ACHIEVING HEALTH EQUITY THROUGH CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION

THE ROOT CAUSE COALITION™

ACHIEVING HEALTH EQUITY THROUGH CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION
“THE TEST OF OUR PROGRESS IS NOT WHETHER WE ADD MORE TO THE ABUNDANCE OF THOSE WHO HAVE MUCH, IT IS WHETHER WE PROVIDE ENOUGH FOR THOSE WHO HAVE LITTLE.”

—FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT
OUR MISSION

Reverse and end the systemic root causes of health inequities for individuals and communities through cross-sector partnerships.
OUR VISION

The Root Cause Coalition will be the national resource on “how to” facilitate pathways for cross-sector, community systems change that improve health outcomes for individuals and communities.

WORKING TO ACHIEVE

We believe that all individuals deserve a fair and equal opportunity to live a healthy and productive life. To ensure this is attainable, individuals must have access to life’s most basic needs, including nutritious and affordable food, safe shelter, transportation, and education. In our nation, one of the most prevalent determinants of a person’s overall health prospects is their ZIP code; and the decisive impact of the environments in which people live, work, learn, and grow has created a stunning imbalance in health outcomes. The Root Cause Coalition is committed to helping all individuals achieve their best selves, living lives free from social isolation and bias in communities that provide a level field for all. This is health equity, and we’ll achieve our Mission by working collectively to resolve the root causes of social disparities.

ABOUT US

Established in 2015, the Root Cause Coalition is a non-profit, member-driven organization comprised of more than 65 leading health systems, hospital associations, foundations, businesses, national and community nonprofits, health insurers, academic institutions, and policy centers. The Coalition works to achieve health equity through cross-sector collaboration in advocacy, education and research. In support of this mission, the Coalition seeks to uphold its four core values: Focusing on Community Change, Advancing Authentic Collaboration, Scaling Innovative Solutions, and Engaging and Learning from Communities.
**WHERE HEALTH CARE SPENDING DISCONNECTS**

**WHAT MAKES US HEALTHY?**
- Genetics: 20%
- Environment: 20%
- Healthy Behaviors: 50%
- Access to Care: 10%

**HEALTH CARE SPENDING**
- Healthy Behaviors: 8%
- Genetics: 4%
- Environment: 20%
- Access to Care: 20%
- Medical Services: 88%

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**OUR CORE VALUES**

**Focusing on Community Change**
We work to advance policies and system change that achieve health equity by addressing basic needs, inclusion and bias.

**Advancing Authentic Collaboration**
Collectively, members of the Coalition work to inspire leaders to prioritize cross-sector solutions that address the root causes of health inequity. We advance the practice of collaboration by supporting organizations in identifying shared interests, respecting diverse perspectives, sharing authority and responsibility, and working effectively.

**Scaling Innovative Solutions**
At the Coalition, we facilitate shared learning across sectors and geographies, cultivating new partnerships and bold solutions to drive sustainable change.

**Engaging and Learning from Communities**
The Coalition recognizes that those most affected by inequities in health and social conditions are the experts on their experience and thus, works to elevate their voices.
The Coalition champions the development and implementation of policies that address the social determinants of health, lowers healthcare costs and improves health outcomes.
The Coalition works to effect change at the local, state and federal levels by providing lawmakers, regulators and administrators with insights and advice on their efforts to resolve health inequity. We work in concert with our member-organizations to develop comments and positions on issues of public policy, establish priorities and connect with public officials. The Coalition champions the development and implementation of policies that address the social determinants of health, lowers healthcare costs and improves health outcomes.

Our rapidly expanding membership covers nearly every corner of the U.S. and includes some of the largest employers in many states and congressional districts. Lawmakers and regulators are accustomed to hearing from coalitions representing a particular interest, region or sector, but rarely do they hear from such a diverse group of like-minded organizations speaking in unison. Additionally, public officials with no direct political or geographical connection to a member-organization understand that the Coalition is a uniquely valuable resource for any matter pertaining to health equity and the social determinants of health.

Since our establishment in 2015, we have sought to draw Capitol Hill’s attention to the root causes of ill-health. Each year, these efforts culminate with the Coalition’s annual Advocacy Day. The Coalition brings representatives of its member-organizations to Washington to meet with members of Congress and their staff to discuss issues of mutual concern. Working with our Board, Advisory Council and Advocacy Committee to develop priorities, Advocacy Day is an insightful and impactful day. We then work throughout the year with key congressional offices and committees to both protect and promote passage of legislation that bolsters the core building-blocks of health equity, including food security, transportation, housing, education, social isolation, access to care, community engagement, economic empowerment, and community development.

Social isolation among older adults is associated with an estimated $6.7 billion in additional Medicare spending annually.
INCREASINGLY
INDIVIDUALS ACROSS
THE NATION,
UNDERSTAND THE
IDEALS THAT OUR
COALITION CHAMPIONS,
AND ARE EAGER TO
LEARN HOW THESE
CONCEPTS CAN BE
PUT INTO PRACTICE.
EDUCATION
Helping Key Constituencies Understand the “How”

Education about how to address health equity is a cornerstone of our work; thus, we strive to educate key constituencies on the nature of health equity, the proven interventions that mitigate its effects as well as the policies and practices that can resolve its root causes. By providing a venue for subject-matter experts to share their ideas and insights, the Coalition contributes to our growing body of knowledge about the social determinants of health and their consequences to overall health outcomes.

Through the Coalition, we educate key constituencies in the development and implementation of evidence-based programs that promote health equity. The past decade has seen a profound change in the way we define the concept of health. This change began among practitioners and subject-matter experts working in healthcare but has rapidly spread to a broader group of stakeholders in various states, services and sectors. Leaders in healthcare are increasingly concerned with the real drivers of morbidity and mortality—and those drivers overwhelmingly occur outside the clinical setting. They include a complex array of socioeconomic, environmental, behavioral, and medical issues. We believe that the healthcare system of the future should be characterized by a prevailing focus on wellness, not illness. This will involve a shift toward proactive interventions that seek to resolve the social factors that lead to ill-health. More then ever, individuals across the nation understand the ideals that our Coalition champions and are increasingly eager to learn how these concepts can be put into practice.

The overarching goal of the Coalition’s education initiatives is to help this audience understand the “how.”

Under the guidance of its Education Committee, the Coalition employs numerous methods to achieve this goal. We host a “how to” webinar series, inviting panels of subject-matter experts to discuss one or more proven interventions that address a particular social determinant of health. Our webinars, which routinely draw hundreds of participants, are an opportunity for our presenters to showcase their work, and for our audience to learn from leading professionals in a particular field.

Finally, the Coalition’s annual National Summit on the Social Determinants of Health offers attendees a wealth of opportunities for personal and professional enrichment. Our plenary, concurrent and poster sessions are an unparalleled venue for education on the social determinants of health. Because of our commitment to educating future community leaders and care providers, we work diligently to engage students in community advocacy, healthcare, health policy, and medicine through a full scholarship program that also provides opportunity for follow-up and engagement in subsequent Coalition gatherings and programs. The Coalition will also host regional summits that convene local partners, elected officials and C-Suite leaders to further Coalition’s work at the community level.

Approximately 1 in 3 chronically ill Americans are unable to afford food, medication, or both, despite participation in assistance programs.
THE COALITION RECOGNIZES THAT DIVERSE, COMMUNITY-BASED ISSUES REQUIRE DIVERSE SOLUTIONS, BUT THOSE SOLUTIONS MUST BE CONNECTED AND VALIDATED BY DATA.
RESEARCH
Telling a Compelling Story through Data

The Coalition seeks out and disseminates research and data that informs its efforts to build health equity. Collectively, we use our resources to conduct or commission new research that fills the gaps in our understanding of the social factors that contribute to ill-health. In addition, we strive to serve a translational function—turning raw data into a story that is meaningful, applicable and relevant.

The Coalition recognizes that diverse, community-based issues require diverse solutions, but those solutions must be connected by data—data that is systematized, evidence-based and gathered through proven best practices. We are concerned not only with who will collect data and how, but how it will be made available to healthcare providers and other community and public health professionals, how they will act on the data, and how they will share their insights with social-service providers and other key stakeholders. The Coalition keeps apprised of the best new research studies, pilot programs and data by participating in the review process for literature on social-determinant interventions. We distribute an annual environmental-scan survey to hundreds of organizations across the country. We also maintain an online data-repository which houses research and tools that pertain to the social determinants of health, population health, and the effort to build health equity.

In addition to its in-house research initiatives, we frequently partner with other organizations to facilitate research in our core focus areas. For example, the Coalition collaborated with the International Food Information Council (IFIC) Foundation on its 2018 Food and Health Survey. We worked with IFIC on a survey of the Medicaid population, seeking to better understand the unique health and nutrition issues facing more than 66 million Americans covered by the program. We then shared the data and key insights garnered through this survey with attendees at its 2018 National Summit before releasing them to the general public.

In the latter half of 2019, the Coalition will publish its “State of Health Equity” report—a multi-faceted overview of the cross-sector movement to achieve health equity. To bolster the observations contained in this report, the Coalition commissioned a survey of 200 practicing physicians, providers and advance practice providers that assessed their outlook on the growing attentiveness to the social determinants in the medical field, as well as their capacity to implement social-determinant interventions.

Making the humanitarian case for greater attentiveness to the social determinants is simple; proving the return-on-investment and demonstrating what programs and particular interventions are effective involves specific data analysis and time-intensive research. That is why we are committed to expanding our knowledge of the social determinants and the communities we serve.

In some cities life expectancy can differ by as much as 25 years from one neighborhood to the next.
Each year, the Coalition brings together more than 600 subject-matter experts and cross-sector leaders to discuss the latest research, innovations and advocacy initiatives in our shared effort to achieve health equity. The National Summit is an unrivaled opportunity to share best practices, engage in professional networking and learn about proven interventions that address the social factors that weigh so heavily on health outcomes. Our presenters come from a wide range of disciplines and backgrounds, but they are united in their commitment to addressing the social factors that lead to health disparities.

The social determinants of health and their effects on health outcomes are among our nation’s greatest challenges. Our Mission calls us to work to reverse and end the systemic root causes of health inequities for individuals and communities through cross-sector partnerships by promoting solutions that have proven effective and sustainable. We understand that the concept of “health” encompasses a broad spectrum of social factors that do not always fall within the traditional purview of the health care sector, and we believe that the imbalance between the resources we devote to medical services and the resources we devote to addressing the root causes of ill-health must be corrected. Through our National Summit, the Coalition seeks to provide an ideal venue for discussion of these and many more worthy goals.

Our firm belief that the best way to achieve health equity is through collaboration across states, services and sectors is reflected each year in the makeup of our audience. We take great pride in our ability to attract leaders who understand how to improve health and well-being through meaningful collaboration and can demonstrate proven outcomes. In 2018, fully half of our audience identified as senior organizational leaders, with 27 percent coming directly from the C-suite or a Vice President role. Our audience was also representative of the cross-sector nature of our work: 31 percent of attendees came from the healthcare sector, 28 percent from the nonprofit sector, 9 percent from educational institutions, 6 percent from food banks, and the remaining 25 percent from a wide range of additional organizations.

And annually, the Coalition confers its highest honor on an outside organization with the presentation of the ROOTS Award. The ROOTS Award (Redefining Outcomes: from Obstacles to Success) is presented at the National Summit to an organization that demonstrate an exceptional commitment to achieving health equity through innovative cross-sector collaborations.

In the future, the Coalition’s overarching goal for its National Summit is simple: continue to act as the preeminent venue for organizing, informing and energizing the movement to achieve health equity.

Interested in joining the Coalition? Log onto: rootcausecoalition.org/join-the-cause
MEET OUR MEMBERS

FOUNDING PARTNERS

AARP Foundation
For a future without senior poverty.

PROMEDICA

INAUGURAL PARTNERS

Breshann Enterprise, Inc.
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Ceres Community Project
Communities of Excellence 2026
Food & Friends
God’s Love We Deliver
Great Plains Food Bank
Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank
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MANNA
Mid-Ohio Food Bank
Open Arms of Minnesota
Oregon Food Bank
Poverello
Project Angel Heart
Project Open Hand Atlanta
Rose Centers on Aging Well
Second Harvest Heartland
Solera Health, Inc.
St. Louis Area Foodbank
West Health Institute

PARTNERS

MEMBERS

AS OF FEBRUARY 2019
CONTACT US

We invite you to learn more about
The Root Cause Coalition,
our programs and services, and
how you can lend your voice to our work.

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