

# What is Health Equity?

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By definition, equity is defined as the quality of being fair and is distinguished from equality. While equality means providing the same for all parties, equity means acknowledging that people don't start from the same place—imbalances exist and adjustments must be made to address these imbalances.

When it comes to health, health equity means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to live a healthy lifestyle. Health equity also acknowledges removing the obstacles to health, namely, structural racism, discriminatory practices, poverty, lack of access to good-paying jobs, etc.

## What are Health Disparities?

Health disparities are a particular type of health difference that is closely linked with social, economic, and/or environmental disadvantage. These health differences may include the number of people who get a certain disease, the severity of the disease, and more.

Additionally, health disparities disproportionately affect groups of people who have systematically experienced greater obstacles to health based on a facet of their identity such as:

- Race/ethnicity
- Religion
- Socioeconomic status
- Age
- Sex
- Sexual orientation and gender identity
- Disability
- Mental health status
- Geographic location
- Others

## Why does Health Equity Research matter?

The study of health disparities is important because it not only affects the groups facing disparities, but also helps evaluate the quality of care and health for the rest of the population.

In the U.S., gaps in health grow even larger due to the persistent obstacles set up to people in all levels of society. Without proper access to quality healthcare, affordable homes, and stable jobs,

many Americans find it difficult to live a healthy life. This results in a greater cost-related burden linked to health disparities and inequities.

One particular example familiar to many Los Angeles County residents is housing affordability. [Forty-nine percent](#) of households in LA City Council District 12 (the northwestern San Fernando Valley) are experiencing a housing burden, meaning they spend 30% of their income or more on housing alone.

Progress can only be achieved when the pathways leading to health disparities are properly reported, studied, and understood within the micro, meso, and macro contexts wherein they occur. At the HERE Center, we strive to address health disparities through collaborative research and community advocacy. We aim for all individuals in the San Fernando Valley and surrounding areas to live healthy lives and feel connected to their communities.