

COALITION
for a Healthier Frederick County

2025

ANNUAL REPORT

COALITION
for a Healthier Frederick County

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Introduction

In 2025, the Coalition for a Healthier Frederick County continued to bring partners and community members together to share information, reflect on local health data, and take action on the issues that matter most. From quarterly meetings convening partners, community members, and local leaders, to the Beyond the Stigma mental health seminar, Healthier Frederick has continued to be a trusted convener focused on elevating our community's voices and advancing initiatives that promote health equity.

June marked the conclusion of the 2022–2025 LHIP Workgroups and priority areas, an important moment to recognize the dedication, collaboration, and impact of partners who helped advance this work over the past three years, such as the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Workgroup's involvement in launching Frederick Health's now very successful Family Connects program.



Another major milestone in 2025 was the development of our long-awaited Health Equity Framework in partnership with SEA Healthcare and members of our Health Equity Committee. This Framework offers a roadmap for addressing structural barriers and advancing equitable opportunities for health across Frederick County, grounding our work in shared principles and community voices as we move forward together.



This report highlights key takeaways from each of our quarterly meetings, beginning with the January CHNA Public Input Session, reflecting our progress and the ongoing partnerships that fuel meaningful change toward a healthier, more equitable community for all. It also features an overview of our Health Equity Framework, which we will continue implementing in and using to guide our efforts throughout 2026 and beyond.

Our quarterly meetings and Health Equity Framework reflect the collective work, shared learning, and ongoing commitment of our partners as we continue working to improve health and well-being across Frederick County.



2025 Highlights

Thank You to Our Volunteers

4,381
Volunteer hours*

402
Volunteers*

Includes Workgroup members, Board members, and student interns

Fundraising

$99,500
Grants Raised

$4,211
From Our Sponsors

$7,283
Donations Received

Milestones

- Concluded 2022-2025 LHIP cycle
- Published 2025 CHNA in partnership with Frederick Health and Frederick County Health Department
- Earned 2025 Candid Platinum Seal of Transparency
- Launched online donation platform
- Published Health Equity Framework in partnership with SEA Healthcare

Faces, Places, & Progress



January 22, 2025

CHNA Public Input Session



February 13, 2025

Hood College Community Engagement Fair



March 12, 2025

MD Consumer Health Information Hub Convening



May 7, 2025

Farewell to long-term Board President, Pilar Olivo



June 2, 2025

Frederick County Gun Violence Awareness Month Proclamation with County Executive Jessica Fitzwater



June 5, 2025

Summer and Marci at MAPP 2.0 Training in DC



June 10, 2025

Frederick Nonprofit Summit

Faces, Places, & Progress



July 19, 2025

Asbury United Methodist Church's (UMC) Annual Block Party



September 9, 2025

United Way of Frederick County's Leadership Breakfast



September 19, 2025

Beyond the Stigma Mental Health Seminar, featuring a panel on men's mental health



October 3, 2025

United Way of Frederick County's Annual Day of Action

JANUARY CHNA PUBLIC INPUT SESSION

On January 22, 2025, more than 160 community members participated in the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) Public Input Session, co-hosted by the Coalition for a Healthier Frederick County, the Frederick County Health Department, and Frederick Health. The strong turnout reflected meaningful community interest in shaping the future of health and well-being in Frederick County. The session was supported by generous food donations from Wegmans and Catoctin Mountain Orchard.

During the session, participants reviewed and discussed key health priorities identified through the 2025 CHNA data analysis. These findings will be formally published in March 2025. Facilitated discussions were led by local subject matter experts representing priority focus areas:

- Racial Equity and Justice: Dr. Denise Rollins, Whole Heart Center; Danielle Haskin, Frederick County Health Department
- Housing: Vincent Rogers, Frederick County Division of Housing
- Food and Nutrition: Alysia Feuer, Farm to School Frederick
- Mental Health and Social Isolation: Andrea Walker, Frederick County Health Department; Suzi Borg, Mental Health Association of Frederick County

To further inform the 2025–2028 Local Health Improvement Process (LHIP), participants were invited to complete a public input form available in both English and Spanish. The form asked respondents to rank ten CHNA-identified root causes by importance and indicate their interest in participating in future Workgroups aligned with those priorities. This feedback will guide the Coalition's strategic direction and collective action efforts over the next three years.

Watch Session Recording

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APRIL QUARTERLY COMMUNITY HEALTH MEETING

To celebrate the upcoming conclusion of the 2022-2025 LHIP cycle, the April Quarterly Community Health meeting brought together Workgroup members, partners, and community stakeholders to reflect on accomplishments and share the collective impact achieved over the past three years.

Each LHIP Workgroup presented outcomes and key milestones aligned with the priority areas identified through the 2022 CHNA:

- Type 2 diabetes
- Mental Health
- Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)

We also used this time to recognize and thank the funders and sponsors whose continued support enabled this work.

Type 2 Diabetes Workgroup Accomplishments

The Type 2 Diabetes (T2D) Workgroup, co-led by Sara Littleton and Laura DeFeo, focused on prevention, education, and access to evidence-based interventions. A significant achievement of the Workgroup was securing $150,000 in Frederick County American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to provide scholarships for Frederick Health's Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP). These scholarships covered program fees for 140 at-risk residents who were uninsured or whose insurance did not cover the DPP. The year-long, evidence-based program supports lifestyle changes that can reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes by up to 58 percent, or 71 percent for adults over age 60.

With support from a Communication Strategies grant, the Workgroup implemented a targeted diabetes awareness campaign between January and June 2024. The campaign included bilingual postcard mailings to 8,000 households, the development of a community education toolkit, and outreach at 37 community events across Frederick County. These efforts resulted in 1,117 community interactions and 343 individuals expressing interest in follow-up support.

In August 2024, the Workgroup achieved the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's highest program recognition level—Full Plus—reflecting strong participant outcomes, retention, and adherence to national evidence-based standards.

Mental Health Workgroup Accomplishments

The Mental Health Workgroup, led by Andrea Walker from 2022 through early 2024 and later by Mary Lynn Hinde, centered its efforts on education, awareness, stigma reduction, and resource connection. One of the Workgroup's most significant accomplishments was the establishment of a sustainable Suicide Prevention Coalition, now housed and managed by the Frederick County Health Department.

The Workgroup also developed and distributed mental health resource rack cards and positive language reframing cards to increase awareness of available supports and promote stigma-free conversations. Additionally, the Workgroup launched **From the Heart: *Creative Expressions***

APRIL QUARTERLY COMMUNITY HEALTH MEETING

in Mental Wellness, a community-based campaign that used art as a tool to foster connection and challenge mental health stigma. Five events were hosted, engaging diverse audiences through poetry, visual art, music, movement, and other creative forms of expression.

Through a partnership with Frederick County Workforce Services, the Workgroup supported two sessions of Recovery is Good Business, a workshop designed to help employers create recovery-friendly and mentally supportive workplaces.

As its final initiative, the Workgroup launched ***You Good?* A Survey on Men's Mental Health** to gather foundational insights into men's mental health experiences in Frederick County. With funding from the Delaplaine Foundation, this project will inform a future communications campaign focused on awareness, stigma reduction, and resource connection. This work is continuing under the 2025–2028 Mental Health Workgroup.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Workgroup Accomplishments

The ACEs Workgroup, led by former Healthier Frederick Board President Pilar Olivo, has been a longstanding driver of systems-level change since ACEs were first identified as a LHIP priority in 2016. A major milestone achieved during this cycle was the launch of Frederick Health's **Family Connects Frederick County program**. Through collaborative research and advocacy, the Workgroup supported the selection and implementation of this evidence-based home visiting program, which provides free, voluntary nurse visits to families following childbirth. The Workgroup also helped secure an $8 million ARPA implementation grant, the largest County ARPA award to an external entity, to support program launch and sustainability.

To strengthen the local trauma-informed care workforce, the Workgroup secured ARPA funding to provide EMDR and Easy Ego States Intervention training scholarships to 22 local mental health providers serving children and families. Additional efforts focused on community education and prevention, including the promotion of early childhood development resources, behavioral health integration initiatives, and national and local research.

The Workgroup also partnered with Frederick County Public Libraries, the Frederick County Division of Family Services, and the Child Advocacy Center of Frederick County to launch the Mind+Body Kids Yoga Series, which supported emotional regulation, youth development, and caregiver education.

The meeting also featured presentations from the Frederick County Health Department, including an overview of **county suicide data** and updates on Suicide Prevention Coalition efforts.

APRIL QUARTERLY COMMUNITY HEALTH MEETING

Through collective impact and cross-sector collaboration, Healthier Frederick's 2022–2025 Workgroups advanced equity, strengthened community systems, and addressed key drivers of health across Frederick County.

Watch Meeting Recording

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JULY QUARTERLY COMMUNITY HEALTH MEETING

Our first Quarterly Community Health Meeting of the 2025–2028 LHIP cycle marked an important transition point for Healthier Frederick. Executive Director Malcolm Furgol announced the publication of the final 2025 Community Health Needs Assessment. Another exciting moment shared was that we earned the 2025 Candid Platinum Seal of Transparency, reflecting our continued commitment to openness, accountability, and community trust. Lastly, we announced the launch of our new online donation portal through PayPal's Giving Fund, allowing 100 percent of donations to directly support our work without processing fees. Since then, we've also added the option to donate directly on our website, with an option to cover the processing fees.

Following these announcements, each of the four LHIP Workgroups shared their vision, early priorities, and intended direction for the 2025–2028 cycle.

Affordable Housing Workgroup

On behalf of Workgroup Lead Ann Ryan, Sharon Stromberg of the Frederick Housing Solutions Task Force shared that the Affordable Housing Workgroup has established a strong partnership with the Task Force to address housing affordability in Frederick County. The Workgroup highlighted that individuals earning under $25,000 annually are currently unable to afford market-rate housing in the county. In response, the Workgroup plans to engage residents and decision-makers through education and outreach focused on housing as a key social determinant of health. Particular attention will be given to the needs of residents living on very low fixed incomes, with efforts aimed at increasing the availability of housing options with rents below $500 per month.

Affordable Healthy Food Workgroup

On behalf of Workgroup Lead and Farm to School Frederick Executive Director Alysia Feuer, we shared the Affordable Healthy Food Workgroup's vision of a Frederick County where all residents are nourished by healthy, affordable food and where sustained, collaborative action ensures equitable access to nutritious options. Data from the 2025 CHNA underscored the urgency of this work, showing that one in seven Frederick County residents experiences food insecurity and that nearly 80 percent of residents do not consume the recommended daily amount of fruits and vegetables. Cost and time were identified as major barriers. In response, the Workgroup plans to advocate for more nutritious Frederick County Public Schools menu options, expand nutrition and agriculture education, and foster community connection around affordable, healthy food access.

Mental Health Workgroup

On behalf of Workgroup Lead and Love for Lochlin Executive Director Brooke DeSantis, we shared the Mental Health Workgroup's vision of a community where mental health is openly discussed, recognized as a foundational

JULY QUARTERLY COMMUNITY HEALTH MEETING

component of overall well-being, and supported through visible, accessible resources.
The Workgroup emphasized that well-being extends beyond access to clinical care. Planned efforts will focus on increasing awareness of local resources, strengthening supportive environments, ensuring individuals feel seen and heard by both peers and providers, and empowering residents to prioritize their mental health.

Watch Session Recording

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Institutional and Systemic Racism Workgroup

We also shared updates from the Institutional and Systemic Racism Workgroup, noting that while Frederick County is one of the most culturally diverse communities in Maryland, long-standing inequities continue to contribute to disparate health outcomes among communities of color.

As part of this Workgroup's early efforts, we announced a collaboration with the **Black Health Equity Coalition (BHEC)**. Through this partnership, Healthier Frederick will support ongoing work addressing Black maternal health disparities in Frederick County by leveraging the capacity, convening power, and cross-sector partnerships of the Institutional and Systemic Racism Workgroup.









OCTOBER QUARTERLY COMMUNITY HEALTH MEETING

Our October Quarterly Community Health Meeting featured important organizational updates and highlighted progress across our four Local Health Improvement Process (LHIP) Workgroups. A special note of appreciation goes to Dr. Cheryl Cioffi, Frederick Health's new CEO and President, for joining us and sharing her inspiring vision for the future. We're grateful for her commitment to lifting all voices and continuing to advance healthcare and improve health outcomes across our community.
We announced the approaching launch of our Health Equity Framework, developed in collaboration with **SEA Healthcare**. Now publicly available on our website, the Framework serves as a foundational guide for embedding health equity across our strategy, governance, and community engagement. It is designed to guide collective action, function as both a strategic anchor and practical tool, and ensure consistent, transparent, and accountable practices across our work.

As part of this launch, we also shared plans to publish, and subsequently released, health equity outreach materials, including a brochure and rack card. These materials outline why health equity matters, our commitment to advancing equity, our short-, mid-, and long-term goals, and ways community members can engage in our initiatives.
We also announced new partnerships and recognitions, including Minuteman Press's commitment as a Health Champion Sponsor and Healthier Frederick's designation as a Community Partner for Maryland Ensemble Theatre's fall production of The Shark Is Broken. In addition, we participated in United Way's Day of Action for the first time, supporting Downtown Frederick Partnership by creating a holiday pop-up selfie space at the Federated Charities building.

Institutional and Systemic Racism Workgroup

Akiyyah Billups, CEO of Vital Business Solutions, shared Black Equity's Pillars of Health, which spans physical, mental, spiritual, maternal, child and family, social, economic, residential, and social justice domains. She emphasized how these pillars represent a holistic approach to wellness that prioritizes addressing root causes of inequity.

The Workgroup focused on progress related to the Black Maternal Health Strategic Plan, now in active implementation. This initiative is guided by community workgroups whose lived experiences inform each phase of the work, with oversight from a Steering Committee, Community Advisory Board, and Community Health Improvement Plan to ensure accountability and community-centered decision-making.

The Workgroups three subgroups' progress was shared, including hospital outreach efforts to support patient-reported experience measures in obstetrics, evaluation and coordination of Black doula and lactation training programs, and development of promotional materials to support awareness.

OCTOBER QUARTERLY COMMUNITY HEALTH MEETING

Affordable Healthy Food Workgroup

The Affordable Healthy Food Workgroup presented data illustrating the scope of food insecurity in Frederick County, including that one in seven (14%) residents worries about running out of food and that nearly 80% of residents do not consume the recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables. Shockingly, more than 15,000 Frederick County children are affected by food insecurity.

The Workgroup's goal is to improve community health by increasing equitable access to healthy, affordable food through education, community-driven solutions, and public awareness of food access as a determinant of health. Planned actions include conducting a countywide food landscape analysis to assess strengths, gaps, and opportunities across food production, distribution, access, and education. Findings will inform the group's future efforts and areas of focus.

Additional efforts will focus on understanding and supporting organizations addressing food insecurity and food waste repurposing, as well as improving school food environments. Planned school-based activities include engaging students, families, educators, and administrators; advocating for healthier menus; and enhancing cafeteria environments to promote nutritious choices and long-term policy change.

Mental Health Workgroup

The Mental Health Workgroup shared findings from "You Good?" A Survey on Men's Mental Health, which collected 117 responses between April and June 2025. Results highlighted a wide range of stressors experienced by men, including health challenges, grief, work and financial pressures, racism, family responsibilities, housing instability, and unresolved trauma. Common barriers to seeking support included time constraints, cost, stigma, and reliance on informal support networks.

The Workgroup shared plans to expand trauma-informed training and capacity across the community, including successful applications for funding to offer Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) instructor training scholarships. MHFA is a nationally recognized course designed to teach community members the skills necessary to respond with care and genuine support to an individual experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis. Additional plans include pursuing funding for Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy training for local providers and launching a storytelling initiative that centers lived experience to reduce stigma, encourage openness, and connect residents with local resources.

OCTOBER QUARTERLY COMMUNITY HEALTH MEETING

Affordable Housing Workgroup

The Affordable Housing Workgroup shared updated data demonstrating that seniors receiving average Social Security benefits currently have no rental options within their price range in Frederick County. In response, the Workgroup outlined progress across five subcommittees focused on development, community engagement, policy and advocacy, supportive services, and landlord engagement.

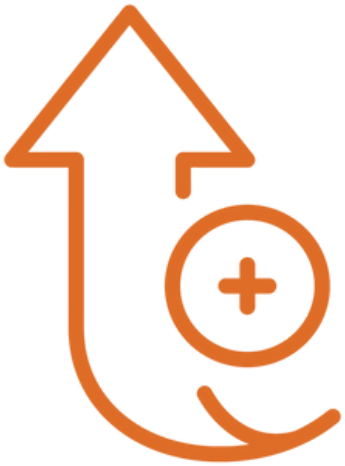
Efforts include working with houses of worship to develop housing on underutilized land, piloting housing models for vulnerable seniors, expanding partnerships with builders and nonprofits, surveying residents excluded from the housing market, advancing local and state policy solutions, and identifying supportive service needs and best practices for landlord engagement.

The Workgroup also shared early funding successes, including grants and donations from private donors, the Target Foundation, the Ausherman Family Foundation, and Peace in Christ Lutheran Church (received post-quarterly meeting).

Watch Session Recording

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HEALTH EQUITY FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW

OVERVIEW

The Health Equity Framework provides a comprehensive and actionable guide to advance equity across the county's public health systems. Developed with evidence-based practices and aligned with national models such as Mobilizing for Action Through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP 2.0) and Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative (BARHII), the Framework outlines a clear pathway to reduce disparities and support long-term community well-being.

We envisions a Frederick County where all individuals have a voice in their health and access to the opportunities necessary to thrive. The Framework integrates this vision into every phase of planning and implementation, reinforcing equity as a shared responsibility across partner organizations.

KEY COMPONENTS

Locally adopted definition of health equity that builds on national standards

5 guiding principles to shape actions and partner engagement

Measurement system using disaggregated indicators and phased key performance indicators (KPIs) to track progress

Strategies to embed equity in governance, engagement, staffing, and communication practices

FRAMEWORK IN ACTION



GOALS

The Framework emphasizes short-, mid-, and long-term goals that promote accountability and continuous improvement. These goals focus on expanding partnerships with underrepresented communities, increasing the use of shared equity indicators, and ensuring decision-making includes residents with lived experience. Equity is operationalized through practical tools, scenario-based training, and routine review of disaggregated data.

TRAINING

Training for our staff, Board, and Workgroup members supports consistent practice and shared language. Orientation processes for new members include an equity lens. Tools such as glossaries and checklists help align actions across programs and maintain continuity.

This unified approach equips us and our partners to make measurable, sustainable progress toward eliminating health disparities. It strengthens our ability to lead coordinated action, track outcomes, and adapt strategies based on community priorities and lived experience.

As a living tool, the Framework not only guides current work but also positions Frederick County to respond more effectively to future challenges. Its adoption signals a shared commitment to building a healthier, more equitable future for all residents.

Learn More and View the Full Framework

Health Equity Materials

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OUR PLEDGE TO HEALTH EQUITY

"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 lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education and housing, safe environments, and health care."[1]



healthierfrederick.org 240-566-3558

info@healthierfrederick.org

[1] Source: BARHII Framework for Reducing Health Inequities, n.d.

HEALTH EQUITY PRIORITIES AND GOALS

- **Addressing Institutional and Systemic Racism**
- **Access to Affordable Healthy Food**
- **Safe Affordable Housing**
- **Reducing Mental Health Stigma**

Short-term (2025-26)

- Recruit new partners from underrepresented communities
- Host listening sessions with residents
- Finalize 5 core equity indicators

Mid-term (2027-28)

- Ensure representation of lived experiences in every Workgroup
- Co-design at least two initiatives with community members
- Publish annual community-friendly equity reports

Long-term (2029-30)

- Show measurable reduction in health disparities
- Make shared decision-making standard in county health initiatives
- Embed equity measurement across 75% of Healthier Frederick initiatives

Learn More and Join the Action:
https://healthierfrederick.org/about/what-we-do

Health Equity Materials

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HEALTH EQUITY FRAMEWORK



LET'S BUILD THE FUTURE TOGETHER

healthierfrederick.org

info@healthierfrederick.org

240-566-3558



Community Story

As Frederick County's designated Local Health Improvement Coalition, Healthier Frederick is leading a coordinated, community-driven effort to ensure every resident has a fair and just opportunity to be healthy.

Guided by a Health Equity Framework, shaped by local voices and national best practices, we are embedding equity into every level of planning, policy, and partnership.

By addressing root causes like affordable housing, mental health stigma, and affordable healthy food, we are building solutions that reflect residents' lived experiences and create lasting change.

Through collaboration, data-driven action, and continuous community input, Healthier Frederick is laying the foundation for a healthier future where everyone can thrive.

Why Health Equity

Health equity matters because too many residents in Frederick County still face barriers that prevent them from living healthy lives.

The Health Equity Framework is our community's answer: bringing people and partners together to address housing, jobs, education, and other root causes of inequity.

Healthier Frederick is leading this work because a healthier future for our county depends on every resident having a fair chance to thrive.

Partnership

We're committed to building lasting relationships, aligning efforts across sectors, providing support to smaller organizations, while co- creating equity indicators.

Healthier Frederick sees partnership not as a transaction, but as a shared commitment to changing systems, working side by side with the community to create lasting, equitable change.

HEALTH EQUITY ISN'T JUST A GOAL—IT'S THE PATHWAY TO STRONGER, MORE CONNECTED COMMUNITIES.

Health Equity Materials

Community Expectations

Community members can expect a transparent, inclusive, and accountable approach to advancing health equity. This means:

- **Clear communication** about Healthier Frederick's' priorities, decisions, and progress.
- **Ongoing ways to be involved** through listening sessions, surveys, and advisory roles that help shape decisions.
- **Programs and policies** shaped by real community needs, especially voices from historically marginalized groups.
- **Using clear, detailed data** to spot health gaps and guide change across neighborhoods and populations.
- **Engaging with respect,** through language access, trust-building, and outreach that honors lived experiences.
- **Sharing progress openly** with equity indicators and regular community updates in meetings and reports.



Timeline for Action

- Summer 2025: Internal review and refinement
- Fall 2025: Public comment period
- Late 2025-Early 2026: Initial implementation launch
- 2026 and Beyond: Annual reporting on progress

Call to Action

Health equity is not a goal Healthier Frederick can achieve alone. It requires partnership, trust, and sustained community involvement. We invite you to:

1. **Review** the Health Equity Framework and provide your feedback during the public comment period.
2. **Join** a Workgroup or community advisory session to ensure your voice helps shape priorities and solutions.
3. **Share** your lived experience to help identify barriers and design more inclusive programs.
4. **Partner** with us—whether you're a resident, service provider, or organization—so that together, we can build a healthier, more equitable Frederick County.

Your voice matters.
Let's build a future together.

Scan for more details

Closing Reflection

As we close out 2025, the Healthier Frederick team has been reflecting on what the 2022–2025 LHIP cycle represented for us. This cycle marked a meaningful turning point for our organization as it was the first time our Workgroups were supported by dedicated staff, allowing ideas to move more quickly from conversation to action and helping partners stay connected, resourced, and aligned. As shown in this report, that added capacity made a real difference in what we were able to accomplish together.

In 2025, especially with the launch of the 2025 CHNA, 2025-2028 LHIP Workgroups, and Health Equity Framework, we saw what is possible when community members, organizations, and systems engage in collective impact with shared goals and mutual trust. From exploring solutions to expanding access to healthy food and affordable housing, to reducing mental health stigma and addressing long-standing inequities, our Workgroups' effort are shaped by lived experience, local knowledge and expertise, and, most of all, a commitment to showing up and advocating for one another.



The launch of our Health Equity Framework gave us a clearer path forward to help ensure our work is rooted in accountability, transparency, and collective responsibility. As we continue the 2025–2028 LHIP cycle, we understand now more than ever that strong partnerships and a deep understanding of what our community needs to thrive is critical to advancing health equity.



We are deeply grateful to our Board of Directors, Workgroup members, partners, funders, sponsors, and community members who continue to invest their time, energy, and trust in our work. We look forward to what's in store for 2026.