TRIBAL HEALTH EQUITY: LESSONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Carrie Field, Policy Analyst
National Indian Health Board
12:10 pm  **Tribal Health Equity: Lessons and Opportunities**  
Carrie Field, Policy Analyst, National Indian Health Board

12:20  **Importance of Indigenous Knowledge in Achieving Health Equity**  
Dr. Alicia Mousseau, Vice-President of the Oglala Sioux Tribe

12:30  **Health Equity on a National Level**  
Jim Roberts, Senior Executive Liaison, Intergovernmental Affairs, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

12:40  **World Café Breakout Sessions**  
- Round 1 of World Café (25 min)  
- Round 2 of World Café (25 min)  
- Round 3 of World Café (25 min)

2:15 – 3:00  **Town Hall Discussion**  
Moderated by Carrie Field and Stacy Bohlen

**TODAY’S AGENDA**
OVERARCHING GOAL: FRAME THE NATIONAL CONVERSATION AROUND HEALTH EQUITY FOR INDIAN COUNTRY

What does health equity mean for Indian Country?

Building consensus around a vision for AI/AN health equity

“Health equity means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible.

This requires removing obstacles to health such as poverty, discrimination, and their consequences - including powerlessness and lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education and housing, safe environments, and health care.”

– Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
RECURRING THEMES

- Address injustices
- Commitment to broad spectrum action
- Traditional values
- Federal trust responsibility
- Tribal Sovereignty
Question:

- Can **public health accreditation** be a vehicle to achieve health equity in Tribal communities?

Methods:

- **Focus groups and surveys** with Tribes, Area Indian Health Boards, and Tribal Epidemiology Centers to provide input on health equity and social determinants of health in Tribes.
RESULTS OF NIHB/OMH SCAN

Opportunities

- Cross-jurisdictional relationships
- Capacity building for Tribes
- Direct, flexible funding to Tribes

Challenges

- Insufficient resources (staff, training, facilities, culturally relevant resources, TA etc)
- Lack of understanding of role of social determinants of health
- Largest barrier: lack of access to quality data
Need for **community specific strategies** to advance health equity in Tribal communities

Need for each Tribal **community to define** what health equity means for them

Current work was found to be aimed at improving health and wellness in Tribal communities more generally rather than a health equity focus.

**Three aspects unique to Tribal communities** that can serve to advance health equity: **traditional values, the federal trust responsibility, and Tribal sovereignty.**
“Recapture, reinvigorate, reflower our indigenous identities to create an equitable future.”
2021 NTHC HEALTH EQUITY LISTENING SESSION

- History Leads to Health Disparities
- Cultural Competence and Holistic Approach Necessary
- Funding and Data needs
- Role of Social Determinants
GOOD HEALTH BEGINS IN THE PLACES WHERE WE LIVE, LEARN, WORK AND PLAY.

Social Determinants of Health:
- Health Care
- Access and Quality
- Education
- Economic Stability
- Neighborhood and Built Environment
- Social and Community Context
NATIVE DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

- Involuntary assimilation
- Indigenous knowledge & culture
- Indigenous languages
- Forced relocation from ancestral lands
- Traditional values
- Tribal justice systems
- Physical and cultural genocide
- Boarding schools
- Unique political status as tribal citizens
- Federal Indian Policy
- Persecution of traditional ways of life, spiritual practices, and language
- Spiritual & faith-based practices
Today’s Objectives

1. Identify historical and current drivers of health inequities for AI/AN

2. Highlight how traditional values and Indigenous ways of knowing show us a path forward for health equity

3. Explore the roles of Tribal Sovereignty and the federal trust responsibility in shaping health equity for AI/AN
HEALTH EQUITY ON A NATIONAL LEVEL

Jim Roberts
Senior Executive Liaison, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
Executive Order On Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government

JANUARY 20, 2021 • PRESIDENTIAL ACTIONS
TTAG Health Equity Subcommittee

- CMS has made health equity a guiding priority for the agency.
- New CMS Framework for Health Equity
- Concerned about the framework's relevance to Indian Country
- Health Equity Subcommittee will create a report to CMS with specific recommendations to inform their health equity plan to be relevant and meaningful for American Indians and Alaska Natives.
INEQUALITIES

HEALTH

DRIVERS OF
Structural discrimination

- Public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and norms
- Examples:
  - Chronic underfunding of IHS
  - Inaccurate historical information taught in schools
Income inequality and poverty

- Who can access and afford what they need lead healthy & fulfilling lives?
- Investment in communities
- Individuals & families
Disparities in Opportunity

- Early childhood
- Education
- Jobs

INEQUALITIES OF HEALTH

DRIVERS OF
Disparities in political power

- Who has a voice to make their problems visible?
- Who has the power to influence the priorities of decision makers?
Governance that limits meaningful participation

- Who has decision making power?
- Who is included in decision making processes?
- How can we leverage governance to promote health equity?
WORLD CAFÉ BREAKOUT SESSIONS

- Structural discrimination
- Income inequality and poverty
- Disparities in opportunity
- Disparities in political power
- Governance that limits meaningful participation

- 3 Rounds
- 25 Minutes per round
- 5 Topics

Every round, you will enter a new breakout room to discuss a new topic.
WHAT'S NEXT?

Centering Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous identity: the path to achieving health equity

May 13: World Café
- Drivers of health inequities in Indian Country
- What are the key questions?

Summer: Key Informant Interviews
- What does an AI/AN framing of health equity look like?
- Current health equity work in Indian Country

August 16: Tribal Health Equity Summit
- Role of data
- How federal agencies can address barriers to AI/AN health equity

Sept: NTHC
- Innovative Tribal approaches to addressing health equity