



What is Health Equity? Discussion Guide from The Colorado Trust

This discussion guide is a tool for individuals and organizations to answer a fundamental question – what is health equity? Health equity has garnered much attention in recent years and yet there is little consensus on its meaning. A number of international and national experts have written extensively on the issue in order to clarify and advance a common definition.

To support and advance the conversation around health equity in Colorado, The Colorado Trust is providing two resources to create a dialogue on the topic of health equity. First, Dr. Paula Braveman a leading national expert on health equity, discussed barriers to achieving optimal health faced by racial and ethnic minorities, low-income and other disadvantaged populations at The Colorado Trust on January 31. Dr. Braveman provided an overview of health equity and health disparities, definitional differences and commonalities. A video of the event will be available on The Colorado Trust’s website in the near future. Second, The Colorado Trust is distributing an article authored by Dr. Braveman titled *Health Disparities and Health Equity: The Issue is Justice* as an additional resource to spark conversations. The article provides further background and context to Dr. Braveman’s January 31 presentation.

After viewing the presentation and/or reading the article, below are a set of discussion questions to consider as you further explore the definition and the applications to your own work.

1. The word “equity” means different things in the phrases “health equity” and “home equity.” What is the difference?
2. The dictionary defines “disparity” simply as a difference or variation. Can you think of an example of a health difference that you would not consider to be a health disparity?
3. What does your organization do now to reduce health disparities and move toward greater equity in health? What else could your organization do? What are the chief obstacles to doing more?
4. What are the opportunities for your organization to impact health equity and health disparities through your organization’s mission, vision and values?