



OVERVIEW

North Carolina is committed to reimagining their culture of public health, using data modernization as a strategy to achieve health equity. In collaboration with the new Office of Health Equity, the North Carolina Department of Public Health's (NCDPH) newly appointed Chief Data Officer is working alongside partners to develop a strategic plan that emphasizes and enables equitable data evaluation, collection, quality control, and dissemination. Through this Cohort, North Carolina will have the opportunity to bring partners together for a Health Equity Data Summit.

Participation in the [21st Century Learning Community](#) enhances all data modernization and transformation efforts.

Centering Health Equity and Well-Being in Narrative Change

NCDPH is taking a multifaceted and collaborative approach to communications to center health equity and wellbeing, emphasizing health and data literacy, and including inclusive teams to tell the story of the data.

NCDPH's health equity data team is working to curate North Carolina's first health equity dashboard to:

- Provide easy to understand data visualizations;
- Explain the differences between disparities and inequities; and
- Inform users on structural determinants of health and related legislation.

In collaboration with the University of North Carolina Sheps Center for Health Services Research, NCDPH's epidemiology section has also created public facing dashboards that share outcomes for various social determinants of health disaggregated across marginalized groups.

Presenting data in a way that uses an asset framing approach and prioritizes plain language and visualization, and reduces racial bias and stigmas in storytelling, ensures that every community's story is told with respect, transparency, and equity.



Prioritizing Equitable Governance and Community Engagement

To pursue equity, external partners and the data they generate must be considered in data infrastructure and governance plans. During the COVID-19 pandemic, public health institutions relied heavily on the community connections, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU). NCDPH values the HBCUs and the unique subject-matter expertise they offer to increase understanding, reach, and service to historically marginalized populations. NCDPH created an HBCU data collection consortium as a model to deepen relationships that incorporate:

- Community engagement;
- Minority-serving institution infrastructure building;
- Enhanced historically marginalized population equity data; and
- Reciprocal data literacy.

NCDPH is also providing funding to local health departments for data modernization efforts including systems upgrades, technical assistance, and training to improve upon data collection, analysis, and community level interventions.

Ensure Measurement Captures & Addresses Structural Racism & Other Inequities

The process by which data has historically been collected, analyzed, and communicated contains significant equity pitfalls. To capture the level to which structural racism and other determinants of health impact the population, new surveillance tools and non-traditional data sources need to be developed and incorporated. NCDPH conducted an in-depth gap-analysis to identify equity gaps within data and its processes and has used these findings to inform recommendations for:

- Data collection and reporting requirements for vendors;
- Democratizing data by expanding data sharing; and
- Use agreements, and increasing opportunities for internal and external collaborations.

Learn more about the Equity in Data Systems Transformation cohort [here](#).