



Foundations of Health Equity

Welcome to the Foundations of Health Equity course.

Each day, people in our community experience health challenges. Often, the cause of the challenge is not their fault. In this 30-minute course, you will learn what health equity is and how Trinity Health supports the health and well-being of those we serve.

To begin, click **START COURSE** above, or click the first lesson below.

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☰ Key Terms


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 Check Your Knowledge

PART 3: ADVANCING HEALTH EQUITY THROUGH ACTION

 Advancing Health Equity Through Action

 Trinity Health's Commitment to Advancing Health Equity

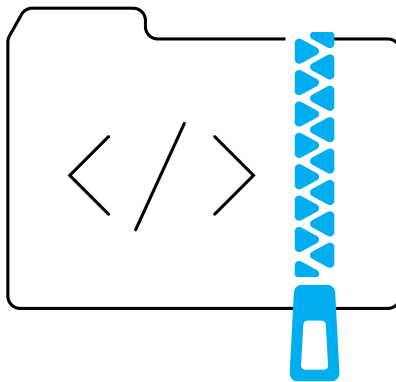
WRAP-UP

 How Do We Advance Health Equity Together?

Welcome

Health equity is a top priority at Trinity Health because it reflects our Mission and Core Values.

Click the **PLAY** button to learn more from LaRonda Haller, Senior Vice President, Health Equity and Human Impact (HEHI) department.



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Read the Transcript

Welcome to the Foundations of Health Equity course. I'm LaRonda Haller, Senior Vice President for Health Equity and Human Impact, and it's a privilege to welcome you and to thank you for your commitment to our Mission and to the people we serve.

At Trinity Health, health equity is not an initiative. It is a strategic priority and a reflection of who we are as a healing ministry. Our work is grounded in our Mission and Core Values, which cause us to honor the inherent dignity of every person.

We recognize two truths: First, that everyone has unique lived experiences, identities, traditions, abilities. And secondly, not every person has the same access to resources, opportunities or support. These differences shape health outcomes in profound ways, often influenced by circumstances well beyond a person's control. Because of this, we confront the realities of health disparities with courage, compassion and purpose.

We work to remove barriers to health and well-being so that every person we serve has a fair and just opportunity to achieve their best possible health.

This course is a key part of our system-wide strategy to advance health equity and the common good. It is designed to equip you with the knowledge, language and practical tools needed to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve.

You'll learn the core principles of health equity and why this work matters. Together, we'll explore the social and structural factors that drive health disparities and identify practical ways each of us can contribute to the solution.

Through real-world examples, you'll see how everyday actions, decisions and interactions can strengthen trust and advance equity.

No matter your role, whether you provide direct care, support operations or lead teams, you are essential to creating equitable outcomes for our patients, residents, families, colleagues and communities.

My hope is that this course will inform you, inspire you and empower you to take action. Advancing health equity is both a responsibility and an opportunity. Our opportunity to live our Mission more fully and build a health system that is just, compassionate and people centered.

Together, we can create a healthier future for every person we are privileged to serve.

Let's Continue

Learning Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to...

- 1 Explain health equity and other key terms
- 2 *Recognize the ways that Social Influencers of Health (SIOH) can influence the health outcomes of people and communities*
- 3 Explain Trinity Health's commitment to health equity
- 4 Take actions in your role at Trinity Health that support health equity

Let's get started!

Key Terms

Some of the terms in this course may not be familiar to you.

Click each flashcard below to learn what each term means at Trinity Health.

Equality

Equality
is giving everyone the
same thing.

Equity

Equity
is giving everyone what
they need.

Health Equity

Health Equity
means everyone has what
they need to be as healthy
as possible.

Social Influencers of Health (SIOH)

Social Influencers of Health (SIOH)

are social and environmental factors (nonmedical things) that influence health outcomes.

Health Disparities



Health Disparities

are unfair differences in health status between groups that can be prevented.

Let's Continue

Let's Take a Closer Look

Equality and Equity are NOT the same.

 <p>EQUALITY Equality is giving everyone the same thing.</p>	 <p>EQUITY Equity is giving everyone what they need.</p>
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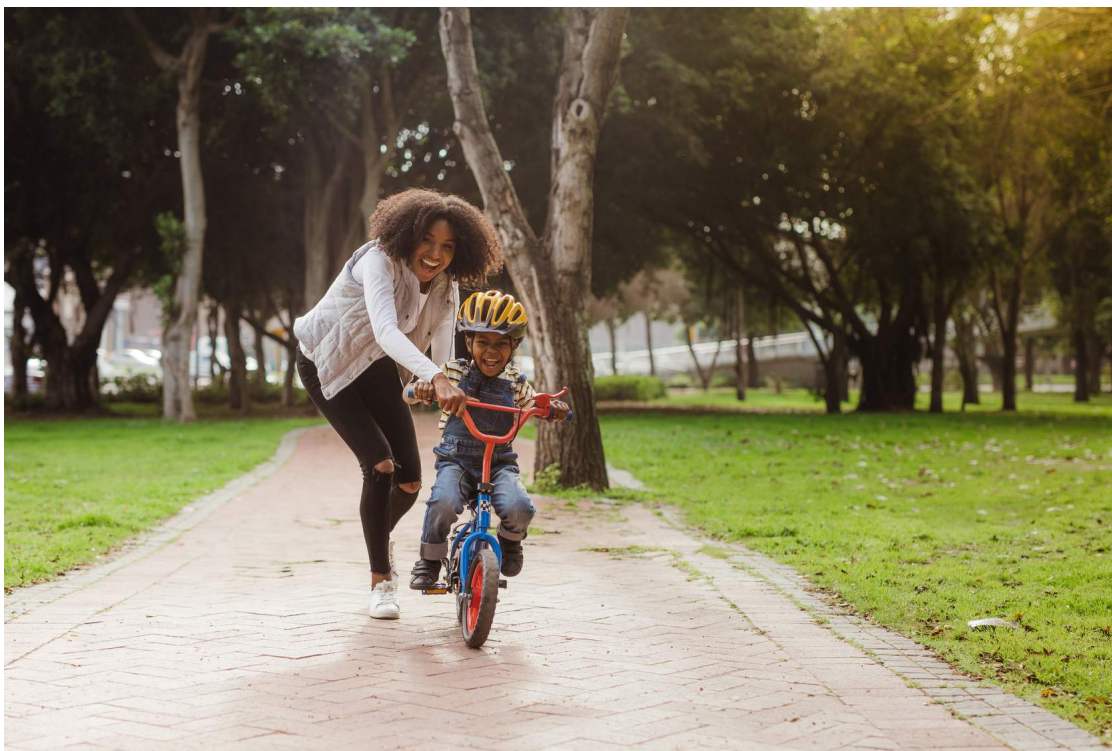
Think about it this way – since we do not all start off at the same place, with the same opportunities and resources, each of us may need something different to be healthy. In looking at the image, equality is making sure everyone has access to the apple tree. Equity is giving each person what they need to reach the apples.

Social Influencers of Health (SIOH)

Trinity Health's Perspective

You may have heard the phrase, Social Determinants of Health. However, at Trinity Health, we use the term **Social Influencers of Health (SIOH)** instead. Why? Because we believe that

social factors influence – *not determine* – health outcomes.



SIOH are the nonmedical factors that influence health outcomes.

These include conditions such as where people are born, grow, work, play, live and worship.



SIOH Examples

In simple terms, **Social Influencers of Health** are the **real-life, everyday factors** that make a difference in our health, such as **having a safe place to live, steady work, transportation and access to healthy food**. When these factors are unequal, they lead to **health disparities**.



Health Disparities

Simply put, **Health Disparities** are unfair differences in overall health among groups that can be prevented.

These PREVENTABLE health differences come from a history of unfair systems (e.g., health care access or education) that gave some groups fewer chances and resources.



Let's Continue

Check Your Knowledge

Drag the **term** to the correct **definition**.

When everyone has what they need to be as healthy as possible

Health Equity

Are social and environmental factors (nonmedical things) that influence health outcomes

Social Influencers of Health

Unfair differences in health status between groups that can be prevented

Health Disparities



Complete the content above before moving on.

Which of the following statements is **true**?

Check the best response.



Equity is providing people with what they need to achieve optimal health.



Equity and equality are the same thing.

SUBMIT

Let's Continue

Social Influencers of Health (SIOH) and Health Disparities

Health equity means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible.

- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

This means we need to:

- 1 Recognize that each person has unique needs and circumstances
- 2 Reduce any obstacles that we can
- 3 Remove any barriers that we can

We Can Do This By:

Making it easier to get care, ensuring people have enough food and building trust in health care.

These are just a few examples. Continue

Let's Continue

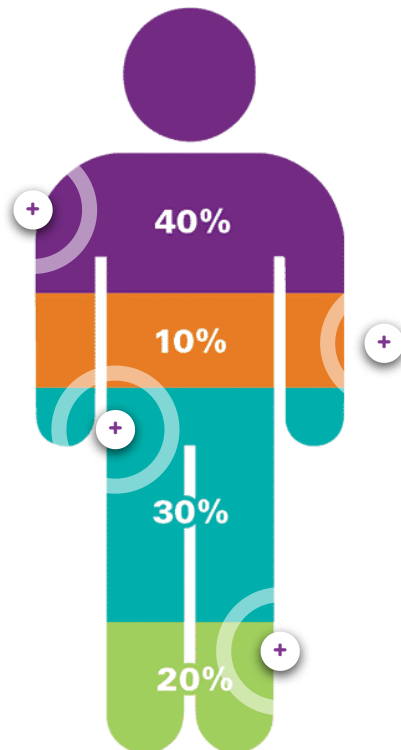
What Affects Our Health and Well-Being?

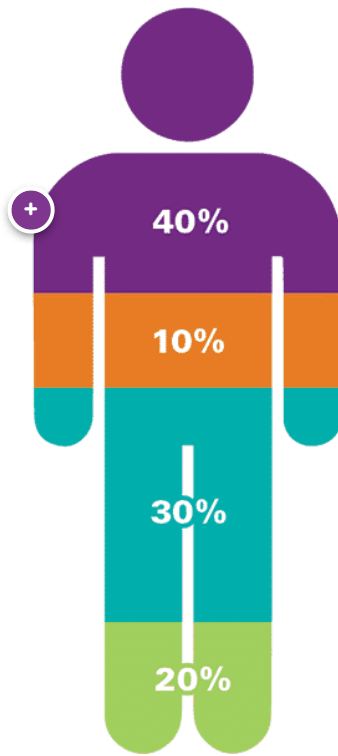
“Being healthy” is more than just going to the doctor or hospital.

Having access to doctors or hospitals only affects about **20%** of your health.

So, what affects the other **80%**?

Click each + sign to discover what else affects our health.





40%

Socioeconomic Factors



Education



Job Status



Family Social
Support

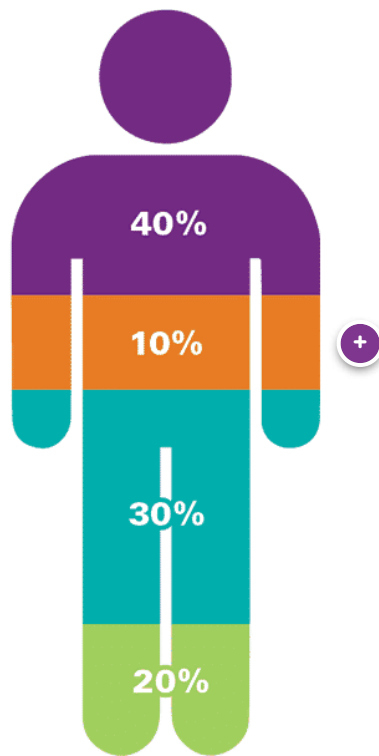


Income



Community
Safety

How much money people make, how far they went in school and what kind of job they have can all affect their health. These factors make it easier, or harder, to pay for basics like healthy food, a safe place to live and health care.

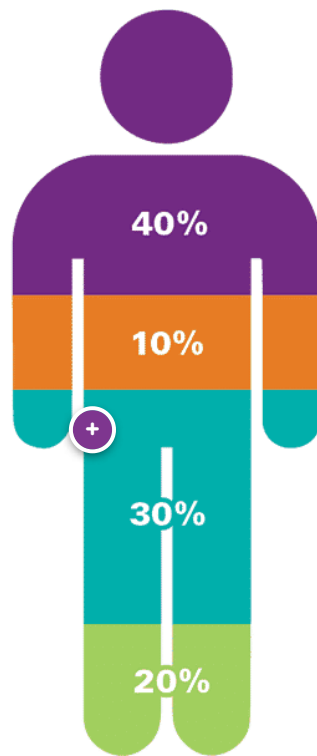


10%

Physical Environment



Our surroundings have a big impact on our health. Some neighborhoods face challenges like higher crime rates, unsafe drinking water, or homes with problems such as lead paint, mold, or asbestos. These issues can cause serious health problems. For example, lead can slow down how a child grows and learns, while mold and asbestos can make it hard to breathe. That is why having a safe and healthy place to live is so important for staying well.



30%

Health Behaviors



Tobacco
Use



Diet &
Exercise

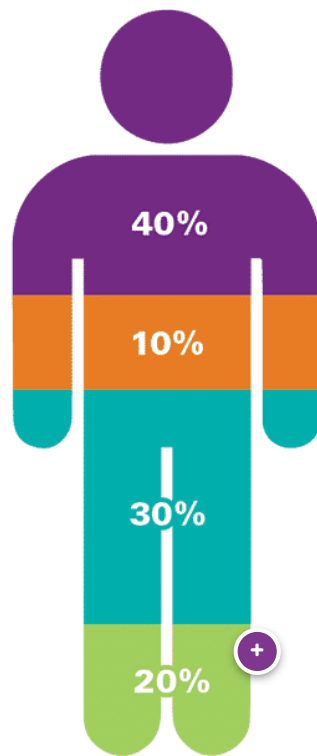


Alcohol
Use



Sexual
Activity

Our choices and habits also play a big role in our health. Eating healthy food helps us stay strong, but not everyone has easy access to healthier options, such as fresh fruits and vegetables. In some areas, called “food swamps,” people mostly shop at convenience stores or fast-food places, which often don’t offer healthy options. This can lead to health problems, such as diabetes and high blood pressure. Exercise matters, too! Walking is a free way to stay active, but not every neighborhood is safe or has sidewalks. Substance use, including tobacco, alcohol or drugs, also impacts health and can increase the risk of chronic disease.



20%

Health Care



Access to Care
Quality of Care

Having access to doctors, nurses, dentists and other health care providers is important for staying healthy. This allows people to get regular checkups, including when they are sick or not feeling well. Some individuals face challenges, such as not having insurance, living far from a hospital or not speaking the same language as their provider. When people cannot receive care, minor health problems can become serious. Quality care means getting help early, or when you need it, and having providers who make the patient feel seen, heard and valued. Making health care easier to reach helps people stay healthier and manage illnesses before they get worse.

Everything is Connected

Everything Is Connected

These factors don't happen alone. They are all connected and can affect people for many years. That is why it is important to look at the whole picture when thinking about health.

Let's Continue

Check Your Knowledge

Drag the **term** to the correct **health factor**.

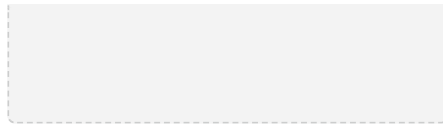
Income and Education

Socioeconomic Factors

Neighborhood

Physical Environment

Daily Habits



Health Behaviors

Doctor and Hospital Visits

Health Care



Complete the content above before moving on.

Choose all the factors that make up 80% of a person's health and well-being.

Check all that apply.

Socioeconomic factors

Physical environment

Health behaviors

Health care

SUBMIT

Let's Continue

Health Disparities are Barriers to Equity

These preventable health differences come from a history of unfair systems (e.g., health care access or education) that gave some groups fewer chances and resources.

To understand health disparities, we will look at three conditions where differences stand out: cancer, infant and maternal health, and diabetes.

Click each tab to see an example of how SIOH create health disparities for these conditions.

CANCER	INFANT AND MATERNAL HEALTH	DIABETES
<p>People living in rural Appalachia (remote areas) get colorectal, lung and cervical cancer screenings less often than those in nearby major cities.</p> <p>Social Influencers of Health: Harder to get screenings and fewer places to receive care</p>		



CANCER

**INFANT AND MATERNAL
HEALTH**

DIABETES

Black and Indigenous (American Indian and Alaska Native) women in the U.S. are two-three times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than white women.

Social Influencers of Health:

Barriers like limited prenatal care, unfair treatment and bias in health care, and trouble finding health information



CANCER

**INFANT AND MATERNAL
HEALTH**

DIABETES

In the U.S., about 13-19% of adults who didn't finish high school have diabetes.

Social Influencers of Health:

Not having enough money, not being able to find healthy food that doesn't cost too much, and not having safe places to play or exercise



Let's Continue

Lesson 9 of 13

How Social Influencers of Health and Health Disparities Impact Our Patients: Meet Maria

This is Maria.



She is a 39-year-old Afro-Latina woman who is married and raising three young children who are under the age of 10.

Her primary language is Spanish. She has a part-time job.

Maria has been struggling to manage asthma, high blood pressure and diabetes.

She wants to stay healthy and watch her children grow up, but her chronic conditions have been difficult to control.

Maria Made a Trip to the Emergency Department (ED).



Maria recently visited the Emergency Department with shortness of breath and dangerously high blood pressure. She was treated and discharged the same day. However, she returned eight days later with the same symptoms.

Here are the Challenges Maria Faced Before Readmission.



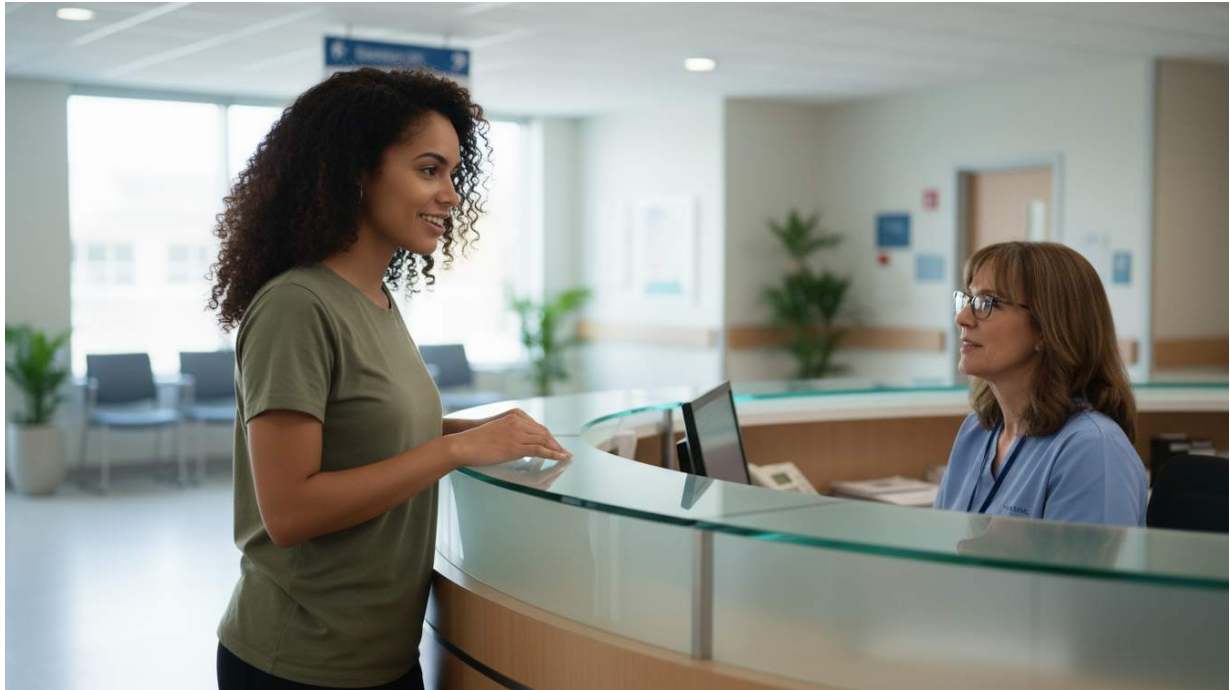
TRANSPORTATION: She had trouble finding a ride and could not attend her follow-up appointments.

ECONOMICS: She could not afford to purchase her prescribed medication.

LANGUAGE: She had trouble reading the discharge instructions, which were provided only in English.

PAST EXPERIENCES: She hesitated to seek help since she often feels unheard and misunderstood in health care settings.

What Can We Do to Help Prevent Readmission for Patients Like Maria?



DOCUMENT PREFERRED LANGUAGE: Record the patient's preferred language in the electronic health record.

SCREEN FOR SOCIAL NEEDS: Identify barriers such as food, housing or transportation.

CONNECT TO COMMUNITY RESOURCES: Use available resources linked in the patient's electronic health record and ZENworks to connect them to local services and support.

BE PRESENT AND CARING: Listen to understand and ask clarifying questions to ensure the patient feels seen, heard and understood.

Key Takeaway:

Looking at care through a health equity lens helps us focus on what we can control, *making sure every patient has a fair chance to be as healthy as possible.*

Let's Continue

Check Your Knowledge

What can we, as health care colleagues, do to create a better outcome for patients like Maria?

Check all that apply.

- Document language preferences
- Screen for social needs
- Connect to community resources
- Be present and caring by listening to understand

SUBMIT

Let's Continue

Advancing Health Equity Through Action

So far, we have learned...

1

WHAT health equity and other terms mean

2

HOW social influencers contribute to health disparities

NOW WHAT?

Let's look at Trinity Health's commitment to health equity and what health equity looks like in action.

Let's Continue

Trinity Health's Commitment to Advancing Health Equity

Trinity Health's Commitment to Advancing Health Equity is Rooted in our Catholic Identity and Core Values.

Trinity Health is committed to advancing health equity as a reflection of our **Mission and Core Values**, honoring the dignity of every person and promoting the **Common Good**.

We aim to care for the most vulnerable as part of our healing ministry culture, working to reduce barriers to health and supporting communities in achieving better health outcomes.

▶ Our Mission

We, Trinity Health, serve together in the spirit of the Gospel as a compassionate and transforming healing presence within our communities.

► Our Core Values

Reverence

We honor the sacredness and dignity of every person.

Commitment to those Experiencing Poverty

We stand with and serve those who are experiencing poverty, especially the most vulnerable.

Safety

We embrace a culture that prevents harm and nurtures a healing, safe environment for all.

Justice

We foster right relationships to promote the common good, including sustainability of Earth.

Stewardship

We honor our heritage and hold ourselves accountable for the human, financial and natural resources entrusted to our care.

Integrity

We are faithful to who we say we are.

Our Vision

As a mission-driven innovative health organization, we will become the national leader in improving the health of our communities and each person we serve. We will be the

most trusted health partner for life.

Let's Continue

How Do We Advance Health Equity Together?



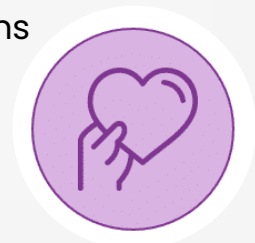
Learn More.

Keep learning about health equity and the factors that make it hard for some people to be healthy.



Build Trust.

Treat everyone with respect, and think about how your actions and words affect patients and their health. Avoid making assumptions or using unfair labels toward patients.





Speak Up.

We all help to make our environments safe and welcoming.



Look for the Cause.

Try to find the reasons health problems happen; otherwise, they will continue to happen. When you seek to understand, you can prevent harm and provide better care to everyone.



To Learn More

Resources —

Trinity Health Resources

[Advocacy](#)

[Community Health and Well-Being](#)

[Community Resource Directory, located in ZENworks or in TogetherCare](#)

[Health Equity and Human Impact SharePoint Site](#)

[Health Equity Educational Resources – Quality and Patient Safety](#)

External Resources

[Cancer Screening in Appalachia: A Common-Sense Approach](#)

[Disparities and Resilience Among American Indian and Alaska Native Women Who Are Pregnant or Postpartum](#)

[Minority Health Disparities | Michelle's Story](#)

[National Diabetes Statistics Report | Diabetes | CDC](#)

[Racial Disparities in Maternal and Infant Health: Current Status and Key Issues](#)

[Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Social Determinants of Health Library](#)

You're Done! Click here to exit the course.

