

**Equity:** HealthierHere leads with equity. We work to intentionally eliminate disparities, build on strengths in health and well-being and address the current power dynamic and structural racism in our health care system that perpetuates inequities. We believe that every community member in King County should receive the type of care that they deserve - with respect and without stigma - to address their unique and individual needs. Consequently, HealthierHere only partners with Organizations that embrace equity, cultural responsiveness , and linguistically appropriate care.

#### EQUITY GUIDELINES

We, the Governing Board of Healthier Here, Governing Board Committees and HealthierHere Staff, believe that transforming the health system to improve health and health equity in King County requires a collaborative effort that seeks to understand the causes of inequities in our current health system so that we may actively work to create a better future. Community members in King County are experiencing health inequities resulting from conscious and unconscious practices of underinvestment and disproportionate impact of communities arising from a legacy of institutional racism, implicit bias, discrimination, power and privilege operating within the United States and our health system. We acknowledge that the Institutions within the United States were built on practices of supporting white-supremacy, racism and colonialism which resulted in intended exclusion historical and culturally ongoing underinvestment and denial of community access and sharing of resources and overburdening within community.

Our efforts to eliminate health disparities are predicated on remembering that behind each data point is a person and the individual experience of that person must drive system transformation. We also know that institutional quantitative data often used in decision making does not accurately reflect the condition and experiences of all community members due to racist and colonizing practices of undercounting people and failing to collect demographic information in alignment with how people choose to identify themselves which effectively erases people from data. To combat this, we value and incorporate qualitative, community and cultural data in our decision making and analysis of the health and well-being of those in our communities. This includes honoring the collective wisdom of community and people working in community-based organizations and the health system who have a vested interest in transforming our current health system and have courageously committed to place equity at the forefront of the way that they work.

We acknowledge that equity is both a product (improving health outcomes) and a process (how we work together to improve health outcomes). Changing historical status quo methods needs

to be replaced with the inclusion of relevant data and participation by community members and viewpoints not considered relevant in the past. Both are equally important and as we work to improve health outcomes, we must hold equity as a process and lens through which we evaluate our planning, decision-making, implementation, and evaluation processes. Equity recognizes the different conditions, resources, and capacity that people have and acknowledges that people start at different places and have different needs. Consequently, equity is not a one-size-fits-all approach. It is individual, tailored and person centered.

We invite others to join in our effort to ensure that all community members in King County have an opportunity to live longer, healthier, more fulfilling lives.

#### HOW WE WORK TO ELIMINATE DISPARITIES IN HEALTH AND WELL-BEING BY ADDRESSING EQUITY

*We believe that these principles must be present as we work together in solidarity with others to eliminate disparities in the health system.*

**Education and Training:** We recognize that the organizations involved in system transformation are comprised of individuals who act according to the best information that they have available. Consequently, we believe that providing equity and cultural responsiveness education and training to individuals within the health system as well as community-based providers and community members is an important foundation to achieving health system transformation. This education will not only provide individuals with the skills to apply an equity lens to their work, but the practical tools to influence organizational change, individual behaviors, practice transformation and improved patient experience.

**Inclusion:** We include the voices of those most impacted by health disparities in HealthierHere's design, planning and decision-making processes. This is done by making an active effort to reach out, being open and willing to listen, learn and act on what we hear from community and commit resources

**Transparency and Accountability:** We recognize that our actions are accountable to our community thus, we regularly share information and progress with community. HealthierHere will revisit its past activity to keep the organization relevant and honest.

**Strength-based:** We acknowledge the inherent strengths and resilience within community that contribute to an individual's health and well-being.

**Resource:** We provide community with the information, resources, access and connections, that they need to live longer, healthier, fulfilled lives.

**Culturally Responsive and Linguistically Appropriate Services:** We promote the development, and maintenance, of a health system where an individual's culture, community traditional practices, language, identity, beliefs and notions of health and well-being are viewed as strengths and assets to achieving better health outcomes.

HOW WE INCORPORATE EQUITY PRINCIPLES TO ADDRESS THE CURRENT POWER DYNAMIC AND STRUCTURAL RACISM IN OUR HEALTH CARE SYSTEM THAT PERPETUATE INEQUITIES

*We believe that the following paradigms of thinking and processes in the way that we deliver care must shift if we are to eliminate health disparities.*

**Unintended Consequences:** We recognize that decisions have the potential to carry benefits and burdens. Consequently, we consciously examine the potential impacts of our decisions to weigh the potential benefits and burdens to community before making those decisions.

**Community as Experts:** We acknowledge the collective power and wisdom of community and center community voice in driving system transformation efforts. We believe that incorporating the voices of people with lived experience in transformation efforts is essential to identifying and implementing sustainable practices to improve health outcomes and address health disparities.

**Community Practice:** We commit to elevating, recognizing and protecting the voices of front-line care workers in the workplace and in system transformation efforts to make care more effective for those experiencing the greatest health disparities in King County. These front-line staff, including community health workers, health advocates, peer support specialists, etc. serve as trusted advisors within community. They often share the identities of those they are serving and, as such, they are often the most knowledgeable about strategies and practices that are effective within community.

**Collective Co-responsibility:** We inspire collective action to address health disparities by bringing people within the health system together not from a place of blame, shame or guilt, but from a place of co-responsibility believing that when we know better we are co-responsible for doing better. We recognize that there are certain barriers for everyone doing this work and everyone has a responsibility to do what they can, where they are, to come together and work to eliminate those barriers together.

**Practice-Based Evidence:** We acknowledge that most Evidence-Based Practices are not normed for all members of our community. Thus, we see the need for equitable recognition of practice-based evidence within our health system.

**Anti- Racism:** We recognize that racism is connected to power structures and rooted in colorism as a tactic of oppression. We are actively working to undo racism through our policies, practices and investments by centering community voice and uplifting equity through our cross-sector collective action. HealthierHere is committed to **becoming** an anti-racist organization.

**Breaking down Systemic/Structural Racism:** We recognize that structural racism is systematic discrimination of particular ethnic groups that is built into systems, structures, policies. This results in disadvantage of those ethnic groups that has and continues to have generational impacts. HealthierHere will utilize our space as a convener to uplift conversations to breaking down the systemic and structural racism.

**Undoing Settler colonialism:** We understand that settler colonialism is a system of active tactics applied to body, mind and spirit of people to assimilate non-white people to Settler Colonial values and lifestyles which result in loss of culture and identity. We acknowledge that need for centering community-based solutions that are culturally relevant and appropriate in the decision-making process.

**Actively Decolonizing:** We recognize, understand, and acknowledge that policies and current systems in the United States are resulting from colonizing language which benefited colonizers and continue to benefit those privileged in white supremacy. We are continuously decolonizing our policies, systems, language, actions, and furthering decolonizing impacts on the healthcare system by identifying all the areas where colonizing values are enacted, all the way from meeting structures up to policies and systems. We will then actively work to remove or change the areas that have inherent colonizing values and structures that result in colonized systems. We will strive to support the inherent Tribal Sovereignty of the Indigenous People by decolonizing in all areas that we have influence within.