

# *Equity for All Arizonans*

## **LAKE HAVASU CITY COMMUNITY TOWN HALL**

**October 16, 2023 – Lake Havasu City, AZ**

### **DEFINING EQUITY AND ITS IMPACT**

Equality is not the same as equity. Providing equitable access to opportunities and resources creates equality and benefits the entire community.

Equity is giving equal opportunity that matches the person's needs. Equity distributes resources and opportunities to provide everyone with a chance to succeed. It incorporates fairness and value and applies to all socio-economic levels.

Equity looks at where someone comes from and how we can provide individual services and resources to them that would be most helpful to their success. It means meeting people where they're at—meeting them with grace and providing them with what they need to succeed. It also means providing education that will help their success and filling the gaps that create barriers.

Equity has impacted the Lake Havasu City area in many areas including inequitable access to housing, transportation, and childcare as well as inequitable access to medical and other services. Inequitable access to these resources prevents people from maximizing their economic and professional opportunities.

### **OPTIMIZING EVERYONE'S POTENTIAL THROUGH EQUITABLE APPROACHES**

An equitable approach is important. Without an equitable approach we are missing important opportunities to have people reach their potential. Providing unique services and opportunities for individual improvement and advancement provides a better society for all.

Technology is one example. Equitable access to technology can help people to get jobs, needed resources and even basic needs like groceries.

The goal should be to reach everyone in different and unique ways as needed to reach their full potential. Too often we do not do this. Rather, instead of trying to let people reach their full potential, we lower expectations. We should reverse this trend. Losing isn't failure. Failure is just an opportunity to learn and improve.

For people in at-risk communities, equitable support might include providing life skills, education, economic opportunities, and classes that will help them to be productive members of society.

The measurement to determine what each community needs should come from the local level. Communities need to look at what we have and how best to uniquely support our people. Funding from government should be done in terms of a long-term investment in the potential of people and should allow communities greater say in how to equitably meet needs such as housing.

One size doesn't fit all. An equitable approach takes this into account.

### **IMPROVING COMMUNITIES THROUGH EQUITY**

The greatest opportunities to use equity as an approach for improving healthcare outcomes include:

1. Educating the community about different aspects that will make healthcare services better and more accessible.
  - a. For example, educate people about the differences between emergencies vs. urgent care.

- b. Enhance or support parent education and engagement through the schools—such as the differences between telehealth, the emergency room, and urgent care as well as preventative care options.
  - c. Use broad communication strategies to educate the public.
  - d. Incorporate education that focuses on prevention measures.
  - e. Improve outreach about existing services such as mobile health care. For education and outreach, utilize patient care workers, community health workers or peer support specialists.
  - f. Depoliticize health care discussions, including around vaccinations.
  - g. Provide education to providers about trauma informed care and ACES (Adverse Childhood Experiences).
2. Improve provider rates, which will lead to more prevention.
    - a. Explore more grant funding to offset the cost of services.
    - b. Look for ways to improve access by reevaluating bureaucracy and eliminating redundancies such as referrals.
  3. Have a concerted effort to attract and retain providers.
    - a. Growing our own: Recruit people who already have roots here and provide educational opportunities, including for support staff.
    - b. Specifically target recruitment of mental health and dental providers.
    - c. Providing more preventative care by lowering the requirements for the licenses needed by providers. Alternatively, because this education is very expensive, explore providing additional financial support for obtaining these licenses.
    - d. With respect to clinical providers: there is a high turnover due to the cost of living. Look at how to address the housing problem.
    - e. Enhance programs that recruit and retain more instructors and providers.
    - f. Increase vocational training in local institutions to add to the pool of providers in all areas.
  4. Transportation is a barrier or an opportunity for improvement. Providing transportation options for those who can't afford to drive to Phoenix would make health care more equitable and accessible.
  5. Prioritize gaps in service: Enhance funding for providers, provide educational opportunities for providers and those in the pipeline, enhance education and incentives around preventative care, and provide support staff at the school level (counselors, nurses etc.).

### **NEXT STEPS AND ACTIONS**

1. We need to educate the public about the difference between services, such as telemedicine and the ER. This could specifically include an app or service on mobile phones. It also includes flyers and infomercials in office waiting rooms and other areas, including back to school nights.
2. We also should try to create a uniform resource guide available to everyone.
3. To grow our own in the healthcare fields, we could host a Career Day for high school students about careers in the healthcare fields and available grants, etc.
4. For solutions we need a Top Down/Bottom-up approach.
  - a. This could include schools getting people together to determine what they need and then providing this to decision makers and elected officials.

- b. Prioritize resources based on needs with more conversations similar to this and drill down to specific recommendations).
5. Create a collective impact approach to apply for federal and other funding.
6. Involve public private partnerships for outreach and education.
7. Housing: The Arizona legislature needs to give back local control for short term rentals
8. Provide Incentives for families to live near senior citizens.
9. Local leaders and collaborators should look for ways to collaborate including transportation across jurisdictional boundaries.

Specialized teams or work groups could be established that are comprised of people knowledgeable in the area and members of the public. They can then provide recommendations to leaders and stakeholders.

Equity is not just about the services themselves. It is how we communicate services so that everyone can learn about them.

Everyone should act as a team instead of in silos. These actions and priorities are everyone's responsibility.

### **INDIVIDUAL COMMITMENTS TO ACTION**

Recognizing that the power to change the future begins with each individual, participants committed to take personal actions based on their experience and discussions during the Lake Havasu City Community Town Hall. Below are individual actions that were shared.

#### ***I WILL...***

- Share the information I learned today with our partner agencies and in our community health associations.
- Research Telemed with insurance company.
- Fund a group interested in working on marketing and advertise.
- Continue to work with community stakeholders to improve our community. The connection made will facilitate my efforts.
- Find opportunities to collaborate with community providers, services, and organizations.
- Take gained information back to my employer.
- Educate my team about equity vs. equality.
- Discuss how we care for members and employees.
- Try to move the work of the coalitions I attend to bring everyone together.
- Share the information learned in this session with all who will listen.
- Continue to collaborate with community organizations to provide equitable services for all!
- Speak with the Director of Mohave Community College about opportunities within the community.
- Connect with community partners to create systemic change and increase awareness of the needs in Lake Havasu City.
- Commit to staying involved and being a partner and advocate at whatever level needed to make progress possible for our community.