ADVANCING HEALTH EQUITY FOR CONNECTICUT’S CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

THROUGH HEALTH SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION

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What is Health Equity and Why is it Important?

Health equity means that everyone should have a fair opportunity to attain their full health potential and no one should be disadvantaged from achieving this potential. In other words, health equity means the absence of avoidable, unfair, and remediable differences among groups of people. Connecticut Voices for Children focuses specifically on racial and ethnic equity in health because of the vast and preventable disparities in our state. Racial disparities in health outcomes persist when controlling for socio-economic variables and can be mitigated by alleviating the impacts of systemic racism, including, but not limited to, disparities in access to fair wages, safe and affordable housing, adequate and healthy food, and quality education.¹

Tracking, examining, and acknowledging inequities in our health systems is important because these inequities reduce the overall wellbeing of our state, dramatically increase unnecessary spending to treat preventable disease, and most importantly because they are preventable causes of harm that shorten lives.

How can Transforming Health Systems Impact Racial Equity?

Health reform efforts have the potential to improve health equity dramatically, yet evaluations of early models suggest a risk that reforms may widen racial and ethnic disparities in health unless equity is thoughtfully and measurably embedded.² Changing our systems to mitigate the impacts of racism and the disproportionate burdens faced by children of color—such as higher rates of economic hardship and increased exposure to traumatic events—can have lifelong impacts that reach across all aspects of our society.³

Proposals to Center Health Equity in Health System Transformation:

To promote health equity, we recommend reforming Connecticut’s health systems through an overarching emphasis on inclusiveness within the following:

1. Equity-focused payment models that incentivize increased quality and reduced disparities
2. Equity-focused measurement to track and evaluate efforts to promote health equity
3. Integrating health systems, social services, and community based services
4. Creating a more inclusive workforce

Many of these proposals could be accomplished by bringing existing programs to scale or establishing sustainable support for interventions of limited scope or duration. As such, Connecticut is well-positioned to implement equity-focused health systems transformation.

For more detail on how to implement these proposals and the current efforts underway in Connecticut, see our full report.
WORKS CITED


