



Health Equity Strategy

The Tufts Together with UMass Memorial Health MassHealth Accountable Care Partnership Plan (THP-UMMH MassHealth ACO) provides care to 45,00-50,000 MassHealth members in Central Massachusetts. Leveraging the comprehensive health services available through UMass Memorial Health system's academic medical center, 70+ practices, and three community hospitals, we are relentless in our commitment to healing for all—and see health equity as a vital component of our mission to improve the health of our diverse communities through culturally-sensitive excellence in clinical care, service, teaching and research. Health Equity consistently shows up in UMMH's annual goals and public commitments—and in the work and focus of the THP-UMMH MassHealth ACO. And yet we realize we have much more we can do align and accelerate health equity initiatives across our system and within our ACO.

Aligning with UMass Memorial Health, the THP-UMMH MassHealth ACO has adopted this definition of health equity from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation: "Health equity means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. This requires removing obstacles to health such as poverty, discrimination, and their consequences, including powerlessness and lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education and housing, safe environments, and healthcare."

Over the next four years (2024-2027), the THP-UMMH MassHealth ACO will lean into our commitment to health equity, with a focus on these three goal areas:

1. **Reduce bias and healthcare delivery barriers that patients face while accessing services at UMass Memorial Health.** Our patients face barriers stemming from structural racism, ableism and other implicit biases. We'll focus over the next four years on reducing these biases and barriers by:
 - a. Increasing our focus and attention on implicit bias and other health equity trainings for our caregivers
 - b. Expanding and making progress on providing disability competent care across our care continuum
 - c. Increasing language accessibility to better serve patients who speak a language other than English
2. **Reduce structural barriers that patients face related to poverty and structural racism.** We realize that our patients' health is driven by factors outside of the hospital or clinic, the factors and environments in people's everyday lives (what are often

referred to as “social drivers of health”). We’ll focus over the next four years on addressing the structural barriers outside the hospital by:

- a. Expanding our ability to identify patients with social needs and link those patients to community resources and supports needed for health
- b. Leveraging our advocacy voice and other institutional resources to address upstream social drivers of health.

3. **Reduce disparities in health care delivery and health outcomes through regular review of stratified data and action plans.** We recognize that some groups of our patients experience worse outcomes and have different access to care because of their identities. We realize that reducing these barriers will take intentional effort, including:
 - a. Improving the quality and completeness of demographic data for patients, including their race, ethnicity, language, disability status sexual orientation and gender identity (RELDSOGI),
 - b. Regularly stratifying our hospitals’ and system’s quality and health outcome data to identify disparities
 - c. Developing and implementing disparity reduction action plans

We realize that all of these goals will require increased alignments, communication and structural supports to be effective into the future. We’ll be working to create those institutional alignments, including setting up clear opportunities for engagement with impacted patients, their families and community partners. We plan to continue our work to develop more trust with local communities – especially those marginalized by structural racism – and expand our communication for increased transparency and accessibility. As we continue to flesh out and gain stakeholder support for our Health Equity Strategic Plan, we are committed to incorporating community voices through more diversified Patient and Family Advisory Committees and other methods for gathering input and ideas.