

Tulane awarded \$2.9 million to launch national health equity research learning collaborative

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[Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine](#) will launch a national learning collaborative to inform and harmonize research to advance solutions toward

health equity.

The collaborative, known as [Partners for Advancing Health Equity](#) (P4HE Collaborative), will bring together leading national public health scholars, philanthropic foundations, federal research funders, community members, and private sector representatives. The group will work to better understand the latest issues related to attaining health equity and create consistency, processes, guidance, and priorities in research to address obstacles to health equity.

Achieving [health equity](#) requires removing barriers to health such as poverty, discrimination, and their consequences, which include lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education, secure housing and safe environments. It means eliminating health disparities and determinants that harm marginalized or excluded groups.

“Health equity means that everyone — no matter who they are or where they live — has a fair and just opportunity to live the healthiest life possible,” said [Thomas LaVeist](#), dean of Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine and Weatherhead Presidential Chair in Health Equity. “By establishing Partners for Advancing Health Equity, we have an exciting opportunity to convene with national leaders to shape the evidence needed to achieve health equity.”

LaVeist, who is a leading researcher of health disparities and the social determinants of health in the United States, will lead the P4HE Collaborative, which is part of the Tulane Institute for Innovations in Health Equity. Tulane will coordinate and implement health equity research initiatives directed by the P4HE Collaborative. [ICF International](#) will develop a digital platform to serve as the virtual hub for the collaborative. Support for the P4HE Collaborative is provided by a grant from the [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#).

“We at the Foundation are excited by what can be made possible through this collaborative. Community partners, researchers, and funders working together to determine research priorities, expand methodologies, interpret findings, and disseminate learnings will innovate health equity research,” said Sheldon Oliver Watts, program officer at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

The leadership team includes a diverse group of School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine faculty focused on health equity research: [Andrew Anderson](#), assistant professor in the Department of Health Policy and Management; [Caryn Bell](#), assistant

professor in the Department of Social, Behavioral, and Population Sciences; [David Chae](#), associate dean for research and associate professor in the Department of Social, Behavioral, and Population Sciences; and [Katherine Theall](#), Cecile Usdin Professor in Women's Health, director of the Mary Amelia Center for Women's Health Equity Research and senior director of the Violence Prevention Institute.

Partners for Advancing Health Equity has begun recruiting members and organizations. One of the collaborative's first priorities will be working to identify effective ways to provide capacity-building supports to communities, to enable community members to participate in research, and to prepare researchers to engage communities authentically and effectively.

The collaborative will host an inaugural webinar, March 8, with national cross-sector thought-leaders to introduce the collaborative's work and discuss next steps in health equity practice and policy.

"Researchers will engage with philanthropy, government officials, business and community representatives to get a nuanced understanding of problems and potential community-led solutions that would help shape the research," LaVeist said. "The idea is that health equity advocates and professionals from each of these constituencies will have an opportunity to learn from each other."

One of the P4HE Collaborative's core objectives will be identifying and building equity-focused research methods with particular emphasis on participant-driven research methodologies. To assess the status of research, and provide opportunities for others to interact, activities such as literature reviews and pre-conference and consensus-building workshops will be conducted.

The P4HE Collaborative will also create and distribute case studies of best practices in equity grantmaking and funder advocacy. It will be an important resource for philanthropic organizations to learn about the latest in health equity research and identify the best funding opportunities that will make an impact, LaVeist said.

"The learning collaborative will create the infrastructure to help these organizations frame what future research should happen," he said.