

## **Equity Wrap-Up Report Outline**

Baltimore City Health Department  
FY 2021 Equity Wrap-Up Report  
Charles Jackson, Health Equity Director

### **1. Reflecting on Our Progress**

- a. Lessons learned from conducting the 2020 Equity Assessment
- b. Summary of progress made towards advancing equity in FY 2021, including challenges

### **1. Reflecting on Our Progress**

- a. Lessons learned from conducting the 2020 Equity Assessment
  - i. There was a need to hire someone dedicated to equity work at BCHD.
  - ii. Equity work was done with intentionality in some programs, but not across the agency.
  - iii. There was a need to provide training to all staff to get everyone up to a basic level of understanding of equity.
  - iv. We Identified racism as a public health issue as one of our agency's strategic priorities but needed to define what that means and how we can implement it to make a change.
  - v. The assessment highlighted that BCHD should ensure that all of our programs and services are more accessible to those with limited English proficiency and people living with disabilities
  - vi. An equity analysis was needed for BCHD budgets, contracts, staffing, and of our boards/commissions.
- b. Summary of progress made towards advancing equity in FY 2021, including challenges
  - i. Summary of progress made:
    - 1. Hired dedicated Health Equity Director
    - 2. Convened monthly meetings of the Equity Committee
    - 3. Developed two sub-committees (one internally-focused and one externally-focused) which also meet monthly
    - 4. Sub-committees are currently focused on developing action plans using the Results-Based Accountability model

Challenges: (1) Equitable Pay. (2) Staff reflecting the community  
Pay and staffing are challenges due to (1) equitable pay is not completely in the purview of the Health Department as it includes multiple departments internal and external which create pay grades etc. (2) Currently the staff resembles the majority racial make-up of the city, but the leadership team does not.

<b>2. Equity Highlights FY 2021</b>
a. Timeline of new or revised policies, programs, initiatives, etc. created/continued related to diversity, equity, and inclusion

**February 2020 – Supported the Elijah Cummings Healing City Act** – The Act focused on integrating comprehensive and culturally relevant trauma-informed approaches into Baltimore City department agencies.

**June 2020 – Social innovations** – The STD/HIV team took a human-centered approach to develop health messaging to address inequities, stigma and discrimination, and community engagement using a variety of media. Their activities included storytelling events, awareness events, producing educational materials, social media, etc. They developed a People Who Look Like Me (#PWLLM) campaign that focused on HIV prevention, treatment, and anti-stigma messaging using community residents as models and storytellers with television commercials that ran between June-November 2020. The "Last Rodeo" was an event held in June 2021 that provided a virtual platform for LGBTQ+ people to share artistic talents and learn about sexual health wellness during Baltimore PRIDE month.

**September 2020 - Drafted Equity Strategic Plan** – This plan was created to help to create the foundation for moving equity forward in the organization. The goals include: (1) Addressing Racism as a Public Health Issue. (2) Staff is a reflection of the community we serve and (3) defining what racism, health equity, and inclusion mean for the organization.

**September 2020 – Baltimore City Commission on Aging** - Members voted on a resolution to focus on ageism and racism as a priority issue for older adults.

**November 2020 - Created Equity Committee** – The committee was created as a forum to develop race/equity structural suggestions on culture and celebrate gold standard efforts. The Equity Committee currently includes a diverse representation of every department, functioning as a body with an internal employee and external employee staff. The Equity Committee also informs HR and senior leadership based on feedback received from staff on building a culture of equity and inclusion.

**November 2020 - Ryan White Planning Council** – The committee created a Needs Assessment for people at risk for or living with HIV. There was a one-year planning process with numerous committees and working groups, several led by community members and all community members represented. The members included representation by individuals of diverse races, gender, and sexual orientation.

**November 2020-Ending the HIV Epidemic (EHE) Community Working Group –**

The working group was formed in the spring of 2020. This cross-section of community members and HIV advocates successfully concluded an initial comprehensive process of reviewing and providing documented feedback in the development of the city’s Ending the HIV Epidemic plan. Working with the HPG and the Ryan White Planning Council, this group provides ongoing feedback and guidance on Baltimore City's Ending the HIV Epidemic activities.

**December 2020- Baltimore City HIV Planning Group and Commission (HPG)-**

**HPG** successfully recruited and held orientation and training for 25 new and returning HPG members. HPG membership includes community members who represent various populations affected by and/or work in the HIV field including faith-based leaders, youth service representatives, transgender people, clinical and nonclinical providers, the philanthropic community, seniors, academia, and long-term HIV advocates. They guide BCHD on HIV prevention and care-related activities and amplify the voices of the community in all decision making.

**December 2020-Baltimore City's Ending the HIV (EHE) Epidemic Plan (2020-2030)** –The plan provides the city’s vision, goals, strategies, and activities for a 90% reduction in the number of new HIV infections in Baltimore City by 2030. Developed through an equity lens, with community members driving the prioritization of strategies, this plan is a living document intended to decrease HIV related disparities and ensure that all Baltimoreans are Diagnosed as early as possible, provided HIV Prevention education and commodities, are Treated or linked to care as efficiently as possible, and that we work with partners to Respond to outbreaks promptly and adequately.

**December 2020 - Sexual Health Strategic Plan** – developed in conjunction with

Maternal and Child Health Department, addressed sexual and reproductive health in the city’s youth with an sexual health and reproductive justice lens, to address disparities and inequity. The plan was reviewed by and included input from several community groups to achieve perspectives from diverse voices.

**December 2020 - Funding allocations** – the bureau of HIV/STI prevention provides funding to the community for HIV prevention, HIV testing, sexual health education, etc. Funding is prioritized to those addressing high-risk areas of the city by geography, racial or ethnic groups, age, or other high-risk groups. The goal is to distribute funding in a way to address issues of equity, marginalization, and those in greatest need.

**June 2021 - the Bureau of School Health Hearing and Vision** - Screeners began using face masks with a clear panel to allow them to better communicate with students with hearing problems who need to lip read. The staff determined that these masks were also helpful in communicating with English Language Learners. Students were better able to respond to instructions communicated via gesture if they could also observe facial cues.

**August 2021 - Language Access Toolkit Development** – BCHD has identified a Language Access Coordinator and has been participating in design sessions led by the Mayor’s Office of Performance Innovation for the development of the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs’ Language Access Toolkit. BCHD staff has participated in three design sessions thus far to help shape and create content for the toolkit.

**August 2021 - Local Health Improvement Coalition (LHIC) Reconvening** – The LHIC brought together representatives from Baltimore City healthcare systems, community-based organizations, faith-based institutions, businesses, foundations, and other sectors across the city to drive improved health outcomes at the population level with a focus on addressing the Social Determinants of Health.

**September 2021 - Publication** - the Bureau of School Health distributed the publication “*Spanish for the School Nurse’s Office*” to school health staff, focusing on schools with the largest percentage of students whose primary language is Spanish.

**Ongoing - Hiring staff** – The STD/HIV Department consistently works to hire a diverse workforce, representative of the population we serve.

**Ongoing - Clinical program** –Sexual Health and Wellness clinics exist to be a safety net for those who otherwise cannot access traditional medical services, for a variety of reasons. We focus on making ourselves accessible and fostering an environment of inclusion. Being able to serve a diverse population and address issues of inequity is a cornerstone of our program. We provide HIV treatment, HCV treatment, PrEP, and STI screening and treatment to be able to serve those in greatest need, whatever the cause may be. We had several trainings for our staff and are constantly looking for ways to improve these aspects of our program.

**Ongoing - Field Services** – we have several field teams that bring services to the community/field to ‘reach people where they are’ to try to mitigate issues of inequity. We strive to serve a diverse group of people. Teams include our HIV/STI outreach team (not active during 2020 due to COVID-19), mobile van (SPOT) providing medical services, Hep C treatment, and buprenorphine drug treatment, or linkage to care teams.

**Ongoing - Resiliency in Communities After Stress and Trauma (ReCAST)** - ReCAST has adopted a community participatory approach in grantmaking as well as in hiring key staff for the project. This transparency and collaboration is made up of over 60 community-based and grassroots organizations in the 21217 zip code which includes a multitude of neighborhoods.

**Ongoing - COVID-19 Response -**

**Hiring staff:** a high amount of attention was paid to hiring a diverse staff as part of the contact tracing and outbreak teams for COVID-19 via the Baltimore Health Corps program. A hiring algorithm was created to focus on recruiting individuals in neighborhoods hardest impacted by COVID-19 and representing underrepresented groups. It was a high priority to hire staff who represented the entire community of Baltimore, were diverse, and unemployed due to COVID-19. A priority was placed on hiring staff who represented local communities.

**COVID-19 testing** - the driving goal of our entire COVID-19 testing program is to ensure COVID-19 testing is easily accessible to those who don't otherwise have access to healthcare and COVID-19 testing through other means. We want to be sure to be inclusive, address inequities in COVID-19 prevention and COVID-19 transmission.

**COVID-19 response** – Throughout the COVID-19 response, there has been constant attention paid to inequities in COVID-19 in the community. We formed a Latinx working group to address the high rates of COVID-19 in the Latinx community and worked closely with community partners to enhance testing, contact tracing, and education. Across many vulnerable groups, we enhanced messaging to employers about providing equitable sick time and paid time off, and partnered with others to provide services to assist those to isolate and quarantine (housing, food, cash assistance, etc.). VALUE (Vaccine Access and Acceptance Lives in Unity, Education, and Engagement) Community Workgroups were created to address multiple diverse targeted populations including Orthodox Jewish community members, young men, pregnant and lactating women, immigrants, pediatric populations, those experiencing homelessness/unsheltered, faith, and people with disabilities.

<b>3. A Strategy for Meaningful Change</b>	
a.	How does your agency plan to continue to advance equity in Baltimore City in FY22?
i.	<b>Diversity and Equity-</b> Here you will provide a statement that expresses your agency's commitment to advancing diversity and equity in your agency.
1.	Detail any measures, if applicable, that your agency has taken
ii.	<b>Inclusion and Belonging-</b> Here you will provide a statement that expresses your agency's commitment to improving/maintaining a healthy work environment that promotes inclusion and belonging.
1.	Detail any measures, if applicable, that your agency has taken
iii.	<b>External Impact-</b> Here you will provide a statement that expresses your agency's commitment to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in our communities.
1.	Detail any measures, if applicable, that your agency has taken

**Diversity and Equity –**

*Diversity* - The Baltimore City Health Department will advance diversity by reviewing demographic data and creating actions steps to make sure that the staff of the Baltimore City Health Department resembles the community that the organization serves.



*Equity* – Giving access to resources in a way that our staff and the community require it.

- BCHD Equity Committee co-created a definition for the organization to follow. The working definition: Health Equity ensures every person has the opportunity to attain their full health potential

**Inclusion and Belonging** – creating a place that is open to all employee voices which allows for a brave space for each employee to be heard, seen, and affirmed.

**External Impact** – Addressing conditions of the Social Determinants of Health and Equity by implementing a Health in All Policy approach and reviewing the level of access that positively and negatively affect health outcomes.

- **Measurement:** Using the Results-Based Accountability Approach to measure how much, how well, and is anyone better off in our initiatives. Results-Based Accountability (RBA) is a partner to a public health approach. It was developed by Mark Friedman of the Fiscal Policies Studies Institute and it is a disciplined way of thinking and taking action that can be used to improve quality of life in communities, cities, counties, states, and nations, as well as to improve the performance of programs.
- **Data:** promoting transparency and data sharing between other agencies and the community with a focus on COVID-19 data.

**b. FY22 Goals and objectives**

- **Diversity, Inclusion and Equity Implementation**
  - Moving from action planning into implementation starting with all departments who currently serve on the DEI committee
- **Training/Conversations**
  - Training Senior Leadership and Equity Committee Members on topics, including but not limited to Cultural Competency, Centering Equity, Unconscious Bias et.
- **Evaluation**
  - Collecting Diversity, Equity and Inclusion information relevant and beginning the process of review actions taken

