

Understanding Critical Issues in Health Equity

Eliminating Health Disparities Initiative
August 4, 2009

The Current Work of EHDI Grantees

- ★ Grantees work to eliminate health disparities between populations of color and American Indians compared to whites
- ★ Grantees work across racial, ethnic, and cultural groups to address the priority areas
- ★ Grantees represent a wide variety of organizations and groups
- ★ Grantees have had substantial success in working to eliminate health disparities

The Future Work of EHDI

- ★ Build on the successes of grantees
- ★ Extend work to address the root causes of health disparities
- ★ Expand work to achieve a broader population reach
- ★ Integrate state-level activities across MDH
- ★ Engage organizations and institutions across the state in working together

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What are health disparities?

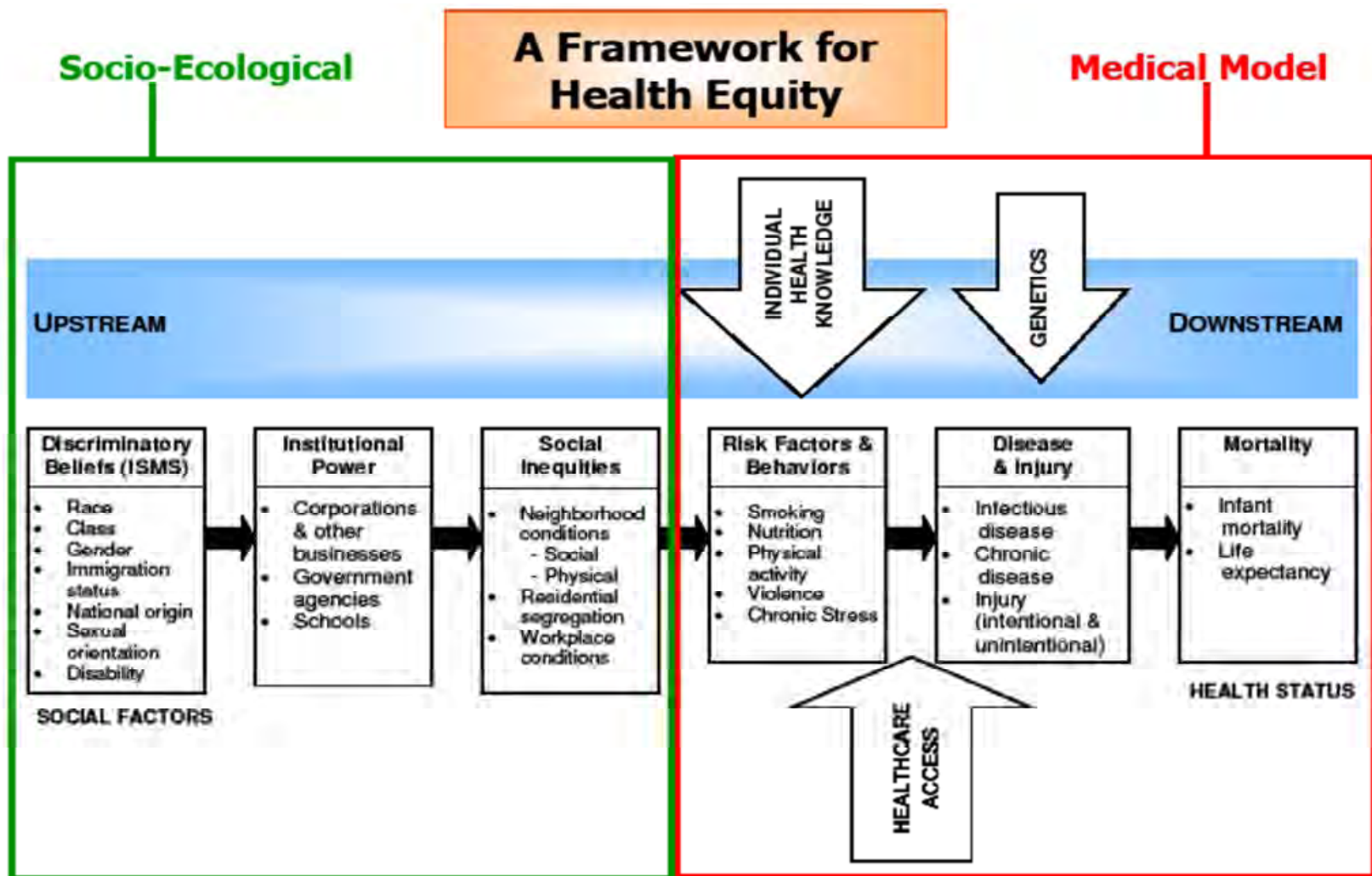
- ★ What is health equity?
 - Individuals' economic and social characteristics are not related to their health
- ★ Health disparities exist when health equity has not been achieved
- ★ Minnesota Department of Health
 - Improve health of all Minnesotans
 - Eliminate social disparities in health

How are health disparities produced?

- ★ Broader social structure creates the conditions under which health disparities persist
- ★ Efforts must target the full spectrum of causes of health disparities in order to eliminate them
- ★ Social policy is health policy. Economic policy is health policy.

Tony Iton's Framework

from *Transforming Public Health Practice to Achieve Health Equity*

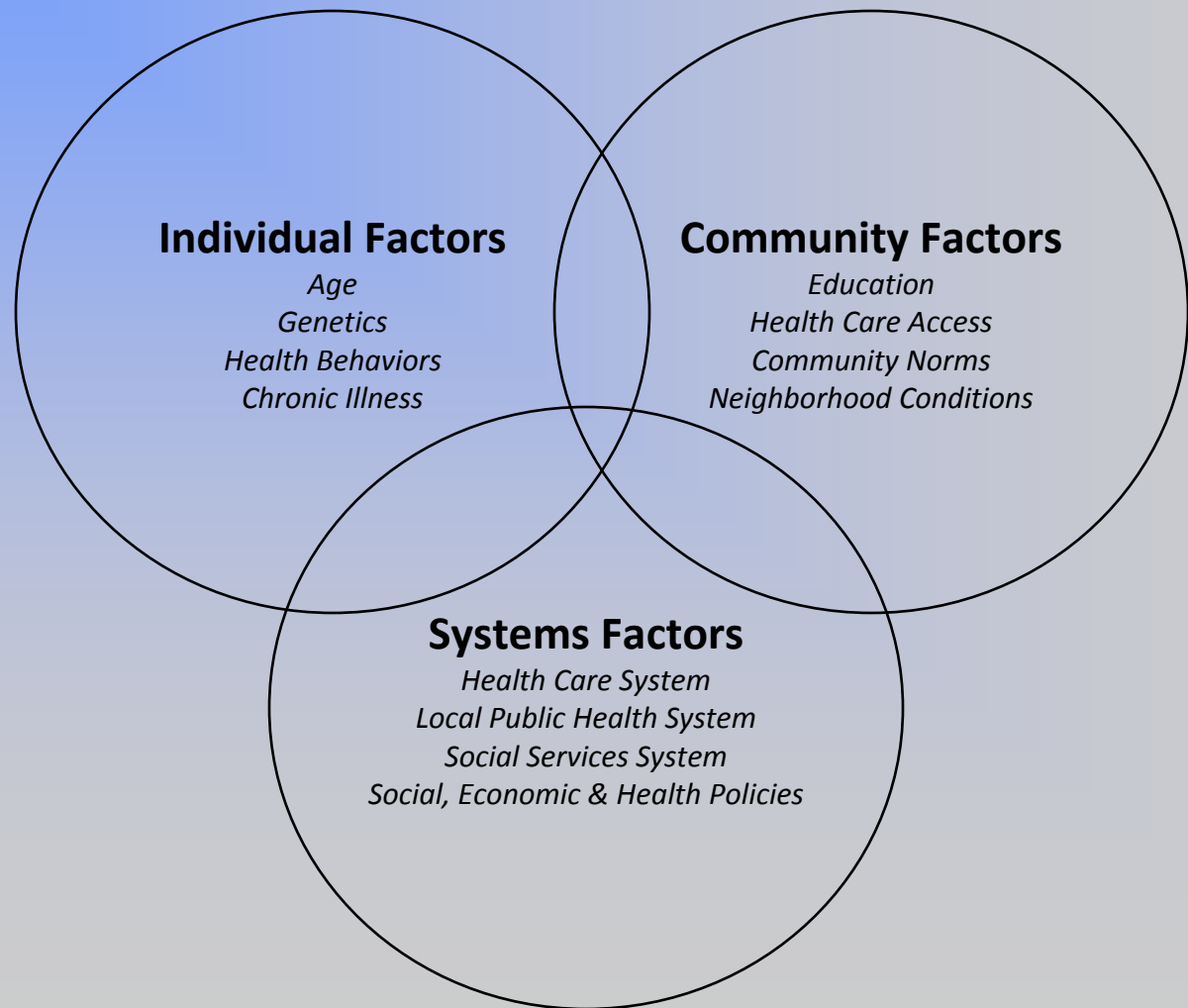


Using the Health Equity Framework

★ Exercise:

- Think through a health disparity that your organization works on
- Where does your work fit in the framework for health equity?
- What is the story of the health disparity you chose, starting with the outcome and moving all the way ‘upstream’?

Factors in Health Equity



How do we intervene to eliminate health disparities?

- ★ Intervention in all three circles of the diagram is most effective
- ★ The more 'upstream' the factor, the broader reach the intervention will have
 - Example: Eliminating institutional racism will affect more people than providing better medical care for patients
 - Both upstream and downstream work are critical: upstream work is longer-term, while downstream work provides short-term results
 - Moving upstream can be challenging

How can we most effectively do this work to eliminate health disparities?

- ★ Address individual, community, and systems factors that produce health disparities
- ★ Move closer to the root causes of health disparities (i.e., left side of the framework)
- ★ Build partnerships and collaborate with organizations and agencies that are able to intervene at different levels