What is health?

“Health is a state of complete physical, social and mental well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”

World Health Organization 1948
Public Health

“Public health is what we, as a society, do collectively to assure the conditions in which (all) people can be healthy.”

Institute of Medicine (1988), Future of Public Health
Factors that determine health

- Genes and Biology, 10%
- Physical Environment, 10%
- Clinical Care, 10%
- Health Behaviors, 30%
- Social and Economic Factors, 40%

Necessary conditions for health

- Peace
- Shelter
- Education
- Food
- Income
- Stable eco-system
- Sustainable resources
- Social justice and equity

Social Determinants of Health

External environments and conditions that contribute to health or lack of health.
Cliff Analogy

Social Determinants Of Health

Primary Prevention

Secondary Prevention (safety net programs)

Tertiary Prevention (medical care)
Health Equity

Attainment of the highest level of health possible for all people. Achieving health equity requires valuing everyone with focused and ongoing societal efforts to address avoidable inequalities, historical and contemporary injustices, and the elimination of health disparities and health care disparities.
EQUALITY

EQUITY
Health Inequity

Health Inequity—Differences in health status between more and less socially and economically advantaged groups, caused by systematic differences in social conditions and processes that effectively determine health. Health inequities are avoidable, unjust, and therefore actionable.
Structural inequities

- Structures or systems of society — such as finance, housing, transportation, education, social opportunities, etc. — that are structured in such a way that they benefit one population unfairly (whether intended or not).
Who’s affected by structural inequities in Massachusetts

- American Indians
- African Americans
- Children
- Persons with mental health challenges
- LGBTQ
- Immigrants
- Refugees
- Asian-Pacific Islanders
- Hispanics/Latinos
- Women
- Persons with disabilities
- And more...
Health equity and structural racism:

- Structural racism is the normalization of an array of dynamics — historical, cultural, institutional and interpersonal — that routinely advantage white people while producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for people of color and American Indians.
Health inequities in Massachusetts are significant and persistent, especially by race:

In the United States, an African American man dies 7 years earlier than a white man.
Iheanyi Okoroafor

The Black man in the United States of America, is he an endangered species?

The plight of Black men and boys in America

BLACK MEN'S HEALTH

There are approximately 28 million Black men in the United States. Black men suffer from higher rates of mental and physical health problems compared to their white counterparts.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Black men have higher death rates and are more likely to die of heart disease.
- Black men are more likely to die of cancer.
- Black men are more likely to die of stroke.

Source: National Center for Health Statistics

Black Men Earn Less on the Dollar Than Male Workers of Other Races

On average, Black men in the U.S. earn 87 cents for every dollar earned by white men, based on data from a sample of 1.8 million employees surveyed between January 2017 and February 2019.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Dollar for Every Dollar Earned by White Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black men</td>
<td>$0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American men</td>
<td>$0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic men</td>
<td>$0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander men</td>
<td>$0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White men</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian men</td>
<td>$1.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: PayScale
If we are not all healthy together, none of us is as healthy as we could be.
Public Health

“Public health is what we, as a society, do collectively to assure the conditions in which (all) people can be healthy.”

Institute of Medicine (1988), Future of Public Health
A community effort

• Health – and health equity - are created in the community by people working together to create just economic, social and environmental conditions that promote health.
Everyone needs:

• Access to economic and educational opportunities (*high school graduation*, *access to jobs*, *transportation*, etc.)...

• The capacity to make decisions and effect change for ourselves, our families and our communities (*empowerment of women*, *community self-governance*, *opportunities for civic participation*, etc.)...
Everyone needs (cont’d)...

• Social and environmental safety in the places we live, learn, work, worship and play (housing conditions, crime rates, school climate, social norms and attitudes, etc.) and

• Culturally-competent and appropriate services when the need arises (access to health care, mental health care, financial assistance, etc.)
What needs to be done

• Achieving health equity and eliminating health disparities requires valuing everyone and making intentional, consistent efforts to address avoidable systematic inequalities, historical and contemporary injustices.
To create change

- *Public understanding* – of what creates health

- *Public agenda* – create expectation that we can and will address these conditions

- *Public/political will* – to make tough choices-accountability for policies, programs
Approach

• Continue to support work to factor in health in all policies
• Building the capacity of staff to understand and address health equity
  • Breaking down silos and asking questions
  • Thinking creatively on funding
    • Health equity work does not fit the traditional public health funding model
• Collaborating
  • Expanding our collaborative work to address health equity
  • Developing new relationship in the community
  • Strengthening existing relationships
  • Sharing data on health equity
  • Acknowledging solution will be collaboratively developed and implemented
• Being patient
You must be the change you wish to see in the world. Ghandi