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## News and Resources from Health Equity Initiative!

Greetings from Health Equity Initiative!

So far, 2020 has been a truly unprecedented year. COVID-19, as well as other current events, have exposed the many deeply-rooted inequities Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities as well as other communities of color and other marginalized and underserved groups both in the U.S. and globally continue to face. Such inequities have unfortunately affected and continue to affect several generations.

However, if we all work together to keep alive this important moment of social awareness, there is still hope for a brighter future. Individuals and organizations across the globe are increasingly recognizing that we are all in this together and that each one of us must take action to fight health and racial inequities. Here at Health Equity Initiative, we strive to advance health equity by building a global community of individuals and organizations that have a stake in or an influence on key social determinants of health, so that together we can develop and advocate for solutions to improve conditions and advance equity in health for all. You can **join our organization** and become a member at: <https://www.healthequityinitiative.org/join.html>.

Finally, we hope this newsletter finds you healthy and safe and thank you all for being part of our **Health Equity Initiative** community!

## Welcome!

### A warm welcome to some of our new HEI organizational and individual members!



"Hello everyone, I'm **Sarah Townley**, my husband David Della Rocca and our 3 children live in NYC. I'm a Nurse Practitioner and work with Futures Today Consulting. I'm fortunate to be involved in groups working toward health equity—Education Across Borders, Hike the Heights, Good Shepherd's Justice & Peace, PS/MS 278 Wellness & NYC District Wellness Advisory Council. I joined Health Equity Initiative because I believe that no one should have to suffer from inequalities. I believe HEI's approach through creative collaboration and shared resources can help dismantle disparities."

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"Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas, Inc. improves the wellness of the least served through

direct services, grant-making, public policy and community partnerships. Health Equity is both the process and goal by which Methodist Healthcare Ministries seeks to carry out that purpose. We are committed to learning with and from the communities we serve as well as peer organizations about how to reach our full potential as a faith-based, not-for-profit organization serving 74 counties in South Texas."

## Take 'Racism is Health Equity Issue' Pledge

Institutionalized racism, a significant issue faced by different racial and ethnic groups in the United States and across the globe, too often leads to pervasive health inequities. Many of these inequities are also perpetuated by implicit bias and the history, policies, and structure of many institutions. Inequities lead to a seemingly endless cycle of injustice that spans generations. It is crucial to recognize that racism is a key health equity issue. It is our duty as individuals, leaders, and professionals to champion the movement for health and racial equity within our communities and organizations.

Join us in signing this **pledge** and committing to raise awareness within your own community and/or organization about racism and its many negative consequences on the lives and well-being of people, and to mitigate its impact on decision-making processes, policies, and all kinds of investments in local communities.



**#RACISMISAEALTHEQUITYISSUE**

**SIGN THIS PLEDGE AND BECOME A CHAMPION FOR HEALTH EQUITY TODAY!**

**Sign the Pledge**

## From our *Health Equity Blog*



### [Looking at How the COVID-19 Pandemic Has Amplified Existing Health Inequities](#)

In this post, HEI's Co-Vice President, Board of Directors, **Dr. Upal Basu Roy**, shares how COVID-19 has exposed and exacerbated already-existing inequities among marginalized communities.



### [Communicating about Health Equity: Why Is There So Much Hesitancy among Communication Professionals?](#)

There are unfortunately many gaps in communication between health professionals and individuals who are impacted by health inequities. In this post, guest blogger **Chelsea Dade**, MPH, of Communicate for Health Justice discusses some of the reasons

behind these gaps as well as some possible solutions.



### [Paid Sick Leave Policy and the Impact on Health Equity](#)

**Bree Bode**, PhD Candidate, Co-Chair of HEI's Professional Development Member Committee and **Friso van Reesema**, MPH, HEI's Board Member and Board Secretary write about inequities in access to paid sick leave, especially relevant during the COVID-19 outbreak.

## Upcoming HEI Event

### **Online Quarterly Social Event, *Health Equity Meet-Up* July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020, 5:30 - 7:00 pm**

HEI is excited to announce that we will be hosting our next quarterly social event on **Wednesday, July 22<sup>nd</sup>**. Health Equity Meet-Ups provide informal spaces for HEI members and broader community to interact, connect, and share information. Due to COVID-19, this event will be hosted virtually. However, it will most certainly be as enjoyable and valuable as previous meet-ups!

If you haven't done so already, please [RSVP](#) to obtain the Zoom link for the event. We look forward to seeing you there!

## Community Leaders Forum "COVID-19: Emerging Community Needs and Policy Solutions"



On Wednesday, July 8, 2020, HEI hosted a community leaders' forum to highlight the experience and insights of community leaders from across the United States. The discussion focused on (a) how the coronavirus underscores many of the challenges we already knew existed with health equity, (b) emerging needs in the communities served or represented by the community leaders in attendance; and (c) community-driven ideas for policy solutions that may address emerging needs and priorities that contribute to COVID-19 inequities. This [Forum](#) is the first in a series of upcoming events and community discussions. It's also an important component of Health Equity Initiative's long-standing capacity-building and advocacy efforts in support of raising the influence of community voices on health equity solutions.

Participants included **Paulette Spencer** of Bronx Community Health Network, **Teneasha Washington** of the National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability, **Annette Roque-Lewis** of La Nueva Esperanza, and **Amy Vu** of FEAST. This informative and moving forum was moderated by [Renata Schiavo](#), who serves as Founder and President on HEI Board of Directors, and [Tonya Lewis Lee](#)—entrepreneur, producer, writer, advocate, health equity champion, and founder of Movita, as well as a much appreciated friend of Health Equity Initiative. Tonya also delivered the Forum's opening remarks.

Please listen to our recording of the forum [here](#) and stay tuned for the upcoming report and call to action!

## We Want to Hear from You! Participate in HEI Professional Development and Capacity Building Online Survey!

Did you take yet our [Professional Development and Capacity Building Opportunities Survey](#)? We know these are busy and unprecedented times, but your responses will help Health Equity Initiative meet your capacity building and professional development needs through our webinars, event series, and other future offerings. Your opinion is important—especially in light of the current COVID-19 pandemic and recent episodes of racism and other forms of bias that continue to affect our communities. In this moment, it is critical to build further capacity among communities and organizations, so that all together we can design and implement effective solutions to address health, racial, and social inequities.

Your responses will help inform our future programs and activities in support of health and racial equity as well as help us meet your needs and priorities! Please take 10 minutes to complete this [survey](#). Finally, **thank you** to everyone who already completed it!

[Take the Survey](#)

## Please help support the resolution to form a United States Commission on Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation!

Based on work by [Dr. Gail Christopher](#) and the initial [Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation \(TRHT\) coalition](#), which was spearhead by the Kellogg Foundation in partnership with 144+ organizations—including us at **Health Equity Initiative**—a resolution to introduce a Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation (TRHT) Commission was introduced to the U.S. congress.

This proposed commission aims to examine the impact of slavery, systemic racism and their influence on our nation's policies. More information on this proposed bill can be found here: <https://haaland.house.gov/media/press-releases/wake-covid-19-george-floyd-s-murder-haaland-co-leads-introduction-bill-address>

Health Equity Initiative supports this bill and invites our members and followers to endorse it as well. If you support this resolution, please contact your representative here: <https://house.gov/representative>

## Resources from Our Network on Health Equity (during COVID-19 and beyond)

- County Health Rankings, **How Healthy is Your Community**: <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>
- Diversity Data Kids, **Policy Equity Assessments for Early Child Development (ECD) and Child Health**: <http://diversitydatakids.org/policy-equity-assessments>
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, **To Help Recover From COVID-19, We Need**

**Universal Free School Meals:** <https://www.rwjf.org/en/blog/2020/07/to-help-recover-from-covid-19-we-need-universal-free-school-meals.html>

- Diversity Data Kids, **Tackling child poverty in the wake of COVID-19:** <http://diversitydatakids.org/income-work-and-family>
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, **Caring for Mental Health in Communities of Color During COVID-19:** <https://www.rwjf.org/en/blog/2020/05/caring-for-mental-health-in-communities-of-color-during-covid-19.html>

## Take Action!



There are many ways to get involved with Health Equity Initiative. Learn about how you can **take action** and support health equity!

### About Health Equity Initiative

Health Equity Initiative (HEI) is a member-driven membership organization dedicated to building and sustaining a global community that engages across sectors and disciplines to advance health equity. By bringing together and enlisting the efforts of the public and private sectors, professions and communities that have both a stake and an influence on social determinants of health, HEI advocates for improving conditions and achieving equity in health for all. We focus on championing transformative change, supporting knowledge, engaging communities and leaders, and building capacity across sectors and disciplines to address barriers that prevent people from leading healthy and productive lives. HEI is a federally recognized 501(c)3 organization.

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Become a Member

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