

Webinar Focus

The Partners for Advancing Health Equity Collaborative hosted the webinar, *Building Partnerships for Health Equity Advocacy* on June 20, 2023. Panelists engaged in discussions about the value of cross-sector partnerships for advancing health equity, highlighting key considerations and approaches for effective collaboration. This report provides a synthesis of key takeaways, solutions, and action steps identified from the webinar.

Webinar Voices

- › **Caryn Bell**, Associate Director, P4HE, [Tulane School of Public Health & Tropical Medicine](#)
- › **Adriana Gutierrez**, Licensed Professional Counselor Supervisor in the [State of Texas](#)
- › **Al Richmond**, Executive Director, [Community-Campus Partnerships for Health](#)
- › **Lechelle W. Wardell**, Population Health Director, [Wake County Health and Human Services](#)

Key Resources

- [Cross-Sector Collaborations and Partnerships](#)
- [Principles and Strategies for Effective Community Engagement](#)
- [What is Lived Experience?](#)

Your Voice

P4HE values collaboration. If there is a resource on this topic that you would like to share with us, provide it [here](#).

Key Takeaways

Cross-sector collaboration between organizations with a shared goal of advancing health equity is the driving force behind improving health outcomes for all. This webinar discussed how partnerships between community organizations, government agencies, private companies, academia, community members, and key players allow for necessary diverse perspectives to unite. Unity fosters the promotion of innovative strategies for achieving health equity. The most effective collaborations utilize thoughtful approaches for building trust, defining expectations, and sharing resources between partners and lift community voices in every step of the process. Strong partnerships are key for [building sustainable solutions and outcomes](#) in all facets of health equity work.



Webinar participants noted the value of emphasizing collaboration with diverse perspectives and lived experiences that rely on a variety of organizations to provide the necessary resources to improve health outcomes. They noted that health equity requires community collaboration, ownership, and power sharing. Further defining community, attendees and panelists framed community collaboration with the following words: belonging, love, support, group, connection, and culture, among others.

Call To Action

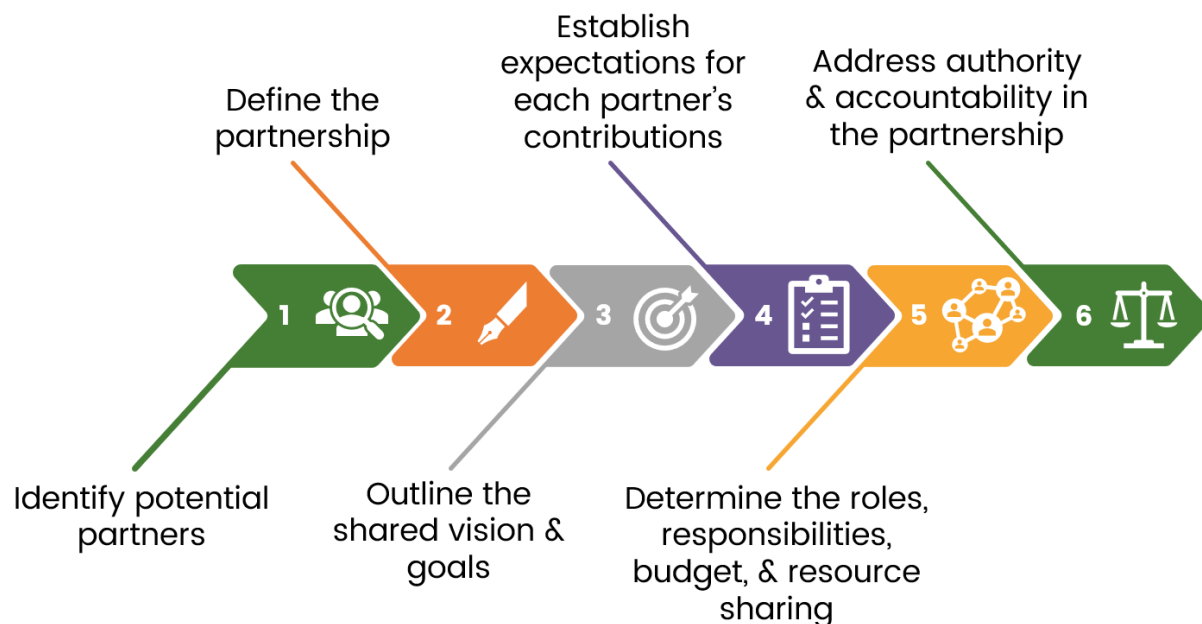


"[Achieving health equity] cannot be done alone." P4HE
Webinar Participant

Building Partnerships for Health Equity Advocacy Webinar Summary and Call to Action



Below we've summarized immediate action steps shared by the panelists and identified by webinar participants to be taken to advance health equity through partnerships.



> Collaborate effectively to reach common goals by building a foundation of trust and establishing clear expectations



"What are our individual responsibilities as we are going into this relationship? What are you going to do as a partner? What are you expecting me to do? Let's have this open communication upfront so we are clear. [It is also important to] address where the authority and

accountability is within this relationship." Lechelle W. Wardell, Population Health Director, Wake County Health and Human Services

Before [entering a partnership](#), it is important to acknowledge that every collaboration is unique and requires all parties to agree on a shared definition of the partnership to be successful. Ensure that all potential partners' goals are aligned towards the mission of advancing health equity. Then, outline the collective vision for the partnership and establish expectations for each partner's contribution to

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the collaboration. Being transparent and honest during these formative discussions and beyond will help [to build trust between partners and with members of the community](#), something that is vital in partnerships. Define the [roles, responsibilities, budget, resource sharing, and other key features of the collaboration](#) to effectively coordinate efforts between partners. Decisions about authority and [accountability](#) within the partnership must be discussed and made. If a power imbalance exists between partners, such as perhaps the influence of a local government agency over a community-based organization, consider [ways to mitigate such power imbalances](#) so that everyone has an equal voice in the partnership. To be successful in a partnership for advancing health equity, all partners must have a clear understanding of: *“Who is responsible for what? What is our long-term goal? Why do we need this partnership?”* Adriana Gutierrez, Licensed Professional Counselor Supervisor in the State of Texas

› Leverage resources and expertise from each organization within partnerships

Building partnerships within the community is incredibly useful for advancing health equity because the collaborative can [leverage diverse resources and expertise from a variety of organizations](#) working together towards their common goal. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of each organization in the partnership to determine the contributions that each partner can make and capacities that can be shared and built. Partnership also requires [coordinating the use of each other’s resources](#) to fully meet the health needs of the community. One way to do this is through exploring ways to [braid funds](#).



“The reality is that the work of building and advancing health equity is very costly. Not one organization has all the money and resources to be able to do that. Therefore, we must work together.” Al Richmond, Executive Director, Community-Campus Partnerships for Health

When first establishing partnerships, it is important for both parties to ask themselves *“What are we getting out of [the partnership]? What are the rewards for us to come together?”* Lechelle W. Wardell, Population Health Director, Wake County Health and Human Services For example, researchers can offer expertise in conducting [community-based participatory research](#) to directly involve people from the community in finding solutions to the health inequities they face. To do so effectively they can partner with [private sector companies](#) and [government agencies](#) to utilize their funding and resources to support health equity advocacy efforts. Bring in [healthcare professionals and providers](#) to integrate their expertise on best practices for service delivery and the intricacies of health conditions. It is also important to work alongside [community-based organizations](#) and nonprofit organizations to bridge connections to the community and build upon their relationships with groups directly impacted by health inequities.



› **Center lived experience in health equity advocacy**



“If we’re not including the people who are impacted, then you’re not going to have the results you’re looking for and you’re not going to be able to build that trust in the partnerships you’re hoping to build.”

Adriana Gutierrez, Licensed Professional Counselor Supervisor in the State of Texas

People with [lived experiences](#) of health inequities possess essential knowledge of the nuances and complexities associated with the health-related issues faced by their group. They must be included when seeking to fully understand and address health inequities. Centering the stories of those with lived experience in health equity advocacy can help to broaden limited viewpoints and better understand concepts like [intersectionality](#) in which some people may belong to multiple disadvantaged groups, facing comorbid health inequities, such as [those experienced by Black women](#). Researchers, advocacy groups, and organizations can uplift these voices by conducting [focus groups](#), interviews, or surveys with these individuals and creating [advisory boards](#) for people with lived experiences to offer guidance and recommendations on how to best address their health needs. In all organizations and partnerships, lived experience is critical in [leadership positions](#) to help direct the health equity efforts, and as [peer mentors](#) to assist people who have similar lived experiences. Acknowledging and valuing lived experiences and the patient voice are *“the center to*

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all the work... [as the adage] says: 'nothing about us without us.'” Al Richmond, Executive Director, Community-Campus Partnerships for Health

> Utilize a creative approach to partnership for advancing health equity



“We have to be creative around how we retrofit this work and locate this work, moving in spite of the ever-present attacks that have been launched against this very important work.” Al Richmond, Executive Director, Community-Campus Partnerships for Health

Developing and implementing creative strategies to promote health equity advocacy through partnerships are necessary to promote long-term improvement of outcomes within inequitable structures. The organized bodies pushing for [policies restricting gender-affirming healthcare to transgender youth](#) across the U.S. are an example of a systemic attack that necessitates similar collaboration and networks to combat them and advance health equity. Partnerships are inherently unique as they offer multiple sources of input and potential areas for intervention. Conduct research to identify [gaps in health equity work](#) that need advocacy efforts and attention. Engage with private sector companies to leverage their resources and networks to expand the reach of the collaborative’s work. If a partner is in a position with restricted ability to directly participate in health equity advocacy efforts, such as some local government agencies, they can [build capacity](#) for other partner organizations by [equipping and training individuals in the community](#) to advocate for change. In addition, [involving young people](#) in the partnership is another useful strategy to present fresh outlooks on how to address health inequities. Encourage college students to [incorporate health equity advocacy work into their studies](#) and [become involved in community partnerships](#), serving as real-life applications of their academic interests that benefit the community. The work of advocacy is done with networks of people and community sharing similar values and goals.

Deeper Dive

Community Partnering for Behavioral Health Equity

A [2018 study](#) explores the views of leaders from community-based organizations and publicly funded health systems involved in cross-sector partnerships for advancing behavioral health equity. The study examines [the Health Neighborhood initiative \(HNI\)](#) in Los Angeles County that aims to improve the coordination of services for behavioral health clients and address [social determinants of health](#) through community partnerships. The authors conducted interviews with key players involved in the initiative to ask about their perceptions of cross-sector partnerships for achieving health equity. Study participants relayed that community partnerships are transformative for improving service access, value, and efficiency; helping to [align priorities of systems and](#)

[communities](#); and uniting the power of communities to improve health outcomes. These organizational leaders noted that trust in partnerships is critical for their success, with the [lack of capacity for relationship-building](#) and sustainability concerns as barriers to building trust. They also described potential innovations for enhancing partnerships, including increased transparency and information exchange, [shared power in agenda-setting and decision-making](#) between partners, and training and accountability to institutionalize partnerships.

Advancing Health Equity through Gender Affirming Health Systems

[Cardea](#), a national organization that provides trainings, organizational development services, and research services, developed a [resource guide](#) to showcase their collaboration with [Odessa Browan Children's Clinic \(OBCC\)](#), funded by the [Pride Foundation](#) and Beyond the Bridge, to address health equity through gender affirming health systems. Through this collaboration, Cardea and OBCC engaged in working groups, consisting of Cardea staff, OBCC staff, and community members with lived experiences, to identify the opportunities for implementing and improving [gender affirming care](#) for transgender and [gender nonconforming](#) youth at OBCC. Such efforts included discussions to inform Cardea's development and piloting of [organizational assessments \(OA\)](#) and community member surveys to evaluate OBCC's readiness and changes needed, as well as strategic planning for OBCC's work plan to enhance their services. The resource guide provides the organizational assessments, community members surveys, working group agendas, handouts, and work plan templates used by the partners. These materials can aid future cross-sector partnerships in assessing how they can work together to advance health outcomes and equity for transgender and gender nonconfirming individuals.

Guide for Community Partners

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) developed a [Guide for Community Partners](#) to help increase COVID-19 vaccine uptake among racial and ethnic minority communities. This resource provides potential strategies, interventions, messaging, and materials for organizations to use in their cross-sector engagements with other organizations and with the community to promote the COVID-19 vaccine to marginalized populations. While the guide is applicable to other communities that may experience disparities and marginalization in receiving vaccines or have demonstrated hesitancy to receiving vaccines, it targets racial and ethnic minority communities as they have disproportionately faced [negative health outcomes from the COVID-19 pandemic](#), alongside their [lack of vaccine access](#) and great [mistrust of the medical system](#). The guide offers useful considerations and approaches for organizations to utilize in their cross-sector collaborations to enhance [community outreach](#) and assistive services for expanding vaccine access and confidence. Implementing innovative strategies through community partnerships to increase knowledge and trust in COVID-19 vaccines will help to improve COVID-19-related health outcomes for all.

About P4HE

The P4HE Collaborative harmonizes goals, advances learning, and facilitates collaboration to improve health equity. It is led by the Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine and is part of the Tulane Institute for Innovations in Health Equity. Support for this program is provided by ICF. Funding is provided by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.



Foster

the co-creation
and spread of
knowledge.



Sharpen

our research tools to
focus on solutions;
facts and stories.



Disrupt

traditional
research
approaches.



Harmonize

our voices.



Challenge

the status quo.



Shine

light on practices that are
indefensible, irrational
and inconsistent.

To learn more about these issues, or Partners for Health Equity's calls to action, a resource library including a full recording of this, and all previous P4HE Webinars, can be found on the P4HE [website](#).