

PHMDC Health & Racial Equity Charter 2016

Introduction:

As public servants, Public Health Madison & Dane County (PHMDC) and the Board of Health (BOH) hold ourselves accountable to meeting community health needs. This includes addressing inequities that lead to disparate health outcomes among people of color and other marginalized groups while supporting management and staff in advancing health and racial equity. PHMDC and the BOH commit to action on health and racial equity by signing this charter, thereby assuring PHMDC policies and practices proactively promote health and racial equity.

Justification:

Public health work is inherently racial equity and social justice work. PHMDC strives to operate with health and racial equity as a guiding principle to ensure that health outcomes in Dane County are not determined by race or other group status. PHMDC aims to achieve this by building health and racial equity into agency operations through the creation of a Health and Racial Equity (HRE) Team. HRE principles support PHMDC employees' effectiveness and ability to best serve the community.

Values and Principles:

PHMDC is part of the community and stewards of public resources and trust. With this in mind, the HRE Team has set out guiding values, principles, and theories of change. Foremost, we are community and stakeholder driven. This means that our work is informed by those most impacted by inequities. We acknowledge that government institutions are hierarchical in nature. Promoting dialogue across this hierarchy requires engaging leadership from all levels of the organization. We are data-driven, following where the data leads instead of having our decisions shape the data we use. Our Team leads with race in mind but recognizes that all types of oppression and bias are linked – there is no hierarchy of oppression or inequity. We will be most effective when our workforce is diverse and reflects the makeup of the community, and when our organizational culture supports leadership development throughout the organization. We will strive to develop shared, agency-wide goals and definitions for health and racial equity, and to create conditions in which people of all backgrounds can thrive. We believe it is essential that each person in the organization builds a strong sense of cultural identity with an understanding of privilege and power, the history of racism and oppression, and the root causes of health inequities. We strive to foster clear, transparent communication and efforts. We strive to create a reciprocal culture of learning, understanding, and support. We work with urgency while also embracing long-term, system-level goals.

Scope:

The HRE team is charged with creation, implementation, and evaluation of an agency-wide health and racial equity plan. The purpose of the HRE Plan is to identify measurable health and racial equity goals, ensure robust assessment and evaluation, develop internal competency in HRE skills and language, provide a systematic process to strengthen PHMDC's ongoing commitment to a diverse workforce, and support positive relationships with the community. The Team will aid with consistent application of health and racial equity principles across divisions and programs. Achieving equitable health outcomes, which align with the PHMDC Strategic Plan, necessitates including and involving the community. The HRE Team and workgroups will provide internal and external forums for ongoing feedback, oversight, and collaboration. HRE Team members are ambassadors for health and racial equity work within their

divisions. We strive to hold ourselves accountable to the HRE Group Agreements, which state that our work is rooted in:

- Learning – We recognize the importance of lifelong learning and professional development.
- Dialogue – We discuss equity in a space that fosters constructive, respectful conversation, and idea exchange.
- Reflective Practice - We consciously analyze our practices and decisions from a health and racial equity framework for ongoing learning and improvement. We name inequity while using language and analyzes that describe issues explicitly in terms of racial and social justice.
- Co-creation – We work across departments, through hierarchy, and with communities to achieve health equity in Dane County.
- “Head, Heart and Hands” – We use both the head (intellect) and the heart (emotion) to understand equity issues to effectively guide our hands (action).

Strengths, Opportunities, and Risks:

PHMDC’s current HRE work is several years in the making. It reflects the ongoing commitment of staff to health equity and the forged partnerships with equity-focused community organizations. The creation of a HRE Plan and Team represents a significant step forward from individual efforts to an institutional commitment. Strengths of PHMDC include dedicated HRE positions and budgetary support as well as a stated commitment in our values and strategic plan. Opportunities exist to continue building partnerships with City and County Racial Equity and Social Justice Initiatives and community organizations. However, there is a risk in working from a health and racial equity framework; institutions and individuals may resist change, remaining in and protecting existing patterns.

Participation and Accountability:

PHMDC and the BOH share accountability for embedding health and racial equity into agency operations, policies, and practices. HRE Team Representatives commit to a minimum of a one year term, participating in Team meetings and activities in one of four workgroups: Assessment and Evaluation, Implementation, Communication, or Professional Development. Health Equity Coordinators provide structure, guidance, expertise, and resources needed for HRE Team members to effectively serve in their roles. PHMDC leadership and the BOH commit to co-learning, action, and provision of adequate resources to reach agency health and racial equity goals. PHMDC’s prioritization of health and racial equity should be reflected throughout the organization, including division and programmatic work plans, position descriptions, internal and external communications, and strategic planning documents. Ongoing evaluation will be conducted to measure progress and successes as well as areas where additional support or modifications may be needed.

Budget:

The HRE Team will work with PHMDC leadership to develop budget allocations that support PHMDC’s HRE goals. This may include, but may not be limited to: staffing, training, evaluation, consultant services, and stakeholder engagement. Future funding sources may include potential grants and the operating budget.

Charter Approval: The signing of this document represents both an institutional and personal commitment to this Charter’s mission of achieving health and racial equity in Dane County. (Signatures of HRE Team members, PHMDC leadership, and the BOH)