

2022 PENNSYLVANIA HEALTH EQUITY SUMMIT

***Momentum to Action***  
***Answering the Call for Social  
Justice and Health Equity***

April 6, 2022 and April 7, 2022

University of Pittsburgh

Wyndham Grand

Downtown Pittsburgh

Pittsburgh, PA

We're proud of our community,  
and proud of those  
we share it with.

We are proud to support the Pennsylvania Department  
of Health and this year's Health Equity Summit.

**UPMC**  
LIFE CHANGING MEDICINE

**UPMC HEALTH PLAN**

## ABOUT

The Office of Health Equity was formally integrated into the Pennsylvania Department of Health through an executive order signed in May 2007. It is located within the Office of Operational Excellence.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), “health is a state of complete physical, social and mental well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” Health is a fundamental human right and an essential component of economic development, vital to a nation’s economic growth and internal stability.” As the fifth largest state in population in America, Pennsylvania is integral to the success of the nation. There is an economic and moral imperative to do all we can to improve the lives of all Commonwealth residents, whether they live in poor, rural or urban communities.

### **The role of the Office of Health Equity is to:**

- Provide leadership to increase public awareness of health disparities in Pennsylvania.
- Advocate for the development of programs to address health disparities.
- Work with policy makers, insurers, health care providers and communities to implement policies and programs that result in a measurable and sustained improvement in health status of underserved and disparate populations; and
- Collaborate with government agencies, academic institutions, community-based organizations, health partners, providers, faith-based organizations, and others in the public and private sectors to eliminate health disparities in Pennsylvania.

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COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH

April 6, 2022

Welcome to the 2022 Pennsylvania Health Equity Summit:

We are excited to announce this year's theme of "Momentum to Action." Throughout the Department's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been continually revealed the importance of achieving health equity through cultural competence, racial equity and eliminating barriers that vulnerable populations face in healthcare systems. As we continue to respond to and recover from the pandemic, we must not lose sight that we are returning to a society with more prominent fault lines. It will take our collective discipline and dedication to address the inequities and build a better foundation without such egregious inequities.

We will continue to direct our efforts toward improving opportunities for Commonwealth residents to live a healthy life, regardless of their zip code, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, level of education, or income. We will advocate for the highest possible standard of health for all people. We understand that the ability to live a healthy life is a fundamental human right.

Inequities often stem from structural and historical disenfranchisement and discrimination. To increase health equity in Pennsylvania, we must address these gaps where they exist and begin to help all residents achieve their optimal health outcomes. Together we can identify shared problems, and together we can leverage resources to move the needle.

Health equity is the bedrock of public health and there is no greater responsibility than ensuring all people are safe and healthy. Our goal of reducing health disparities by 2030 will take innovation, partnerships, and creativity. The Pennsylvania Department is committed to this effort. We hope that you will join us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Keara Klinepeter".

Keara Klinepeter  
Acting Secretary of Health



CITY OF PITTSBURGH  
**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**  
MAYOR ED GAINEY

Greetings,

As Mayor of the great City of Pittsburgh, it is my pleasure to extend a warm welcome to the Pennsylvania Health Equity Summit and its attendees. My Administration is proud to support your efforts to eliminate health disparities in Pennsylvania by 2030.

As the home to world-class medical and educational institutions, Pittsburgh is uniquely positioned to be a strong partner to develop action steps to reduce and eliminate inequalities in underserved communities. I commend the Pennsylvania Department of Health Office of Health Equity for its dedication and commitment to bring together leaders to discuss innovative approaches that can help us address this pressing issue.

While in our city, we encourage first-time visitors to explore the many attractions our city has to offer including: the Carnegie Museum of Natural History, the Frick Art and Historical Center, the Pittsburgh Zoo and PPG Aquarium, historic Point State Park, our downtown Cultural District and many more. We invite you to share in and enjoy our city's rich history. On behalf of the people of Pittsburgh, I offer best wishes for an incredible summit.

Yours in service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ed Gainey", is written over a large, light blue, stylized graphic element that resembles a signature or a decorative flourish.

Ed Gainey, Mayor

City of Pittsburgh

Pronouns: He/Him/His

April 6, 2022

## Welcome to the 2022 Health Equity Summit!

When we held our last Summit in November of 2019, the world was quite a different place. George Floyd was still alive and there was not a global pandemic. However, the conditions that make certain racial and ethnic minorities, cultures, classes, and those in vulnerable communities susceptible to poor health outcomes already existed.

The social determinants of health such as socioeconomic factors, barriers to access healthcare providers and services, lack of educational opportunities and awareness, environmental impacts, and law enforcement misconduct have contributed to poor health outcomes. The pandemic has brought long awaited attention to health disparities, renewed calls for racial and social justice, and a fervor to see impactful change.

Now it is time for us to pivot from momentum to action! We have come together in the great city of Pittsburgh, to champion wellness and health equity for all. Some of us have traveled many miles, and some have joined virtually, to become more informed, to connect, and to collaborate to eliminate health disparities. Too many people are unnecessarily living shorter lives, suffering unduly, and going hungry from Fayette County in the Southwest to Lehigh Valley in the Northeast.

Fortunately, we have many wonderful people like you representing organizations across this great Commonwealth. We hope you will learn, collaborate, and connect over the next day and half for the 2022 Health Equity Summit. Please join the Office of Health Equity in the PA Department of Health lead the charge to act!

Thank you for joining us on this journey.

Warm Regards,



**David Saunders**

Director, Office of Health Equity



# Welcome to the Health Equity Summit 2022

## Momentum to Action



### Master of Ceremonies

**Mario Browne**, M.P.H. C.H.E.S. C.D.P.

Associate Dean for Equity, Engagement, & Justice  
Associate Professor, Department of Pharmacy & Therapeutics  
University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy



**Dr. Denise Johnson**, MD, FACOG, FACHE

Physician General, Office of Physician General, Pennsylvania  
Department of Health



**Edward C. Gainey**

Mayor of Pittsburgh



**Dr. James Schuster**, MD

Chief Medical Director, UPMC  
Health Plan

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## 2022 Pennsylvania Health Equity Summit Planning Committee

### Office of Health Equity

David Saunders	Garlie St-Cyr
Judelissa Rosario	Isabel Snyder
Angela Gumbo	Jaelynn McFadden
Tensae Getz	Abigail DeYoung
Emily Lebo	Alyson Brown
Aubrey Juris	Taizhanae Lewis

### Special Thanks

UPMC and UPMC Health Plan

Pennsylvania Department of Health,  
Bureau of Family Health

Pennsylvania Department of Health,  
Bureau of Health Promotion and Risk Reduction

Pennsylvania Department of Health,  
Bureau of Communicable Disease

Highmark Wholecare

American Lung Association

Latino Connection

Fox Chase Cancer Center

Unite Us

## Office of Health Equity Advisory Committee Members

Cheryl Bettigole, MD, MPH  
*Director, Division of Chronic Disease Prevention  
Philadelphia Department of Public Health*

Mario Browne, MPH, CHES  
*Director, Office of Health Sciences Diversity Schools of the Health  
Sciences, University of Pittsburgh*

Yolanda Jimenez-Colón

Lisa Davis, MHA  
*Director, Pennsylvania Office of Rural Health*

Nia Coaxum  
*Prevention Specialist, Montgomery County Department of Health  
& Human Services*

Khadijah Mitchel M.D., Ph.D., M.S.  
*Professor, Lafayette College*

Kim Levitt DHS., MPH  
*Health Programs and Supporting Services Manager,  
Bradbury Sullivan LGBT Center*

Geoffrey Roche M.P.A.  
*Executive Director, Harrisburg University*

Michael Seim M.D.  
*Senior Vice President, WellSpan Health*

Oralia Garcia Dominic, PhD, MS, MA  
*Medical Policy Research Analyst, Highmark, Inc.*

Brenda Shelton-Dunston, MPH  
*Executive Director, Black Women's Health Alliance*

Jonathan Encarnacion  
*PhD Regional Director, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center*

Serina Gaston M.Ed, CHES  
*Pennsylvania Nutrition Education Network*

Evelyn Gonzalez, MA  
*Senior Director, Fox Chase Cancer Center*

Tina Nixon M.H.A.  
*Vice President, Mission Effectiveness, Pinnacle Health*

Norman Weinstein  
*Esquire Attorney, Galfand Berger Law Firm*

Desha Dickson, MS  
*Associate Vice President, Community Wellness, Tower Health*

# APRIL 7<sup>TH</sup> – AGENDA AT A GLANCE

<b>7:00 a.m. Start</b>	Walk with Us and Share the Vision
<b>7:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.</b>	Registration and Networking Breakfast
<b>8:30 a.m. - 8:35 a.m.</b>	Welcome and Health Equity by 2030
<b>8:35 a.m. - 8:45 a.m.</b>	Dr. Denise Johnson
<b>8:45a.m. - 8:55 a.m.</b>	Welcome to Pittsburgh
<b>8:50 a.m. - 8:55 a.m.</b>	UPMC Sponsor Remarks
<b>8:55 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.</b>	Morning Agenda and Introduction of Speaker
<b>9:00 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.</b>	Morning Keynote/ Q&A
<b>9:45 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.</b>	<b>Panel Discussion:</b> Political Determinants of Health (PDoH)
<b>11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.</b>	Concurrent Session 1
<b>12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.</b>	Recognition Ceremony, Lunch, and Networking
<b>1:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.</b>	Health Equity in Action
<b>1:35 p.m. - 2:35 p.m.</b>	Concurrent Session 2
<b>2:40 p.m. - 3:10 p.m.</b>	<b>Panel Discussion:</b> Latino Health
<b>3:10 p.m. - 4:10 p.m.</b>	<b>Panel Discussion:</b> A Youth Perspective on Eliminating Health Disparities
<b>4:25 p.m. - 4:50 p.m.</b>	Closing Plenary Session
<b>4:50 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.</b>	Wrap Up and Evaluation
<b>5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.</b>	Networking Reception

# AGENDA

## 7:00 a.m. Start

### Morning Walk with Pittsburgh Park Conservancy and PA Downtown Center discussing Healthy Communities

Participants will not only get a breath of fresh air and energize for the day with a walk in Point State Park, but they will also learn how park and recreation agencies are planning programs like Walk with a Doc and Park RX to connect their communities with nature and health. The PA Downtown Center will also discuss about creating walkable communities for health equity and other planning ideas to get your community to where it needs to be.

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## 7:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.

### Registration And Networking Breakfast

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## 8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

### Welcome And Health Equity By 2030

#### MASTER OF CEREMONIES

**Mario Browne**, MPH, Associate Dean for Equity, Engagement, and Justice, Associate Professor in the School of Pharmacy, the University of Pittsburgh

**David Saunders**, M.Ed., Director, Office of Health Equity, Pennsylvania Department of Health

**Denise Johnson**, MD, FACOG, FACHE, Physician General, Office of Physician General, Pennsylvania Department of Health

**Edward C. Gainey**, Mayor of Pittsburgh

**Dr. James Schuster MD**, Chief Medical Director, UPMC Health Plan

This session will provide an overview of the nine goals the Office of Health Equity has identified for achieving health equity by 2030 and why they are essential for reaching this goal.

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## 9:00 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.

### Keynote Presentation

Hope On The Horizon: Disability Justice Approaches to Harm, Healing & Collective Care in Public Health

**Justice Shorter**, National Disaster Protection Advisor, America's Protection and Advocacy System

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## 9:45 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.

### Political Determinants of Health (PDoH) Panel

The Impact of the Political Determinants of Health on Advancing Health Equity.

**Robert Torres**, J.D., Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Aging

**Jake Wheatley**, MPA, Chief of Staff, Office of the Mayor of Pittsburgh

**Paul Abernathy**, MDiv, MPA, Pastor, St. Moses the Black Orthodox Church

**Aliya Bhatia**, MPP, Executive Director of Vot-ER

#### MODERATOR

**Geoffrey Roche**, MPA, Senior Vice President, Business & Workforce Development, Dignity Health Global Education

# AGENDA

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

## CONCURRENT SESSION 1

Join a lively facilitated dialogue on an issue that matters most to you. In each session, experts and health equity leaders will explore innovative solutions to addressing health disparities and advancing health equity. Become familiar with national, state, and local resources and partnerships that can advance health equity initiatives.

### Connections and Partnerships

Disrupt the sector ‘silos’ to address social determinants of health across academia, health systems, and the faith community. Health Equity in Pennsylvania involves a tapestry of understanding and action – let’s weave that tapestry together!

**Mario Browne**, MPH, Associate Dean for Equity, Engagement, and Justice, Associate; Professor, School of Pharmacy, the University of Pittsburgh

**Rodney Jones Sr.**, MHA, CEO, East Liberty Family Health Care

**Linwood Smith Jr.**, M.Div, D.Min, Itinerant Elder, The African Methodist Episcopal Church

**MODERATOR**

**Aubrey Juris**, MPH, Pennsylvania Department of Health

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### Housing

We will discuss housing as a social determinant of health, including lack of housing as a systemic issue, the Impact of housing on health, and potential solutions for addressing the issue. The presentation will be given through a social justice lens.

**Kevin Progar**, Project Director, UPMC Center for Social Impact

**Howard Slaughter Jr.**, MBA, MPM, DSc, President, Chief Executive Officer, Habitat for Humanity of Greater Pittsburgh

**Jessica Pulliam Petrunak**, Regional Housing Coordinator, Self-Determination Housing of Pennsylvania

**MODERATOR**

**Laura Willmer-Rodack**, MSW, Co-Director, Self-Determination Housing of Pennsylvania

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### Rural Health Equity

The limited release of data from the 2020 Census has provided a narrow, but fascinating, glimpse into how Pennsylvania has changed in the last decade. It has confirmed that rural counties are undergoing a prolonged demographic drought that will have significant effects on health care needs for years to come. This presentation will highlight the available results of the Census and address the questions of how Pennsylvania arrived at this inflection point. It also will discuss the current status of rural health care in the state. An overview of the development of the Pennsylvania Rural Health Plan will be highlighted.

**Lisa Davis**, MHA, Director, Outreach Associate Professor of Health Policy and Administration, Pennsylvania Office of Rural Health

**Kyle Kopko**, Ph.D. Executive Director, Center for Rural Pennsylvania

**MODERATOR**

**Oralia Dominic**, MS, MA, Ph.D., Chief Medical Officer, Highmark Inc.

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# AGENDA

## Health Equity for Pediatric Populations: Lessons from Philadelphia

Achieving health equity for children is vital for their long-term health and well-being. In this session, three experts from the Philadelphia region will discuss childhood disparities and approaches being used to advance health equity.

Topics will include the creation of a Center for Health Equity at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, including the participatory process to engage stakeholders; findings from a review of infant mortality and pilot projects being planned to address disparities; and other projects underway in Philadelphia to achieve optimal child health and health equity.

Participants will be encouraged to reflect on how similar approaches could be used in other areas of the state.

**James Guevara**, MD, MPH, University of Pennsylvania Professor of Pediatrics & Epidemiology at the Perelman School of Medicine, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Attending Physician

**Tyra Bryant-Stephens**, MD, Senior Director, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia's Center for Health Equity

**Stacey Kallem**, MD, MSHP, Director of Divisions of Maternal, Child and Family Health, Primary Care Pediatrician

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## Disability Equity

Health equity for persons with disabilities and access and functional needs requires a patient centered treatment plan to support better health outcomes pre and post disaster. This approach to care fosters trust and reinforces a healthy partnership between health care providers and persons with disabilities. Trust is a key component in developing a positive working relationship between provider and consumer so they can achieve the identified treatment goals. This panel includes self-advocates, community youth advocates, and subject matter experts that will focus on how our health care systems can move forward to meet the needs of their consumers before, during and after a disaster.

**Rob Oliver**, Self-Advocate and Keynote Speaker

**Laura Power**, Self-Advocate and Masters of Sociology student at Indiana University of Pennsylvania

**Kevin Puskaric**, CPS, CRS, CFRS Youth Move PA Program Director

**Ceena Jenkins**, PA Department of Human Services Disaster Disability Integration Advisor

**Chris Lunsford**, CPS Call For Change & Youth Care Coordinator

**Liam Dougherty**, MPA Philadelphia Department of Public Health Access and Functional Needs Coordinator

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**12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

**Lunch**

Join us for a healthy and delicious lunch. Take this time to review and reflect upon each other's root causes for success, positive cores of their organizations, and current state policies/initiatives that connect to their work locally.

# AGENDA

**1:00p.m. – 1:30 p.m.**

## Health Equity In Action

An introduction and open dialogue surrounding the implementation of a regional health equity approach in the Commonwealth. Learn about the process of regionalization efforts and the importance of each area of focus chosen for committees. Opportunity to provide suggestions and share interest in taking part in specific regional groups.

**Emily Lebo**, Regional Health Equity Action Team Coordinator, Office of Health Equity, Pennsylvania Department of Health

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**1:35p.m. – 2:35 p.m.**

## CONCURRENT SESSION 2

Join a lively facilitated dialogue on an issue that matters most to you. In each session, experts and health equity leaders will explore innovative solutions to addressing health disparities and advancing health equity. Become familiar with national, state, and local resources and partnerships that can advance health equity initiatives.

### Pathways of Prevention

Almost 40% of the US population, and ~25% of Pennsylvanians, identify as a racial or ethnic minority (REM). Pre- and post-pandemic, REM communities experienced a disproportionate burden of preventable disease, death, and disability. In this panel and audience Q&A session, four experts frame problems and actionable solutions for disease prevention in REMs from medical policy, environmental justice, patient advocate, and precision medicine lenses.

**Oralia Dominic**, M.S., PhD, Medical Policy Research Analyst, Chief Medical Officer Organization, Highmark Inc.

**Jacquelyn Nixon**, Director of Marketing & Communications, Citizens Radioactive Radon Reductions

**Nathaniel L. Burden, Jr.**, Radon/Environmental Scientist/Consultant, PA AARST (American Association of Radon Scientists and Technicians) Chapter President

#### MODERATOR

**Khadijah Mitchell**, M.D.,Ph.D., M.S., Scholar of Health and Life Sciences, Assistant Professor of Biology, Lafayette College

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### Food Insecurity

#### The vital role of food assistance programs during COVID-19 and outlook for the future

Creative solutions and programmatic adaptations to food assistance programs have helped millions of food insecure Pennsylvanians throughout the pandemic. This panel will highlight some of the key efforts of our schools, food banks, and SNAP program that have provided a safety net in an uncertain time. We will also discuss how the audience can improve food security in their communities.

**Brian Whorl**, Director, Division of Federal Programs and Program Management

**Vonda Ramp**, M.S., R.D., State Director, Child Nutrition Programs

**Caryn Long-Earl**, M.S., Director, Bureau of Food Assistance

**Adam Morgan**, Advocacy Coordinator, Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank

#### MODERATOR

**Christine Heyser**, Mass Care Coordinator, Department of Human Services

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# AGENDA

## Outdoor Recreation Access and Need for Healthier Communities

Public health and outdoor recreation are intricately connected. Discover how the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation is working to promote public health and equity through conservation. Learn about a DCNR dataset that can be leveraged to improve communities' access to green space, and a regional effort that is expanding recreational opportunities through leveraging local partnerships.

**Craig Colistra**, M.S. Ph.D., Program Officer, Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation

**Josh VanBrakle**, Recreation and Conservation Advisor, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

**Shea Zwerver**, MES, Policy Specialist, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

**Samantha Pearson**, Healthy Communities Program Manager, Pennsylvania Downtown Center

**MODERATOR**

**Cherri Matter**, Section Chief, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

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## Implicit Bias

We will discuss the impact of implicit bias in clinical settings. Because everyone is susceptible to implicit bias, even clinicians, these unconscious preconceptions will naturally seep into patient-provider communication altering health outcomes towards unintended results.

**Tracey Conti**, MD, Chair of the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and UPMC

**Jerome Gloster**, MD, MS, CEO/CMO, Primary Care Health Services

**Michael Seim**, MD, Chief Quality Officer, WellSpan

**MODERATOR**

**Tensae Getz**, MPH, Pennsylvania Department of Health

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**2:40p.m. – 3:10 p.m.**

## Latino Health Panel

Health Equity is achieved when every person has the opportunity to attain his or her potential and no one is disadvantaged from achieving this goal because of their social-economic position or other socially determined circumstances. The Latino Health plenary session will feature regional health experts who will discuss health disparities issues that are impacting the health and quality of life for Latinos in Pennsylvania. Our panel will consist of a pediatrician, health advocate, social marketer, and community advocate.

**Evelyn Gonzalez, MA**, Fox Chase Cancer Center

**Diego Chaves-Gnecco**, MD, MPH, FAAP, UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh

**George Fernandez**, Latino Connection

**Monica Ruiz**, MSW, Casa San Jose

**MODERATOR Jonathan Encarnacion**, PhD, UPMC for You

# AGENDA

**3:20p.m. – 4:20 p.m.**

## **A Youth Perspective On Eliminating Health Disparities**

The future depends on youth ambassadors paving the way for future generations. The Youth-led Initiative plenary session will feature youth ambassadors in Pennsylvania, utilizing their voices to promote action on a local, state, and national level. Youth ambassadors will discuss issues relating to COVID-19, mental health awareness, the school-to-prison pipeline, and many more. This panel will amplify youth voices and teach participants productive ways to respond to youth needs, whether mental, physical, or emotional.

**iGeneration Youth**

**Amachi Pittsburgh**

**PA Youth Advocacy Network**

**Beaver County Youth Ambassador Program**

**Philly Teen Vaxx**

**MODERATOR Lori Cullen**, Publisher, iGeneration Youth

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**4:25p.m. – 4:50 p.m.**

## **Closing Program**

**Reflections and Closing Remarks: Kevin Ressler**, M.Div., President and CEO, United Way of Lancaster County

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**5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.**

## **Networking Reception**

## KEYNOTE SPEAKER



### Justice Shorter

*National Disaster Protection Advisor, America's Protection and Advocacy System*

Justice Shorter is a Disability Justice advocate and Black Disabled Lives Matter amplifier. She is a national expert on disability inclusive disaster protections, emergency management and humanitarian crises/conflicts. She has studied community development in South Africa, Peace & Post-Conflict Reconciliation in Uganda/Rwanda, periodically returned to her childhood community to teach on subjects surrounding social action/communications and earned a B.A. in Journalism with minors in Justice & Peace Studies from Marquette University. While earning her MA in Sustainable Development: International Policy & Management, Justice interned within the White House Office of Public Engagement & Intergovernmental Affairs where she focused on disability outreach efforts, social inclusion policies and federal agency engagement.

In more recent years, Justice served as a Disability Integration Advisor with the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency, deploying frequently to disaster areas across America and its territories. She is also the co-creator of a celebrated framework for applying Disability Justice approaches to disaster assistance, a Crisis Management method that acknowledges histories of harm, centers intersectionality and prioritizes leadership by Black, Indigenous & People of Color with disabilities. Justice is a steering committee member for the National Human Trafficking & Disability Working group where she has been appointed to advise on training and educational outreach efforts. Justice is currently the National Disaster Protection Advisor for America's Protection & Advocacy system. 2022 also marks the beginning of her journey as a Senior Fellow & Adjunct Faculty Member for the Disaster Resilience Leadership Academy at Tulane University.

## MORNING PLENARY SPEAKERS



### Robert Torres

*Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Aging*

Robert Torres was appointed, by Governor Tom Wolf, to serve as Secretary of Aging on January 5, 2019, after serving as Acting Secretary of the Commonwealth since October 11, 2017. He was confirmed by the Pennsylvania Senate on June 4, 2019. As Secretary, Mr. Torres is responsible for the administration of aging programs and services in the Commonwealth and is committed to ensuring that the department is being responsive to older adults, a population that is growing significantly and becoming more diverse. He believes that strategic partnerships and collaborations will be essential to help meet the demand for services for older adults over 60 years of age; a demographic that currently makes up 25% of the Commonwealth's population and is projected to increase to 30% over the next 10 years.

Mr. Torres is also concerned with the level of fraud, abuse, exploitation, and neglect impacting older adults and has made that a priority to address. He is emphasizing the effective use of data and data driven management to help guide priorities and the effective use of resources.

Mr. Torres is focused and working to improve aging services to ensure Pennsylvania is a welcoming, safe and quality environment where older Pennsylvanians can age, in a setting they choose, with the dignity and respect that they deserve.

Mr. Torres is an attorney who holds a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from Pace University and a law degree from Widener University School of Law.

## MORNING PLENARY SPEAKERS

Jake Wheatley, proud resident of the City of Pittsburgh, is a recognized United States Marine combat veteran of Operation Desert Storm, who received the Combat Action Ribbon, National Defense Service Medal, and the Kuwaiti Liberation Medal. In January 2022, he accepted the 61st Mayor of Pittsburgh's appointment to become Chief of Staff, leaving his position as State Representative of the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative district where he served for 19 years.

As Chief of Staff, Jake will lead the charge in actualizing Mayor Gainey's vision of a "Pittsburgh for all." He is passionate about several issues, including minority and women-owned business inclusion; quality, equitable education for all children; social and criminal justice reforms; high quality and accessible out-of-school-time programming; and the fight to end the discriminatory and irresponsible prohibition on cannabis.

Prior to joining Mayor Gainey's Administration, Jake was the longest-serving African American member in the House of Representatives. First elected in 2002, Jake represented the 19th Legislative District, which includes historic Pittsburgh neighborhoods such as: the Hill District, North Side, South Side, Allentown, Hazelwood, Downtown, the Bluff, Knoxville, Beltzhoover, Manchester, Arlington, Arlington Heights, and West, South and North Oakland, among others. During his time in the State House, Jake also served as the first African American Chair for the House Professional Licensure Committee, which oversees the 29 professional boards and commissions that set the standards and practices of our workforce. He was only the second member ever to be selected to serve on the powerful Appropriations Committee as a first-term legislator. As a first-term legislator, Jake was identified by a nonpartisan highly recognized political website as one of six rising political stars to watch. In 2005, he was identified by PoliticsPA.com as one of the 100 most influential politicians in the state, as well as identified by a national political magazine as one of three Pennsylvania state representatives to watch as a political star.



**Jake Wheatley**

*Former State Representative,  
Chief of Staff, for Mayor Gainey*



**Dr. Rev. Paul Abernathy**

*Neighborhood  
Resilience Project*

Father Paul Abernathy is an Orthodox Christian priest and the founding CEO of the Neighborhood Resilience Project. Since 2011, Fr. Paul has labored with his community to address Community Trauma with Trauma Informed Community Development; A framework that facilitates the transformation of trauma affected communities to resilient, healing, and healthy communities so that people can be healthy enough to sustain opportunities and realize their potential. Under Fr. Paul's leadership, innovative trauma-informed grass-roots strategies have been developed and implemented to address acute, transgenerational, and complex trauma on a community level. In addition to programming, millions of dollars in various kinds of support have also been distributed to the Greater Pittsburgh Area with his direction. Community groups from across the nation have worked with Fr. Paul to be trained in the Trauma-Informed Community Development framework.

He has a B.A. in International Studies from Wheeling Jesuit University and holds a master's in public and International Affairs from the University of Pittsburgh. He also holds a Master of Divinity from St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary and was selected for Harvard Business School's Young American Leaders Program. A former Non-Commissioned Officer in the U.S. Army, Father Paul is also a combat veteran of the Iraq War.

In addition to his work with the organization, Fr. Paul is and has been a member of multiple community, state, and national boards and has received numerous community awards.

Fr. Paul is the pastor of St. Moses the Black Orthodox Church, an author, and a husband and father of two children.

## MORNING PLENARY SPEAKERS



**Aliya Bhatia (she/her)**

*Acting Executive Director  
at Vot-ER*

Aliya Bhatia is the Executive Director at Vot-ER and Civic Health Month where she works to bring voter registration into health care settings, including emergency rooms, hospitals, and community health centers.

She completed her Master's in Public Policy from Harvard Kennedy School as a Sheila C. Johnson Leadership Fellow and is a graduate of the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University.

Aliya was drawn to the connection between health and democracy through the combination of being raised by parents in the medical field and various defining experiences while studying, teaching, and working on housing and health initiatives.

Aliya started her career as a high school educator and then as a strategy consultant at the Boston Consulting Group (BCG). She prioritizes diversity and inclusion in all her endeavors.

Aliya resides in Washington, DC where she works to realize Vot-ER's vision of healthy communities powered by an inclusive democracy. She is a Georgia native and has worked in Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, and Missouri

## AFTERNOON PLENARY SPEAKERS



**George Fernandez**

*Latino Connection*

In 2014, George Fernandez founded Latino Connection— a social determinants of health marketing and communications firm, serving low incomes and vulnerable communities in Pennsylvania and beyond. Since then, Latino Connection has worked closely with multiple agencies and corporate companies to bring an innovative approach to public health promotion on a national scale. Latino Connection possesses a dual mission: to effectively connect clients with their Latino stakeholders and to deliver high quality translation and interpretation services.

Since its inception, Latino Connection has been recognized nationally and internationally with many awards and certified by the Eastern Minority Supplier Diversity Council, recognized as a Hispanic Business Enterprise by the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and as a Minority Certified Business by the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce.

## AFTERNOON PLENARY SPEAKERS

Monica Ruiz is the Executive Director at Casa San José. Monica has been working with Casa since 2014 when she started as an intern, then moved to service coordinator and then community organizer. Prior to that, she worked for Catholic Charities as a case manager. She was born in Cleveland Ohio and has Latino roots from Guatemala and Puerto Rico, where her mom and her dad are originally from. She is a proud mother of one daughter and four sons. She loves cooking and enjoys playing soccer with her children.

Monica holds a master's degree in Social Work with a focus on Community Organizing and Social Action. She earned her bachelor's degree in Social Work from the University of Pittsburgh with a concentration in Psychology.

Monica is a powerful advocate for Latinos on legal, housing, development, and educational issues. She fights for those facing deportation proceedings and launches projects to assist women, children, and youth. In addition, she partners with political, labor, religious, and law enforcement leadership to make Pittsburgh stronger and more welcoming to all.



**Monica Ruiz**

*Casa San Jose*



Ms. González is a public health advocate with over 30 years' experience focused on health disparities and health equity. As Senior Director for the Office of Community Outreach at Fox Chase Cancer Center, an NCI-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, she leads the community engagement programs, which include bilingual cancer education, onsite and mobile cancer screening, and community research. Working in collaboration with diverse community organizations, she and her team have implemented community-based research to learn about barriers and facilitators to care and to research participation by underrepresented communities. Recognized as a passionate leader, Ms. González has been honored for her outstanding commitment to the health of Latinos by the American Cancer Society and Susan G. Komen.

Ms. González is an author and educator who received her master's degree in health advocacy from Sarah Lawrence College in New York. Her professional career includes work in reproductive healthcare, maternal and child health, genetics, cardiovascular disease, community health workers and oncology.

**Evelyn González**

*Fox Chase Cancer Center*

## AFTERNOON PLENARY SPEAKERS

Diego Chaves-Gnecco MD, MPH is a Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrician, Associate Professor at the University of Pittsburgh, School of Medicine, Director and Founder of the program SALUD PARA NIÑOS.

Dr. Diego's clinical and academic interest include the diagnosis and treatment of children with Autism and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, providing care to families and children with disabilities, providing care to children from minority and underserved populations and addressing barriers to health care access.

Dr. Diego graduated from Gimnasio Moderno in Bogotá, Colombia. He obtained his title as a Medical Doctor from Pontificia Universidad Javeriana where he held a position as Instructor of Physiology and Pharmacology at the School of Medicine. From 1995 to 1998 he completed his residency in Pediatrics at Hospital Universitario San Ignacio, Clinicas Infantiles Cafam and Colsubsidio being Chief Resident during his last year. In 1998, Dr. Diego came to Pittsburgh as a Visiting Instructor at the University of Pittsburgh, School of Medicine Center for Clinical Pharmacology where he worked until 2002. He obtained a master's degree in public health from the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health (GSPH), in 2000.

In 2002, he started his residency in pediatrics at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh and joined its Community Oriented Residency Education (CORE) program, an area of concentration in the pediatric training program that aims to train leaders in community health and child advocacy. As part of his CORE training, in the summer of 2002 Dr. Diego created the First Pediatric Bilingual-Bicultural Clinic in Southwestern Pennsylvania.

Since its creation, this clinic has expanded to the program Salud Para Niños (Health for the Children). At Salud Para Niños, culturally and linguistically competent primary care for children and families is complemented with activities oriented toward prevention and empowering the community about its own health. Some of the activities of Salud Para Niños include: a weekly clinics in Oakland at the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh Primary Care Center, a monthly free clinic at the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh Care Mobile and at the Birmingham Clinic, participation in the organizations of the community fairs "Al Servicio de la Comunidad", a literacy program where children are given bilingual books to promote literacy and learning of English as a Second Language for both children and parents, translation of health prevention materials into Spanish, and Hispanic/Latino Car Seat Checks in which emphasis is made in car safety issues.

Dr. Diego completed his fellowship in Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics in 2008 being a fellow of the Maternal and Child Health Bureau program and a fellow of the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and related Disabilities (LEND).



**Diego Chaves-Gnecco  
MD, MPH**

*UPMC Children's Hospital  
of Pittsburgh*

## MODERATORS



Geoffrey currently serves as Senior Vice President, Business & Workforce Development at Dignity Health Global Education. His professional career has included over nine years in hospital administration where he served as a strategic advisor to the President and CEO and department director of various departments, including Business Development and Planning, Government Affairs, Community Health, and Public Relations, for Lehigh Valley Hospital-Pocono. Geoffrey also has served two academic institutions where he led strategic partnerships, organizational strategy, and business development for both Lebanon Valley College and Harrisburg University of Science and Technology. He is also an Adjunct Instructor of Health Administration in the MBA/MHA Program at Moravian University, serves on the United Way of Lebanon County and United Way of Pennsylvania Board of Directors, IU 13 Board of Directors, Leadership Council for Moravian College, Patient Safety Committee for WellSpan Good Samaritan Hospital, and is a school Director of Annville-Cleona School District.

### **Geoffrey Roche**

*Senior Vice President, Business & Workforce Development at Dignity Health Global Education*

Jonathan Encarnación serves as the Senior Director for UPMC for You (12+ years), a division of UPMC Health Plan. In his capacity as Senior Director, Encarnación is responsible for UPMC Health Plan's Medicaid product, UPMC for You, as it relates to strategic planning, overall P/L accountability and performance which includes membership growth, retention, and product expansion into new and existing markets. In his role, Encarnación is responsible for the development and implementation of a statewide multi-year strategic plan for the Medicaid product that drives growth and retention through the maximization of clinical pay-for-performance (P4P) revenues, multi-channel marketing campaigns focused on acquisition and retention, value-based payment strategies that address Social Determinants of Health (SDOH), Network Development strategies that maximize provider partnerships with System partners and Federally Qualified Health Centers, and Community Relations efforts across the Commonwealth Of Pennsylvania.

Most recently, Encarnación was appointed By Governor Wolf as a commissioner to the Governor's Advisory Commission on Latino Affairs (GACLA) and was elected to The Regional Foundation Board of Trustees. Encarnación earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology and Spanish from Texas A & M University, and his Master of Business Administration degree from Alvernia University. In addition, Encarnación has participated as a Fellow at John Hopkins University and Harvard Business School.



### **Jonathan D. Encarnación**

*Senior Director, UPMC for You, a division of UPMC Health Plan*

## MODERATORS



Often the first to identify new demands and novel techniques, Lori Cullen believes young people can tackle real challenges if given a chance. After working as a writer for ten years at Wall Street Journal Custom Studios, Lori leveraged the excellent training she received from whip-smart, innovative editors to launch iGeneration Youth, a printed magazine and journalism training incubator by the same name. Today, she leads a global team of young storytellers who are grappling with traditional news companies' needs for strategic innovation in areas of content development, audience engagement, and advertising. By collaborating across disciplines, students who demonstrate near-professional-level skills in writing or visual arts invent novel storytelling formats that meet the needs, interests, and capabilities of young audiences. Their stories are syndicated by Tribune Content Agency.

Lori Cullen is a two-time immigrant. She was raised in England by Jamaican parents until moving to Philadelphia at the age of 10. She now lives happily in Pittsburgh, PA (her favorite American city) with her Irish-Jamaican family and sometimes the neighbor's cat.

### Lori Cullen

*Publisher, iGeneration Youth*

## CLOSING SPEAKER

Kevin M. Ressler, M.Div has spent his life seeking ways to bring about an equitable peace and justice for all. These endeavors started as early as elementary school speaking against bullies, through Middle School where he disrupted a semester-long Revolutionary War history simulation (having been made Governor of Pennsylvania, he demanded freeing slaves as part of the Declaration of Independence), through forming Peace Club in High School.

Kevin's personal journey increasingly interacted with the realities of poverty and the negative historical and social repercussions beginning with a learning tour to Nicaragua at fifteen years of age with Witness for Peace to visits to his mother's homeland in Eastern Africa during formative years, to a month-long trip to Southern Africa and Zimbabwe during Mennonite World Conference and eventually studying a semester in the Middle East while attaining his B.A at Eastern Mennonite University. His first post-college job was a year-long volunteer year in Oakland, California with Peace e Bene Nonviolence Service living with an intentional community before returning to Lancaster for an AmeriCorps VISTA year with Community First Fund when he bought a house in an economically distressed part of Lancaster City, where he and his wife, Melissa, still reside while raising their daughters Acacia and Iriana as active participants in the neighborhood and SDOL.

Kevin earned a Master of Divinity through Lancaster Theological Seminary, hoping to integrate his spiritual and moral concerns with the professional activities he could engage in through non-profit leadership. He spent 5 years growing Meals on Wheels of Lancaster and joined United Way of Lancaster County on January 1, 2020. His volunteer work includes board and committee work as Board President of Meals on Wheels of Lancaster, Board Chair of Everence Federal Credit Union, and at large member of Landis Quality Living, UPMC Lititz Hospital, LancoMyHome, Conestoga Valley Education Foundation, Partnership for Public Health and a variety of community steering committees. He also



### Kevin M. Ressler

*United Way of Lancaster County*



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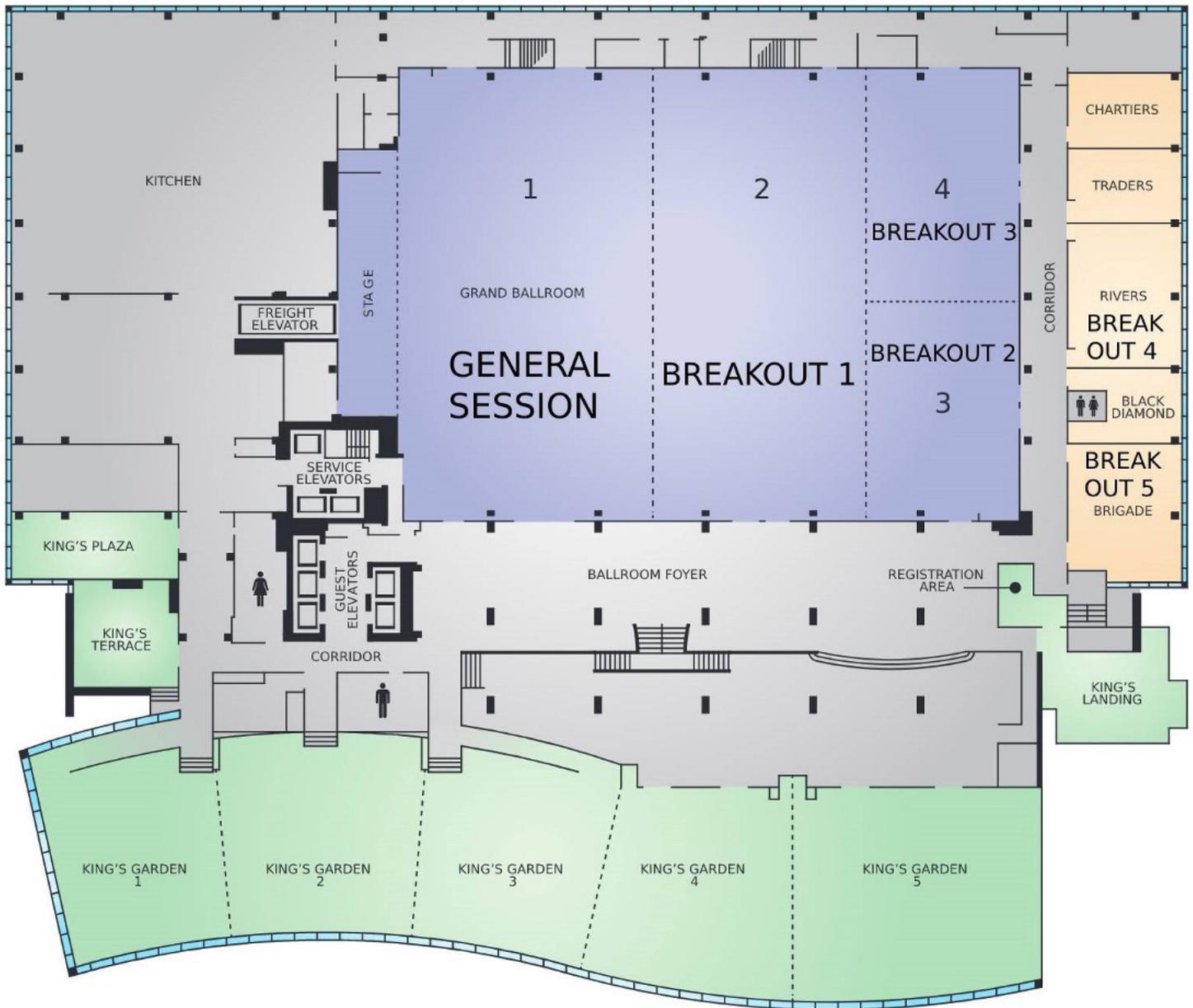


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# ***Momentum to Action!***



# MAP OF WYNDHAM GRAND PITTSBURGH DOWNTOWN HOTEL



WYNDHAM GRAND | BALLROOM LEVEL  
PITTSBURGH DOWNTOWN

# HEALTH EQUITY BY 2030: ACTION PLAN

The following recommendations were developed, ratified, and approved by the Office of Health Equity Advisory Committee for the Department of Health.

## **Leadership: Provide commonwealth-wide leadership to advance health equity.**

The Department of Health should catalyze eliminating health disparities by 2030 and establish specific milestones to be achieved by 2020 and 2025 through policy implementation and the engagement of new and existing partnerships to infuse the concept of ongoing shared responsibility for the health of all Pennsylvanians. Mechanisms will be enacted to ensure the continued prioritization of health equity across commonwealth agencies.

## **Relationship Building: Formalize and maintain community relationships and mutual partnerships to advance health equity across current and emerging communities.**

The learned experiences of community members must be incorporated into planning processes. Therefore, the department will develop and implement a sustainable process for working with the community. Genuine efforts to reach out to community members for advice, support and engagement will help accelerate health equity efforts.

## **Data Usage: Invest in the collection, analysis, meaningful use, secure sharing and accessible translation of data to advance health equity.**

Health equity and health disparity data must be defined, measured and understood. These data must then be used to assess the impact of programs, policies, practices and products. Interdisciplinary partnerships and collaborations will be established to realize this effort. Data and the stories behind the data, must drive progress. Continuously monitoring progress and making timely adjustments will help to ensure goal attainment. Data, particularly data gathered with the help of communities, will be distributed and disseminated to those areas to promote community engagement and empowerment.

## **Awareness: Continuously raise awareness of current and emerging health disparities.**

Health disparities and their impact must be highlighted and best practices that reduce them must be shared widely. Educational efforts will be made to help inform relevant parties such as physicians, healthcare organizations, hospitals, managed care organizations, health insurers, etc., of the relationship between the social determinants of health and their impact on health outcomes.

## **Remediation: Address and remediate structural inequities that have resulted from discriminatory policies and practices.**

Historical impediments, like racism, homophobia and discrimination, that place entire populations at a systematic disadvantage, must be acknowledged and remediation must be enacted, to address health disparities. Educational outreach will be conducted to help inform relevant parties as listed above of the relationship between historical policies and practices and the present-day structural inequities they engendered.

## **Improvement: Improving living conditions where people live, learn, work and play.**

The most vulnerable areas of the state, both urban and rural environments, need improvements to basic living conditions. The Advisory Committee recommends targeting several social determinants of health including, but not limited to: education; nutrition; healthcare services; environmental health; housing; safety; economic and occupational health.

## **Advancement: Advance health equity across sectors.**

Using a policy approach, Pennsylvania will need to take a broader look at what drives health and bring together many different sectors to achieve equity. From state government, local government and community-based organizations, resources should go where the need is greatest.

## **Establishment: Establish OHE by statute.**

- To fully achieve health equity, resources and influence should be given to the OHE. To accomplish this, legislation to enact the office by statute should be considered.
- Expand current health equity initiatives.
- Fully fund the Office of Health Equity commensurate with the size of the state and what other states provide;
- Expand upon current program offerings with proven success;
- Fully engage academia— go from research to action; and
- Engage with community groups currently working to impact social determinants of health.

