

Partnership4Health: Making Health Equity a Strategic Priority

Partnership4Health staff act daily to build health equity at both the program and organizational level. As a four-county community health board along the Red River Valley, Partnership4Health knows its approach to health equity must be practical, flexible, and comprehensive to meet the diverse needs of both urban and rural staff and residents.

Partnership4Health started at the top and considered every level of work by:

- Including health equity in the community health board's vision
- Asking new questions, like: How can we **all** work toward this vision in our everyday work? What can we do to make sure we hear all voices?
- Engaging coordinators to conduct an equity assessment of its WIC program, seeking to understand who benefits from WIC and who might be unintentionally excluded or burdened by WIC; this assessment highlighted common themes of missed appointments and struggling with outreach
- Bringing an equity lens to strategic planning: "We wouldn't let it be tabled or taken away," says one team member
- Helping team members identify their own "blind spots," or hidden biases they couldn't recognize on their own



"I always thought of health equity in a kind of silo alongside our work in public health, and I realize now it's really the umbrella over all that we do in public health."

KEYS TO SUCCESS

- **Start the health equity discussion in your organization.**
- **Find blind spots.** Seek to understand and learn more about what team members can't see, even though this is hard and can make staff feel vulnerable.
- **Value health equity in all interactions.**
- **Health equity is continuous,** and not the result of one training or one conference.

