

Seattle King County Public Health

Jail Health Services

2023-2024 Equity Plan

Overview

Jail Health Services (JHS), as a Division of Public Health – Seattle & King County, recognizes the importance and significance of Racism as a Public Health Crisis (RPHC) and Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) in our unique role of providing healthcare services to one of the most underserved populations in our community, within the jails. We see the impacts of racism and inequities in the clients we serve, our jail environment, the interactions among our staff, and in the broader community. It is imperative that we take targeted and drastic action to interrupt the inequities that are ever-present in our corrections environment.

Commitment

JHS is dedicated to enhancing awareness and taking defined action toward our own and others' experiences of and contributions toward inequitable systems and structures. With the goal of eradicating health disparities and improving the health outcomes of the patients served while detained in King County. We are committed to applying anti-racist principles in our decision-making processes, and in our interactions with employees, partners, and patients.

We are committed to dismantling and interrupting racist systems that perpetuate inequity in our service delivery. We strive to improve health equity among our patient population, by improving communication and building relationships – centering BIPOC communities, that support our ability to understand and respond to patient needs.

We are committed to dismantling the racist systems and culture that impact staff. We will foster a culture of inclusion amongst employees and incorporate the voices of BIPOC through shared power and decision making.

JHS will prioritize its participation in dismantling systemic racism, by equipping its staff to recognize and eliminate inequitable processes and practices. We will empower employees to challenge and address inequities, to understand JHS's current role within racist systems and to dismantle these systems, replacing them with those rooted in equity and anti-racism.

Objective

To “interrupt the norm” of inequities in our division and more broadly within King County, JHS will take a multi-faceted approach to begin recognizing, identifying, and addressing structural racism and bias inside our policies, practices, processes, and interactions. JHS will structure its efforts and initiatives on the **Racism is a Public Health Crisis organizing principles** –

- Anti-racist
- Focus where negative impacts have been most harmful
- Center Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) experiences and voices
- Responsive, adaptive, transparent, and accountable
- Focus on addressing root causes

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With the recent declaration of racism as a PH crisis, this is a prime opportunity for the division to begin addressing its role in systemic racism. We fully acknowledge that our patients are often grappling with failures within our social and economic system, and that we are directly connected to two important pillars of systemic racism - criminal justice and healthcare disparity. We will focus our efforts on these two perspectives to begin dismantling racism, bias, and prejudice from our own internal systems and structures.

JHS's 2023-24 Equity Plan is organized into three focus areas

- 1. Community Partnerships**
- 2. Workforce and Workplace**
- 3. Budget and Policy**

Community Partnerships

- JHS will focus on cultivating and strengthening trust in its relationships with community partners using anti-racist organizing principles to understand and challenge oppressive practices in our interpersonal interactions, decision making processes and service delivery.
- JHS will center the quality of healthcare and services provided to its patient population by improving patient health education and awareness of services available. Enhancing communication methods and approaches to meet patient needs, cultivating relationships and trust between service providers and patients.
- JHS will improve and expand community partnerships by identifying key partners, based on the feedback and needs of patients transitioning from jail. Improve our understanding of patient experiences as they navigate care, including key transition points, limitations, and gaps. Identify and build partnerships with key external organizations who share our patient population.
- JHS will actively seek the input and engagement of the BIPOC community, by fostering a culture of trust, partnership, and shared power. The division will increase opportunities to incorporate community participation in the development of programs, services, and initiatives.
- JHS will gain a better understanding of the resources dedicated to and required to develop meaningful partnerships and relationships with external partners. Gain knowledge of resources partners have access to and what is needed to improve patient outcomes.

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Workplace/Workforce

- JHS will use the ***Undoing Institutionalized Racism (UIR)*** curriculum and principles to guide its equity training, education, and development. The training of managers, supervisors, and equity committee members within the division, has been prioritized as the decision-making roles of JHS.
- JHS will increase UIR training opportunities for staff, that will focus on shared learning and additional training of JHS employees, especially direct service roles, and continuing development of division leadership.
- JHS will fully embrace the King County value “We Are Racially Just” – reviewing regularly at staff meetings and huddles. Staff feedback will be used to develop specific goals and equity efforts to support staff and team development.
- JHS will develop an Equity Community of Practice, in addition to continuing employee caucusing spaces and supporting employee affinity group participation.
- JHS will form an Equity Steering Committee to guide the development and implementation of equity initiatives within the division as well as co-create and share in the facilitation of employee led training and engagement efforts.
- JHS will evaluate its recruitment and onboarding processes, focusing on hiring, retention, and ongoing support of BIPOC employees. Improve data collection and monitoring of employee hiring and retention.
- JHS will identify opportunities for shared leadership and demonstration of its investment in staff.
- JHS will foster a culture of inclusion, improving its communication and accessibility of information to all employees.
- JHS will center its employee’s sense of safety - emotional, physical, and psychological. Structure and tools to address harm and manage harmful situations will be developed.
- JHS will improve and increase efforts to address and combat bias, prejudices, and assumptions from patient encounters and employee experiences.

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Racism is a Public Health Crisis (Policy and Budget)

- JHS will review and revise policies, procedures, processes, manuals, and protocols, with an ESJ and Racial Justice perspective and incorporate anti-racist principles.
- JHS will identify and analyze disparities in our healthcare delivery by regularly collecting data from patients, community partners and employees.
- JHS will expand training opportunities by dedicating training and development budget for employee safety and healing.
- JHS will ensure policies are in place to support community engagement efforts within the division. The division will participate in the departments strategic planning efforts, advocating to prioritize resources in BIPOC communities and where needs are greatest.
- JHS will develop a participatory budgeting process to include staff and community partners in allocation decisions. The division will prioritize program and budget investments upstream and where negative impacts have been most harmful.
- JHS will adapt the King County Community Engagement guide to support community partner and patient engagement.
- JHS will improve its capacity to provide technical assistance to support the use of the King County Equity Impact Analysis and tools to inform budget analysis, program evaluation and process improvements.
- JHS will share and promote the work done to improve transparency in our local community and larger correctional healthcare community. JHS will share its approach to this critical work with other institutions and community partners.
- JHS will utilize the momentum of its organizational transformation efforts to ensure anti-racist, equity and racial justice principles are incorporated into the divisions mission, values, and vision.

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Next Steps

Leveraging the diverse perspectives and experiences of JHS staff, in addition to the dedicated resource of an Equity Inclusion and Belonging (EIB) Manager, the division equity plan will be used to create an action plan, identify JHS leads and points of contact to embed accountability into the division's equity initiatives.

The JHS Equity Community of Practice will identify the methods that the division will adopt, to realize JHS's equity goals in the key focus areas of this plan. This group will be instrumental in the development of success indicators for the division's equity efforts. The Equity Steering committee will lead the initiatives that will integrate anti-racism into practice, sustain progress and ensure continuous improvement.

The EIB manager, in partnership with division leadership and the equity committees, will develop the structure and framework of future JHS equity initiatives. The process will include a thorough evaluation of organizational and employee capacity, as well as the identification of strategies to increase JHS employee capacity to participate in this crucial work.

This plan will serve as a living document for JHS employees and community partners, it will be reviewed regularly and revised as needed.