strategies to make an impact on the problem or issue affecting individuals, leveraging the immediate sphere of influence.

**Community Level:** Working with trusted community partners to create targeted, local solutions that improve access to care and health outcomes.

**Systemic Level:** Collaborating with partners to effectuate change in culture, economics, and the regulatory environment to address root causes of structural barriers in order to create sustainable change.



Each action loop is distinct but interconnected. Effective action on one level will require addressing barriers across the other two levels. Pursuing action across all three levels offers the strongest opportunity for health organizations to make a broad impact. Central to the success of these efforts across ACHP’s membership is the local, community-driven approach, where health plans serve as a connector between the most vulnerable patients and available services.

## Fostering a More Equitable Health Care System

**Vision.** Building on the “Action Loops” framework, ACHP offers a four-part policy focused strategy to foster a more equitable health care system. The strategy establishes industry-wide data collection standards; prioritizes equity in federal health programs; proposes investments in public programs; and promotes strong partnerships. Through the implementation of this strategy, we will measure success in actionable policy outcomes, development of educational materials, and greater interagency collaboration.

## Strategies for Success



### ***Establishing industry-wide data collection standards.***

As our health care system moves towards value, it must collectively develop and consistently use standardized data elements to inform health equity assessments and performance measures.

#### **ACHP supports:**

- Federal and state governments improving quality measurement surveys to assess health literacy and cultural competency to better serve diverse populations;
- Establishing a Federally Recognized Coordinating Entity to improve health equity data standards and data collection methods, with an emphasis on disaggregated race, ethnicity, age and disability data;
- Partnering with federal entities and other stakeholders to develop national standards and guidance for capturing, documenting, and using data related to individual social needs;
- Advancing opportunities to create and strengthen data exchanges between payers, providers, and community and social services to promote trusted pathways to services.



### ***Prioritizing health equity in federal programs.***

Health equity is impacted by social drivers, such as food, housing, education, and transportation, and requires a multifaceted response. Many federal agencies and private sector entities are well-positioned to make an impact.

#### **ACHP supports:**

- Expanding federal grant-making criteria to align health-related initiatives across federal entities;
- Incorporating social drivers of health in community-reviewed and endorsed risk-adjustment models;
- Partnering with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) to develop models of best practices for Medicare Advantage, Medicaid managed care, and other qualified health plans to address disparities within populations;
- Facilitating dialogue between public and private stakeholders to identify disparities and develop target solutions;
- Advancing legislation that aligns federal agencies to better address social drivers of health.



### ***Promoting strong partnerships.***

ACHP members will use their unique community, provider-aligned perspective to forge partnerships across health care and other sectors aimed at addressing health disparities.

#### **ACHP supports:**

- Sharing resources and lessons learned with our member plans to advance education and health literacy;
- Leading training on the value of collaboration, across multiple sectors, in achieving equity.



**Securing new investments in federal and state programs.**

Initiatives that encourage care integration, promote Programs for All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE), and improve dual-eligible Special Needs Plans (SNPs) can help to improve health equity.

**ACHP supports:**

- Incentivizing states to fully integrate care for programs that predominately serve dual-eligible patients;
- Supporting state-based efforts through grants, technical assistance and shared savings;
- Advocating for new federal funding and expanded eligibility for Medicaid’s home and community-based programs to meet the critical needs of individuals with the services that support daily living;
- Providing Medicare Advantage with additional flexibility and the full quality bonus to provide services to patients with chronic conditions and those who have unmet social needs;
- Distinguishing Medicare Advantage programs offering innovative benefit designs to manage chronic conditions through copay-only formulary designs or special supplemental benefits for the chronically ill.

**Conclusion**

ACHP member health plans embody a community-driven ethos, with an awareness of challenges impacting the communities they serve. The above strategies serve as a framework to leverage ACHP member companies’ provider-aligned model to best identify health disparities and develop solutions to improve health inequities. Join us in our efforts to set standards, establish vital partnerships and promote health equity across federal programs, as we work towards creating a more equitable health care system that works for all.

**ABOUT ACHP**

The Alliance of Community Health Plans (ACHP) represents the nation’s top-performing nonprofit health plans to improve affordability and outcomes in the health care system. ACHP member companies are provider-aligned health organizations that

provide high-quality coverage and care to tens of millions of Americans. They are leading the industry in practical, proven reforms around primary care delivery, value-based payment and data-driven systems improvement.

***i* Want to know more?**

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