

# CREATING AN EQUITY-FOCUSED HEALTH DEPARTMENT

## *Our Path to Progress*

### NOHD Health Equity Initiative:

NOHD is part of a national initiative to support public health transformation in local health departments. We are using this opportunity to integrate *equity*—fair and just inclusion—as a guiding principle for our work and to examine health equity issues facing children, youth and families (CYF).

### Health Equity Working Definition

**Health equity** means all people and communities have the opportunity to attain their full potential and highest level of health. Achieving health equity requires valuing everyone equally while focusing on eliminating inequities experienced by groups that have experienced greater obstacles to health based on their racial or ethnic group, income, gender, neighborhood or other characteristics historically linked to discrimination or exclusion. It also requires addressing the social, economic and environmental conditions (such as housing, employment, public safety, and education) that create unjust differences in health status and opportunities for health in communities.

Adopted from DHHS/CDC, APHA and Boston Public Health Commission

### What We're Doing (January – August 2016)

#### Internal Activities

- Organizational assessment including a health equity staff survey, focus groups and management interviews
- Strategic planning including developing a health equity framework and theory of change
- Examining best practices from leading public health agencies and other local health departments

#### External Activities

- Listening sessions and discussions with:
  - Community-based leaders and nonprofit organizations
  - Community members
  - City government partners

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### Health Equity Initiative Key Deliverables & Timeline for 2016:

- **Health Equity Framework** that includes:
  - Health equity definition and key terms, theory of change and guiding principles.
  - An outline of activities and strategies to promote the health and wellbeing of children, youth and families.
  - A roadmap for focusing our efforts in areas where NOHD can have the most impact.
- An **organizational strategy** for institutionalizing equity principles at NOHD through staff training, quality improvement measures, and other strategies that build the department's capacity to address health inequities.

