

# Health Equity Now!

Designing, Implementing and Maintaining Your Health Equity Program



Addressing health disparities is a critical step in delivering high quality healthcare and creating sustainable communities. The **Health Equity Now Workgroup** was created to provide an opportunity for hospitals to work alongside peers, as well as Hqi, to design a health equity focused intervention, create implementation strategies and learn how to maintain interventions. The workgroup focused on three topics: implementing the new health equity requirements, implementing the social determinants of health (SDOH) and addressing disparities in readmissions. The series offered two sessions per month for six months, from February 2023 – August 2023.

- The “Learning” sessions featured lectures on each of the three focused topics, providing best practices and recommendations in the health equity field.
- The “Health Equity Huddle (HEH)” sessions provided an open-ended opportunity for participants to ask questions and discuss information from the learning sessions.



The objectives of the series were for participants to:

1. **Understand** the three new health equity measures CMS is adopting under the Hospital Inpatient Quality Reporting (IQR) Program as well as The Joint Commission’s new elements of performance related to addressing health disparities.
2. **Demonstrate** how to complete each health equity requirement and identify relevant deadlines.
3. **Outline** the steps necessary to implement screening for SDOH and connect patient needs to community resources.
4. **Develop** methods of assessing the root causes of disparities, including collecting critical data and conducting root cause analyses.
5. **Apply** strategies to address key issues in disparities in readmissions, from documenting patient literacy to improving discharge and care transitions.

## Session Summaries

### Session One: Delving into The Joint Commission Health Equity Elements

February 21 Learning Session & March 7 Health Equity Huddle | 12:00 – 1:00pm ET

Participants reviewed the six elements of performance identified by The Joint Commission as the new health equity standards. This session walked through the courses of action necessary to meet each requirement. Hospitals learned how they can use provided tools and resources, such as their Quarterly Disparities Reports, to understand how to identify disparities, develop action plans, redirect goals when targets are not met and communicate health equity plans to the broader community.

Slides

Webinar

**Session Two:** Exploring the Hospital Commitment to Health Equity CMS Measure  
*March 21 Learning Session & April 4 Health Equity Huddle | 12:00 – 1:00pm ET*

Slides

Participants reviewed the requirements of the Hospital Commitment to Health Equity Measure as part of the CMS FY2023 IPPS/LTCH Final Rule. This session focused on how to meet the requirements, including building equity into strategic plans, collecting and stratifying REAL data and establishing the role of leadership in the annual review process.

Webinar

**Session Three:** Understanding the Screening for Social Drivers CMS Measure  
*April 18 Learning Session & May 2 Health Equity Huddle | 12:00 – 1:00pm ET*

Slides

Participants reviewed the requirements for the Screening for Social Drivers measures as part of the CMS FY2023 IPPS/LTCH Final Rule. The session provided an overview of the social drivers of health, available screening tools and a guide for hospitals to get started, from creating a timeline to piloting screenings and connecting patients' needs to community resources.

Webinar

**Session Four:** Assessing Disparities in Readmissions Part 1  
*May 23 Learning Session & June 6 Health Equity Huddle | 12:00 – 1:00pm ET*

Slides

Participants explored the importance of assessing the landscape when addressing disparities in readmissions by collecting critical data and learning to identify root causes. Participants learned how to create systems that assess risk prior to admission, as well as before, during and after the hospital stay—promoting early intervention.

Webinar

**Session Five:** Addressing Disparities in Readmissions Part 2  
*June 20 Learning Session & June 27 Health Equity Huddle | 12:00 – 1:00pm ET*

Slides

Building on the previous session, participants focused on developing strategies to respond to common issues in disparities in readmissions, including providing early discharge planning and follow-up for high-risk patients, linking patients to primary care and addressing language barriers and low health literacy.

Webinar

**Session Six:** Addressing Disparities in Readmissions Part 3  
*July 18 Learning Session & August 1 Health Equity Huddle | 12:00 – 1:00pm ET*

Slides

Building on the previous session, participants continued to learn key methods for responding to issues in disparities in readmissions. This session reviewed how to provide culturally competent patient education, connect patients with resources related to the social drivers of health and address mental health and comorbidities.

Webinar