

Health Inequity is a Public Health Crisis

WHEREAS:

- Public health is the science of protecting and improving the health of people, entire populations and their communities.
- Public health work is achieved by promoting healthy lifestyles, researching disease and injury prevention, and detecting, preventing and responding to infectious diseases;
- Public health professionals try to prevent problems from happening or recurring through implementing education programs, recommending policies, administering services, and limiting health inequities through the promotion of equitable and accessible healthcare;

WHEREAS, health inequity, race, segregation, and socioeconomic gaps in Ohio have exacerbated a health divide resulting in vulnerable Ohioans and especially Ohioans of color having poorer overall health outcomes;

WHEREAS, approximately 15% of Knox County residents live in poverty (according to the Federal Poverty Guidelines); 15% of low-income residents in Knox County are uninsured; 70% of low-income residents are overweight or obese; 14% felt sad or hopeless two weeks or more in a row; 21% ranked their health as “Fair or Poor”; an average of 40% have chronic cardiovascular issues; 35% suffer from some limiting health problem, among several other health related issues.

WHEREAS, Knox Public Health:

- recognizes the impact of inequities in Ohio and specifically Knox County, and strives to work to dismantle the factors that contribute to these inequities;
- condemns racism and strives to mitigate its adverse impact;
- acknowledges that fulfilling its responsibilities to create and maintain an equitable public health system includes reflecting social justice in its discourse and agendas.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Knox Public Health will work diligently towards the following actions:

1. Assert that health inequity is a public health crisis that affects Knox County
2. Actively work to prevent disease and injury, promote physical and mental health, and protect the equitable access to health care for every Knox County resident regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, age, income, or insurance status

3. Incorporate into the organizational structure a plan for educational efforts to address inequities
4. Advocate for policies that improve health in communities of low socio-economic residents as well as support local, state, regional, and federal initiatives that advance efforts to remove barriers that may foster disproportional health outcomes
5. Promote community engagement on the broad topic of health equity as well as specific issues such as income disparities and access to care, racism, and other societal topics affecting the health of our county
6. Collaborate with community partners and stakeholders in the education, employment, housing, criminal justice, and safety arenas to recognize health inequalities as a public health crisis and to implement this statement or appropriate portions of this statement
7. Commit to using the Health Equity in All Policies framework and embed equity across the agency's existing and prospective decision-making
8. Tirelessly continue all efforts to promote health equity to help ensure optimal health for future Knox County generations.