

INTRODUCTION

The board's unique position to advance health equity

| APR 03, 2024

<https://www.chartis.com/insights/boards-unique-position-advance-health-equity>

As a member of a hospital or health system's board of directors, you've no doubt discussed the pressing need to address health inequities in your community. Society is calling for it, and regulators are requiring it. But health inequities also cut to the very heart and purpose of healthcare organizations: caring for individual people and the collective well-being of the community.

While addressing health inequity is no simple task, the board is in a unique position to ensure the organization converts good intentions into meaningful outcomes. The board plays a critical role in providing oversight of the organization's strategic direction and leadership; commitment to environmental, social, and governance (ESG) issues; stewardship of financial sustainability; and accountability for community benefit.

Health equity promotes patient, community, and organization health

\$421–\$451 BILLION

Estimated economic burden of racial and ethnic health inequities.¹

In addition to the strong mission-based imperative of cultivating health equity and belonging, there's a compelling business case.

Organizations can minimize the risks related to public perception and trust, noncompliance, and the associated consequences. They can improve engagement and the experience for their workforce and patients. They can make care more accessible and affordable. And they can increase quality, safety, and outcomes of care.

On the financial side, this course of action should support long-term sustainability from increased clinical revenue, decreased healthcare expenditures, and greater operational efficiencies.²

Ultimately, the broader impact on the community will also be clear as quality of life, life expectancy, morbidities, and economic health improve.

Engage senior leaders with questions that drive the organization forward

This collection highlights three timely areas of opportunity for boards to engage with their organization's senior leaders:

- Building health equity into the workforce
- Leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) applications for health equity
- Creating equitable access to care

These insights were created in partnership with the Chartis Health Equity Advisory Board, whose members draw on their experience as prominent executives and board members of industry-leading healthcare organizations. Together, we identify key questions boards should raise, implications, and examples of efforts underway at leading healthcare organizations.

With the power of their boards behind them, organizations can be beacons of hope, transforming healthcare for all in ways previously unattained. They can provide increasingly high-quality care—made conveniently accessible for everyone—and support the health and well-being of their workforce and communities, through direct patient care and beyond.

Sources

¹ Thomas A. LaVeist, PhD, et al, "The Economic Burden of Racial, Ethnic, and Educational Health Inequities in the U.S.," JAMA, May 16, 2023, <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/article-abstract/2804818>.

² Therese Wetterman and Lea Tompsett, "Capturing Value in Social Health: Lessons in Developing the Business Case for Social Health Integration in Primary Care," The Commonwealth Fund, January 31, 2022, <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/issue-briefs/2022/jan/capturing-value-social-health-lessons-developing-business-case>

Our services

STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATION

PERFORMANCE TRANSFORMATION

DIGITAL & TECHNOLOGY TRANSFORMATION

CHARTIS CENTERS FOR AI & STRATEGIC INTELLIGENCE

PAYER TRANSFORMATION

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS & CHANGE MANAGEMENT