

## **What are “Health Equity” and “Social Determinants of Health?”**

### **Health Disparities or Inequities**

Health disparities or inequities are types of unfair health differences closely linked with social, economic or environmental disadvantages that adversely affect groups of people.

### **Health Equity**

Those differences in health that can be traced to unequal economic and social conditions and are systemic and avoidable—and so are essentially unfair.

Health equity is the principle underlying a commitment to reduce—and ultimately, eliminate disparities in health, including social determinants. Pursuing health equity means striving for the highest possible standards of health for all people...and giving special attention to the needs of those at greatest risk of poor health, based on social conditions. –Source: Braveman, P. Public Health Reports (2014, Jan-Feb).

Health Equity is the assurance of the conditions for optimal health for all people. –Source: Camara Jones

Health equity is achieved when every person has the opportunity to "attain his or her full health potential" and no one is "disadvantaged from achieving this potential because of social position or other socially determined circumstances." –Source: *National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (NCCDPHP)*

### **Health Inequities / Health Disparities**

Health inequities are differences in health status and mortality rates across population groups that are systemic, avoidable, unfair, and unjust. –Source: Margaret Whitehead

Health disparities or inequities are those health differences by racial/ethnic group, relation, social economic status, gender, age, mental health, cognitive, sensory, or physical disability, sexual orientation or gender identity, geographic location, or other characteristics historically linked to discrimination or exclusion.

### **Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) / Social Conditions**

Social Determinants of Health (sometimes referred to as social conditions) are the aspects of the environment in which people are born, grow up, live, work, and age, as well as the systems put in place to deal with illness. These aspects are shaped by a wider set of forces such as historical decisions, economics, social policies, and politics, race/ethnicity, socio-economic status and access to opportunities.

Healthcare is only a small part of what REALLY affects our health. The choices we make, our behavior, has a large impact on our health. BUT, the places where we live, work, and play—our social conditions— affect the choices we make. – Source: New Mexico Health Equity Working Group