

# HEALTH EQUITY EQUATION NEWSBRIEF

June 2019

Welcome to the 16<sup>th</sup> edition  
of Health Equity Equation

## **READING CORNER:**

Identify Meaningful  
Community  
Engagement Guidelines

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## **NEXT HEALTH EQUITY COLLECTIVE IMPACT MEETING:**

**Monday, August 12<sup>TH</sup>**

10 - 11:30 AM, NSOB 3B  
All are welcome!

For more info about **the  
Health Equity Equation**,  
and *the Health Equity  
Collective Impact* group  
that meets quarterly,  
contact Mai Dang at  
[mai.dang@nebraska.gov](mailto:mai.dang@nebraska.gov).

## **WHAT IS HAPPENING IN DHHS?**

### ***Division of Developmental Disabilities (DD):***

- DD has submitted applications to the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to amend both Medicaid home and community-based services (HCBS) developmental disabilities waivers. The proposed amendments contain a variety of changes which will allow for more customized services for participants experiencing significant medical or mental health issues, clarify participant safeguards and increase oversight and reporting to CMS in several areas impacting the health and safety of participants.
- DD is updating the process and requirements for reporting critical incidents to the division, which will enable the division and developmental disabilities service providers to more effectively track and address incidents which impact the health, safety and wellbeing of participants. New guidelines are also being developed for review and follow-up of incidents which impact participant health and safety to reduce recurrence and address identified concerns.
- Several DD employees attended the Aging with DD Conference in St. Charles, Missouri, which provided a variety of opportunities to learn about the challenges faced by people with DD who are aging and how to better support the aging DD population. The attendees will share information and resources gained at the conference with their teams and other division staff, so that the division can continue to improve services for this growing population.
- DD also continues to work towards improved understanding of participant rights and the importance of community integration and employment opportunities for those in DD services. Ongoing training and resource development for DD staff and the development of a Policy Guide as a resource for DD staff, DD service providers, participants and families and the general public work toward this goal. All of these issues relate to social determinants of health that are common barriers to health equity for people with developmental disabilities.
- For more info, contact Pam Hovis, [Pam.Hovis@nebraska.gov](mailto:Pam.Hovis@nebraska.gov).

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## Working Definition of “Health Equity”:

Health Equity is when people have full and equal access to opportunities that enable them to lead healthy lives. Achieving health equity involves an underlying commitment to reduce—and, ultimately, eliminate—disparities in health and in its determinants, including social determinants.

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DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

In the Title V Maternal and Child Health Block grant (Title V) in Lifespan Health Services, Community Health Workers (CHW) have been a focus in 2019. The first series of events, “**CHWs and Community**,” hosted a total of 49 CHWs in five locations. Our partners are five local public health departments. The second series, “**CHWs and Health Systems**,” will be held this summer in July and August in the same five locations. If you know or work with Community Health Workers, encourage them to check out the [registration link](#). The events are free. For more info, contact us at [DHHS.MCASHFeedback@nebraska.gov](mailto:DHHS.MCASHFeedback@nebraska.gov).

Title V has also funded short-term projects involving CHWs and other partners, to help advance the CHW workforce. The **first** activity is to assess and compare the various training programs for CHWs in NE, with the objective of identifying the extent to which the various training approaches include the core consensus competencies for CHWs. The intent is to help employers who wish to hire CHWs understand the training prospective candidates have achieved, and to help CHWs move between employers with consistent expectations of the role they’ve been prepared to fill. This contract will be led by the UNMC College of Nursing. The **second** project involves a statewide leadership group, including CHWs and led by Douglas County Health Department, reviewing and making recommendations about sustainable business and financing models for CHWs. The results of both projects are expected to be available in late fall, 2019. For more info, contact Kathy Karsting at [Kathy.karsting@nebraska.gov](mailto:Kathy.karsting@nebraska.gov).

The divisions of Medicaid and Public Health have collaborated on a messaging project for parents of school aged children, “**Why Health Insurance is Important for Your Child**.” The half page message will accompany the information about the state’s Child Health Insurance Program (CHIP) that is distributed to every child in Nebraska’s public schools at the beginning of the school year. The messaging project was developed as a quality improvement initiative to improve **access to mental and behavioral health care services for children**. Health insurance coverage is a gateway to care in the U.S. health care system. Those without health insurance experience different outcomes to ill health that result in inequities. Additional strategies include working with schools to better understand how schools make referrals for evaluation and care when behavior becomes a problem, and strategies to improve consultation for rural primary care providers with behavioral health experts via telehealth or telephone when no behavioral health professionals are available in the local area. To learn more about the Pediatric Mental Health Care Access Program in Nebraska, contact us at [Jennifer.auman@nebraska.gov](mailto:Jennifer.auman@nebraska.gov).