

# Health Equity Statement:

In 2018, the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) adopted a formal, agency-wide health equity policy. A statement on health equity is also supplied here:

**Eliminating Health Disparities.** According to Healthy People 2020, “There are many dimensions of disparities that exist in the United States, particularly in health. A health disparity is a health difference that is closely linked with social, economic, or environmental disadvantage.” It is incumbent upon ISDH to assess health issues facing the community, identify health disparities, and support and enable meaningful access to essential health services for all Hoosiers in a manner that: is culturally and linguistically appropriate; advances health equity; supports continuous quality improvement; eliminates health disparities; and addresses incidents of high morbidity and mortality, to include that among underserved and overlooked populations.

**Addressing Health Inequities and Anti-racism.** Health inequities are systemic differences in the health status of different population groups. These inequities often have considerable social and economic costs both to individuals and societies. We will continually engage in the active process to identify, address, and dismantle the structures, policies, and norms that perpetuate race-based and other advantages so that optimal health outcomes are achieved for all.

**Health in All Policies.** Health in All Policies is a collaborative approach to improving the health of all people by incorporating health considerations into decision-making across sectors and policy areas. The goal of Health in All Policies is to ensure that all decision-makers are informed about the health, equity, and sustainability consequences of various policy options during the policy development process. For example, Health in All Policies builds on successful inter-sectoral collaboration, such as efforts to implement water fluoridation, reduce lead exposure, restrict tobacco use in workplaces and public spaces, improve sanitation and drinking water quality, reduce domestic violence and drunk driving, and require the use of seatbelts and child car seats. Ultimately the Health in All Policies approach seeks to institutionalize considerations of health, equity, and sustainability as a standard part of decision-making processes across a broad array of sectors.

**Examining Social Determinants of Health.** Social determinants of health are conditions in the environment in which people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks. Healthy People 2020 has developed a “place-based” organizing framework, reflecting five (5) key areas of social determinants of health: economic stability; education; social and community context; health and health care; and neighborhood and built environment. Objectives and resources are identified for each of the five (5) areas. The goal is to enhance quality of life and influence population health outcomes. ISDH will better serve Hoosiers by identifying and exploring the impact of social determinants of health and take a Health in All Policies approach to address key drivers of health outcomes and health inequities.

# How Will Indiana Work to Achieve Health Equity?

ISDH will support the following statement on health equity and the importance of Health in all Policies as an approach to addressing social determinants of health as key drivers of health outcomes and health inequities:

## **To achieve health equity, ISDH will focus on the following short- and long-term actions:**

- 1) Actively pursue and intervene in root causes of health inequity and disparity to include social determinants of health.
- 2) Be attentive and develop targeted, collaborative approaches to combat health inequities and disparities in vulnerable communities as a result of deficits in any of the five (5) key areas of social determinants of health: economic stability; education; social and community context; health and health care; and neighborhood and built environment.
- 3) Promote equal opportunities for all people to achieve optimal health through a Health in All Policies approach.
- 4) Create communication strategies targeted at both internal and external stakeholders to share evidence-based education on reducing health disparities and the need to distribute appropriate and available resources to promote health equity.
- 5) Continually improve and sustain ISDH's internal processes, policies and procedures, and manage performance against best practices that result in the reduction of avoidable health inequities and disparities.