Incorporating Equity into Practice and Education
Questions for Action

The first section contains questions for specific audiences (split out by roles in medical education or clinical practice). The second section contains questions for specific topics that both educators and clinicians should consider.

Section 1: Questions by Audience

Medical School Administration

- What value does our medical school place on recruiting and retaining diverse faculty and students?
- How does our medical school engage with the community?
  - To what degree do we consider it our responsibility to mobilize and support the community in taking responsibility for its health? How do we carry this out?
  - What is our process for evaluating and responding to changing community need?
  - At what frequency do we reflect on possible need for adapting our equity efforts to new information we have learned about the community?
- How does your organization balance the need for social accountability with research competitiveness?
  - Do we encourage and praise faculty for explicitly including principles of social accountability (e.g., community based participatory research) in their research projects?
  - Are allowances made in the promotion process for the longer timelines necessary to conduct strong community based participatory research?
- What other disciplines does the medical school work with? (Public health, public policy, economics, anthropology, etc.?)
- Where does equity fit in the articulated competencies of our program?

Medical School Faculty

- How do we engage students in meaningful discussion of social responsibility?
  - How is this different than what they already hear around being committed to healing and social good? That is, is there a specific acknowledgment and frank discussion of differences in mortality and morbidity among various demographics?
- In my own practice (clinical or otherwise), how have I worked the community to enhance patient care?

- Do we talk about system and community factors when discussing patients' lack of adherence to treatment? (This is not to discount the major role of patient choice and accountability. However, to what degree are students aware of how community or system level factors may relate to patient health? What awareness do they have of community resources that exist to address patient barriers to quality care?)
- Today's medical students are likely to see many political changes affecting healthcare, as well as changes in the communities in which they practice. How do we prepare students to adapt to change?
- How do we assess student knowledge and skill in these areas? Where do social sciences fit in medical education, given the many competencies that students must learn in current curricula?
- What opportunities do students have to practice advocacy?

Residents/Students:
- How important do I think it is to be able to adapt my practice to changing community needs? What have I learned that supports or contradicts this viewpoint?
- What skills do I need to build to allow me to address community needs?
- How do I see working with other health professionals during my medical career?
- What role will advocacy have in my career?
- What is my role in seeking system-level change to lead to equitable care (immediate practice, local, state, regional, or national health care policy)?
- Does the way I think about equity change when I consider different specialty areas?

Clinicians
- What skills do clinicians coming to practice in our community need? Does current medical education teach those skills?
- To what extent does my organization (clinical practice) work with the community to address social determinants of health? How well do we respond to patient barriers to health with clinic-level changes?
- Have we thought about what health care disparities (differences in quality of care and outcomes) exist among our patients? If yes, what are they and what might contribute to them?
- How does equity fit into quality improvement efforts at our organization? Where are there opportunities to integrate our quality and equity work?
- What internal and external factors affect our ability to address equity issues in quality of care? (SWOT)

Section 2: Questions applicable to both medical education and clinical practice

Culture of Equity
- What does my organization currently do to improve equity in health and health care?
- What do we think a culture of equity is? How would we recognize it?
  o How do providers in my practice view or talk about disparities?
  o What is at risk if there is not a culture of equity?
  o What racial and ethnic disparities issues do we feel are important to discuss?
- To what degree are the following statements true of my organization?
  o "The leadership at my practice is committed to reducing disparities in health care."
  o "The leadership at my practice is committed to incorporating equity into all of our quality improvement activities."
  o "My practice has designated specific leaders that are responsible for disparities reduction."
  o "The staff at my organization feel empowered to address equity (that is, staff feels capable and confident to take specific, even if small, actions to promote equity)."
  o "My practice staff is diverse and represents the population we serve."
  o "We have a community advisory board, and it includes minority patients."
  o "My practice has developed strong working ties with community-based groups and organizations that serve the vulnerable populations in my practice."
- How do we share clinical performance data stratified by patient race, ethnicity, and language within our practice? What opportunities do we make to discuss and respond to the implications of the data?

Equity in Quality Improvement
- Is this an issue related to the patient, the provider, the immediate care team, the organization, the community, or broader policy? Could it be related to more than one level?
- What is the patient's comfort discussing personal/private health issues with a provider and/or peers?
- Do I have medical fluency in languages other than English? What opportunities do I have to develop medical fluency in other languages?
- Are case managers or patient navigators part of the patient's care team?
- Does my organization's schedule accommodate evening or weekend hours for patients who don't have the flexibility to leave work during the day?

- What QI tools will we use to choose feasible and high-priority efforts to improve equity? (e.g. root cause analysis, priority matrix)
- How familiar are people in my organization with cultural tailoring? (Not just the concept, but specific actions.) In what ways do we do cultural targeting now?
- Do I have the technology necessary to identify and monitor disparities? Do I have technology that would facilitate active population management in response to identified disparities? (e.g., registry, electronic health record with exception reporting capabilities)
- How can staff explain to patients why collecting patient race, ethnicity, language (REL) data is important?
- What are the main concerns about equity efforts from different types of staff at my organization? How have we or will we address them?
- What data will we collect to support our efforts?

Advocacy
- How far does the responsibility of the healthcare system extend in address social determinants of health?
- What is our responsibility for improving local, state, regional, or national health care policy to lead to equitable care?

Patient/Community Engagement
- What buy-in or partnership do we need from community members? How will we get patient/ community input into our efforts?
- What are the potential barriers to building strong community ties?
- Is there a relatively easy activity we could do together with a community to start building a new partnership? For example, sharing space at a booth at a local health fair.
- What can we do to inspire active patient participation in our efforts to improve care delivery for them and other patients?
- How has community buy-in been important for our work, either for equity efforts, specifically, or for other projects? How have we gotten buy-in from community groups?
- How do we make patient/community buy-in sustainable?