

OFFICE OF HEALTH EQUITY STRATEGIC PLAN, 2015 – 2018 YEAR 1 ACCOMPLISHMENTS (10/1/15 – 9/30/16)

Goal 1: Develop a common language that all DPH employees and partners can use to communicate about health equity and apply an equity lens in their daily work.

Objective 1.1 – Develop an institutional DPH-wide glossary.

- **Accomplishment:** A staff workgroup met over six months in 2016, and developed a glossary of key terms. The Glossary was sent to all DPH for comment, and then finalized in June, 2016. It is now posted on the DPH Intranet and the Office of Health Equity (OHE) webpage – www.ct.gov/dph/healthequity – as part of the “Health Equity Toolkit.”

Objective 1.2 – Develop a strategy to communicate the culture of health equity at DPH.

- **Accomplishment:** Talking points/messages about the meaning of health equity were established. These messages were then distributed via email to ALL DPH and to our Multicultural Health Listserv Network as part of four weekly “Minority Health Month” (April 2016) messages.
- **Accomplishment:** OHE held a two-day training workshop in May, 2016 for 31 DPH staff and partners on “communicating the culture of health equity.” The workshop was conducted by CommonHealth ACTION Consultants. A communications strategy and action steps were developed. Several action steps have been taken.
- **Accomplishment:** The *DPH Health Equity Policy* was established in 2015, updated in 2016, and then approved by Commissioner Pino in August, 2016 as the *DPH Health Equity Policy and Procedures*. This document defines health equity, identifies DPH priority populations, and 10 essential public health services with special attention to the needs of vulnerable or “priority” populations. The policy is posted on the DPH Intranet and [OHE webpage](#).

Goal 2: Use data effectively to plan, monitor, and measure the equity impact of DPH policies and programs, with a specific focus on the social determinants of health.

Objective 2.1 – Develop best practices in measuring the equity impact of DPH policies and programs.

- **Accomplishment:** A two-page “Best Practices” document was developed. Comments from key DPH staff were incorporated. The document was finalized in May, 2016 and is now posted on the DPH Intranet and shared subdirectory.

Objective 2.2 – Institute an agency-wide guidance document on measuring the equity impact of DPH policies and programs.

- **Accomplishment:** The *Health Equity Impact of Legislation* Worksheet was developed, and then used by DPH staff reviewing CT legislation during the 2016 legislative session. An evaluation of this worksheet tool was conducted in July - August 2016. The tool has been revised as a result of the evaluation findings. DPH staff training on using the tool is planned for November 2016. The document is now posted on the DPH Intranet and shared subdirectory.
- **Accomplishment:** The *Health Equity Planning Guide* was developed, and then tested with DPH Chronic Disease and Environmental Health staff from February through May. The guide was finalized in September, 2016, and is now posted on the DPH Intranet and shared subdirectory.
- **Accomplishment:** A *Health Equity Grant Checklist* (for grant proposal reviews) was developed, and tested with Community, Family and Health Equity Section supervisors in August, 2016. The checklist was finalized in September, 2016, and is now posted on the DPH Intranet and shared subdirectory.
- The DPH Healthy Connecticut Performance Dashboard is being reorganized to include a series of health disparity/health equity performance measures. This work will be completed in 2017.

Objective 2.3 – Update and implement training on DPH’s data collection policy.

- **Accomplishment:** The Connecticut Department of Public Health Policy on Collecting Sociodemographic Data (2008) was revised and updated in 2016. It is currently under final review by DPH Deputy Commissioners. The web-based training module for the policy is under revision as well.

Goal 3: Continue implementing the National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care (CLAS Standards) to increase awareness and support for health equity.

Objective 3.1 – Develop a strategy with talking points about the connection between the CLAS Standards and health equity.

- **Accomplishment:** Talking points/messages about the connection between CLAS Standards and health equity were established. These messages were then distributed via email to ALL DPH and to our Multicultural Health Listserv Network as part of the weekly “Minority Health Month, April 2016” messages.

Objective 3.2 – Develop a language access policy.

Accomplishment: A DPH Language Access Policy was developed in consultation with lead staff throughout the agency, then finalized, and signed by Commissioner Mullen in August, 2015. It was later updated and signed by Commissioner Pino in August, 2016. It is posted on the [OHE webpage](#).

Objective 3.3 – Develop a language access plan.

- **Accomplishment:** A DPH Language Access Plan was developed in early 2016, and reviewed by lead agency staff in July, 2016. The draft Plan was finalized in October, 2016, and is posted on the DPH shared directory.

Goal 4: Engage in ongoing health equity training and education to build knowledge and skills among DPH staff and local partners.

Objective 4.1 – Work with the DPH Workforce Development Committee and Human Resources to develop an orientation module for new staff.

- **Accomplishment:** A Health Equity orientation module has been developed by OHE staff in collaboration with Workforce Development Committee and HR staff. It has been incorporated into the DPH On-boarding Orientation for new staff.

Objective 4.2 – Train all DPH staff on the Health Equity Toolkit and develop a plan for continuous learning.

- **Accomplishments:** A Health Equity Toolkit is available for all DPH staff on the DPH Intranet. The Toolkit contains relevant materials and resources on: 1) Health Equity Glossary; 2) the CLAS Standards; 3) Social Determinants of Health; 4) Data Collection Quality Improvement Standards; 5) Social Justice; 6) Policies; 7) Tools and Examples; and 8) Publications and Resources. The following web-based training modules have been developed by OHE staff and are available on TRAIN-CT: 1) *CLAS 101: An Introduction to the CLAS Standards*; and 2) *Using Language Interpretation Services: Why and How to Use a State-Approved Vendor*. Other ‘health equity’ training modules on the CLAS Standards, the DPH Data Collection Policy, and the social determinants of health are also available on TRAIN-CT: <https://ct.train.org/>

Objective 4.3 – Tailor and promote the CLAS Standards and Health Equity Toolkits among relevant partners.

- **Accomplishments:** A Health Equity Toolkit has been made available to Local Health Departments and other partners on the OHE webpage: www.ct.gov/dph/healthequity . Topics in the Toolkit include: a Health Equity Glossary; the CLAS Standards; Frequently Asked Questions about CLAS; DPH Language Identification Chart; Listing of DPH Translated Documents; Publications and Resources; and Social Justice. The Toolkit is under continual development, and new information will be made available periodically. Notices about the new Toolkit are being sent out to DPH staff and partners throughout the Fall, 2016.

Goal 5: Develop and maintain internal and external partnerships to build individual and organizational capacity to engage in equity-focused work.

Objective 5.1 – Create internal DPH recognition awards for staff members who exemplify and champion the culture of health equity.

- **Accomplishment:** In 2015, OHE staff established criteria for a “Health Equity Recognition Award,” and three DPH staff (Federico Amadeo, Nordia Grant, and Susan Hewes) were selected to receive this award based on their past contributions to the culture of health equity at DPH. Awards were presented at a DPH Town Hall Meeting in October 2015, at which Commissioner Mullen presided. Year 2 Awardees (Tracy Hung and Kevin Krusz) were selected in September 2016, and then announced in October 2016.

Objective 5.2 – Create DPH awards/designations related to health equity for external partners (e.g., Connecticut Health Equity Champion designation).

- **Accomplishment:** In 2016, OHE staff established a committee of staff and external partners to oversee the development of this award. The award will recognize a CT organization (or individual) that has demonstrated a commitment to health equity and taken steps to advance it in the community it serves. The committee has met three times in 2016, and draft criteria are now developed. The first award is scheduled to be given in 2017.