



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Health Equity Compact Continues to Grow its Membership, Incorporating Increasingly Diverse and Talented Professionals

Coalition welcomes nine new members from across Massachusetts

Boston, MA (September 6, 2023): The Health Equity Compact, originally founded by 37 Black and Latinx leaders in health, business, philanthropic and labor organizations, welcomed nine new members, expanding its membership to over 80 leaders of color. The expansion furthers its diverse representation of language, race, ethnicity, sector and expertise among leaders seeking equitable health outcomes across the Commonwealth.

With its newest additions, the Compact will continue to advocate for health equity and racial justice for the Commonwealth's most underserved residents, elevating the urgent need for health reform through private sector action along with transformative legislation – [An Act to Advance Health Equity](#) – intended to enact sweeping systemic policy changes.

The announcement comes alongside statewide momentum around health equity, as the [Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation \(BCBSMAF\) report](#) found that Massachusetts loses over \$23 billion annually due to health disparities, further elevating the urgent need for health reform and solidifying an incontestable economic case for health equity. A recent [public opinion poll from MassInc Polling Group](#) found that Massachusetts residents are largely supportive of the principles of health equity, governmental and industrial involvement in health equity, and the concepts behind the bill's provisions.

The Compact recently held its inaugural Health Equity Trends Summit, convening political and health-system leaders with over 700 attendees around the salience of health equity, BCBSMAF's report, MassInc's poll, action-oriented discussion and associated solutions.

The following leaders representing health care, public health, business and academic institutions, have joined the Health Equity Compact:

- **Lissette Blondet**, Executive Director, Massachusetts Association of Community Health Workers
- **Dr. Cheryl Clark**, Executive Director, Institute for Health Equity Research, Evaluation and Policy; Associate Chief of the Division of General Internal Medicine & Primary Care, Brigham and Women's Hospital; Associate Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School
- **Dr. Alejandro Esparza-Perez**, Chief Executive Officer, Holyoke Health Center
- **Dr. Nate Horwitz-Willis**, Executive Director, Planned Parenthood Advocacy Fund of Massachusetts; Public Health Officer, Massachusetts Air National Guard
- **Izzy Lopes**, Vice President of Health Equity, Massachusetts Health & Hospital Association
- **Paulo Pinto**, Chief Executive Officer, Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers
- **Dr. Sandhya Rao**, Chief Medical Officer and Senior Vice President, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts

- **Dr. Valerie Stone**, Vice Chair for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Department of Medicine, Brigham and Women's Hospital; Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School
- **Dr. Monica Vohra**, Chief Medical Officer, Dothouse Health

"As a reproductive rights advocate, health equity is a fundamental right that empowers individuals, regardless of race, to receive quality care and make informed decisions about their bodies and futures," said **Dr. Nate Horwitz-Willis**, executive director of Planned Parenthood Advocacy Fund of Massachusetts. "I am thrilled to join the Compact in bringing urgent and transformative change to our health and healthcare infrastructure to effect healthier futures for all Massachusetts residents."

"I take immense pride in joining a coalition that so successfully convenes leaders from diverse identities and sectors, united by an urgent mission to prioritize equity in all health-related decision-making in Massachusetts," said **Dr. Cheryl Clark**, executive director and senior vice president of the Massachusetts League of Community Health Center's Institute for Health Equity Research, Policy and Evaluation. "The Compact's priorities align closely with those of the Institute for Health Equity, and embody what is needed to enact real progress. As both of our organizations grow, we look forward to leveraging key data to address the root causes of health disparities, advancing key legislation and advocacy efforts and ultimately bringing justice to our health systems."

Alongside this growth, the Compact is working to expand awareness and support of its omnibus bill, An Act to Advance Health Equity, in advance of its hearing date on September 20. The bill would imbue equity and accountability measures into government-, industry- and community-level decision-making, with the goal of making health outcomes more equitable. Its key provisions include expanding MassHealth insurance coverage to all those otherwise eligible, regardless of immigration status; creating an Executive Office of Health Equity, standardizing health equity data collection, and identifying and investing in communities with historically poor health outcomes.

About the Health Equity Compact

The Health Equity Compact is a coalition of over 80 leaders of color who seek to dismantle systemic barriers to equitable health outcomes for all residents of the Commonwealth. Compact members are high-level executives and experts from a diverse set of health, business, philanthropic and labor organizations, including hospitals, health centers, payers, academic institutions, and public health. Its mission is to realize bold statewide policy and institutional practice changes that center racial justice and health equity. Its members are committed to eliminating health inequities as the next chapter of health reform. For more information, visit www.healthequitycompact.org/.

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