

RWJF Health Equity Collaborative: Talking Points

Many organizations are dedicated to the goal of creating opportunity for Americans to achieve their best health. While there has been much research on documenting health inequities and their causes, much less is known about solutions for creating health equity. What we do know is that solutions are needed in many sectors and domains, with a focus on changes in policies, systems, and environments.

At this moment, there is great interest in funding health equity research, but no coordination or collaboration across funders. Forming a health equity research collaborative will allow both government agencies and private foundations to come together and accelerate the identification and application of solutions more quickly through coordinated, complementary, and synergistic research efforts.

Key Points:

- **Capitalizing on interest.** FHI360 has already conducted a few interviews with funders from private organizations and federal agencies, all of whom have shown great interest in health equity research/evaluation and the opportunity to collaborate.
- **Accelerating progress through collaboration.** The state of health equity research is currently fractured among many funding organizations. Through collaboration, research funders can bring to the table varied perspectives and expertise, work together to identify critical gaps in evidence, explore opportunities to increase knowledge, and uncover ways to harness the unique resources of each funder. Forming a collaborative that makes strategic investments in policy, systems, and environmental research across diverse sectors can help jump start the field and accelerate learning and action.
- **Focusing on solutions.** The field is ready for solutions-oriented research, also referred to as third generation research. The National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine is releasing a report (January 11) on Community-Based Solutions to Promote Health Equity.
- **Leveraging resources to make complementary investments.** No organization can fund all of the research that is needed. But by making complementary research investments, funders can cover more ground more quickly and make progress faster, making the best use of their research funds by not duplicating efforts.
- **Building on successful models.** FHI360 has developed and managed two tobacco control collaboratives, the National Tobacco Cessation Collaborative and the Youth Tobacco Cessation Collaborative, and currently manages the National Collaborative on Childhood Obesity Research (NCCOR). This model has been shown to be innovative and impactful--accelerating dialog and action, building knowledge and tools, investigating new areas, and working across sectors to integrate priorities.
- **Generating a high return on investment.** Collaborative models have shown the ability to have a great impact. For example, NCCOR has a 1:100 return on investment. For every \$1 spent on coordination among funders, NCCOR has influenced \$100 in childhood obesity efforts.