



## POSITION STATEMENT

### Health Equity

#### I. **ASTHO and the undersigned members of the Affiliate Council Commit to Health Equity**

The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) and the undersigned Affiliate Council Members commit to efforts to improve health equity and eliminate health disparities. We support the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' *National Stakeholder Strategy to Achieve Health Equity*, its *Action Plan to Reduce Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*, and ASTHO's [President's Challenge on Health Equity](#). The President's Challenge is an opportunity for the ASTHO president to encourage and challenge ASTHO's members and affiliates to focus on a public health issue of significance. For Commissioner John Auerbach's presidency, he chose achieving health equity by eliminating health disparities as his challenge.

#### II. **Within this Context , ASTHO and the undersigned members of the Affiliate Council Commit to:**

- a. Evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of existing health equity-focused work and activities.
- b. Share promising models or best practices in the technical assistance provided to our members.
- c. Adopt the goals and mission of HHS's *National Stakeholder Strategy to Achieve Health Equity*, and HHS's *Action Plan to Reduce Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities* to guide health equity and health disparities work.
- d. Work in partnership with states to develop health equity strategic plans.
- e. Increase accountability surrounding the importance of integrating health equity into the work we do as ASTHO Affiliates.

#### III. **Shared Definitions:**

**Health equity:** Health equity exists when all people have the opportunity to thrive and no one is limited in achieving comprehensive health and wellness because of their social position or any other social factors/determinant of health (i.e. income, education, race/ethnicity, sexual identity, disability).

**Health inequity:** Health inequities exist when there are differences in health outcomes which are...unnecessary and avoidable...unfair and unjust. Health inequities are systematic disparities in health, or in the major social determinants of health, between groups with different levels of underlying social advantage/disadvantage (for example, by virtue of being poor, female, or members of a disenfranchised racial/ethnic, religious, or sexual minority).

#### IV. **Background**

ASTHO and the Affiliate Council (or undersigned members of the Affiliate Council) support the goals and mission of the Affordable Care Act, *HHS's National Stakeholder Strategy to Achieve*



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*Health Equity, and Action Plan to Reduce Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities.* The three initiatives are outlined below.

- The Affordable Care Act offers the opportunity and potential to address the needs of racial and ethnic minority populations by reducing the cost of health care, increasing the investment in prevention and wellness, supporting primary care improvements and creating partnerships between the public health and health care field and social services.
- The HHS Action Plan to Reduce Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities builds on the strong groundwork of the Affordable Care Act and is supported by other federal programs and initiatives such as Healthy People 2020, which has adopted new objectives related to social determinants of health.
- The National Stakeholder Strategy to Achieve Health Equity provides a flexible road map for public and private sector partnerships to work together on initiatives and programs to achieve health equity.

### ASTHO's Health Equity Policy Statement

Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs

Association of Public Health Laboratories

Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors

Association of State and Territorial Directors of Nursing

Association of State and Territorial Health Officials

Association of State and Territorial Public Health Nutrition Directors

Directors of Health Promotion and Education

National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems

National Association of State Offices of Minority Health Officers

National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors

National Association of Chronic Disease Directors

National Coalition of STD Directors

Safe States Alliance