



Issue 1

In this first issue of the ***Health Equity Moment***, I want to highlight that our Health Equity & DEI efforts parallel many well-respected local and national partners.



[The CDC](#) defines Health Equity as the state in which everyone has a fair & just opportunity to attain their highest level of health. Achieving this requires focused and ongoing societal efforts to address historical & contemporary injustices; overcome economic, social, and other obstacles to health & healthcare; and eliminate preventable health disparities. It also involves acknowledging and addressing racism as a threat to public health and the history of unethical practices in public health that lead to inequitable health outcomes.



[5-minute video](#) - Michelle's story (*click on Browne YouTube button*) for the link

Michelle Simmons is a patient, mother, and grandmother who understands firsthand the impact of health disparity in her family and in her community.

Three Local Healthcare Efforts in Health Equity

Baystate Franklin Medical Center's [2023-2025 strategic implementation plan](#) calls for health equity to be a priority and guide policy decisions with the result of equity becoming the accepted framework for how it serves patients and the community. As part of its commitment, one of Baystate's health equity goals is to increase the collection and use of socio-demographic data.



Cooley Dickinson Hospital's [2022 Community Health Needs Assessment](#) cites not all community members have the same likelihood of achieving good health. While most of the service area identifies as White and English-speaking, community members who belong to communities of color or are English language learners face significant challenges when it comes to maintaining good health. Many people in historically marginalized groups report discrimination based on income, housing status, or use of government programs, affecting access to health care and essential services. Given the fact that people of color and trans or nonbinary people are also more likely to be of limited income, most respondents experience multiple forms of unfair treatment. Gender is another important distinction - trans and nonbinary youth suffer disproportionately in their mental



health. The pandemic has exacerbated almost every negative health outcome, from the actual loss of life from COVID-19 and the long-term health issues associated with long COVID to economic hardships and mental health and educational problems stemming from isolation and anxiety.

Baycare Health Partners' training related to demographic data collection was rolled out this month. Baycare knows that reliable patient-level data, including race, ethnicity, and language (REaL) preference, are valuable tools when used to measure and improve patient safety, population health, and chronic disease management. Moreover, without reliable REaL data, health disparities at the local level cannot be identified or resolved. Over 25 of our VMG employees have participated in the Baycare-provided training so far.