

Call to Action

Government as well as private and other civil society sectors have a role to play in transforming our public health data system.

SECTOR	ACTION
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop minimum standards about data collection, disaggregation, presentation, and access, in federally funded data collection efforts, with an orientation to “freeing federal data” or promoting greater access. ▪ Strengthen public health data infrastructure and incentivize the use of new data collection and analytic approaches. ▪ Federal funding for data infrastructure should be prioritized to systems that are standards-based and interoperable. ▪ Offer guidance on interpretation of racial/ethnic variation in health-relevant data to counter longstanding acceptance of the idea that these variations reflect biological differences rather than systemic, cultural, behavioral, and social factors.
STATE GOVERNMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure that state policies for public health data collection, sharing (including balancing privacy and transparency), and analysis are equity driven and explicitly call out the influence and consequences of structural racism and other inequities on health. ▪ Partner with local health departments and departments that provide public health data (e.g., social services data) to consider new models of collaboration to improve efficiency and timeliness of decision-making and action at both state and local levels.
LOCAL GOVERNMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regularly connect public health data to local communications (i.e., what is happening in the community and how it relates to overall community well-being, or the impact of inequity). ▪ Ensure the local voice is represented not only in public health data (e.g., from whom data are collected), but in positions of authority responsible for making sense of the data and informing decisions. ▪ Explore data-sharing collaborations across government and civil society (e.g., nonprofits, businesses) that can more consistently generate public health data to support equity considerations and advance innovative public-private collaborations on data and analysis.
PUBLIC HEALTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lead multisector collaboration around public health data sharing to improve the timeliness and quality of data to strengthen local decision-making. ▪ Strengthen capacity, diversity, and ongoing training of the public health workforce to monitor and address health equity, both in the field of public health and through novel collaborations with business, academia, or other sectors that influence health. ▪ Advocate for and prioritize modernization efforts and data sharing within and across the public health system to ensure that local data can inform emerging public health concerns at the regional, state, and national levels in real time.

BUSINESSES

- Work with government partners and other organizations to develop standards through which public health data generated by the private sector can be used and communicated.
- Engage in more consistent workforce exchanges and data partnerships with public health organizations to cross-pollinate innovations in the types, content, quality, and precision of public health data.
- Foster public health innovation by promoting methods in use by technology companies, such as data integration, “big data” analytics, and data security.

HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS

- Collect social determinants of health data at every consumer encounter, using standardized questions and ICD-10 codes that allow data aggregation within communities.
- Overcome historic silos and build partnerships and legal solutions to facilitate sharing of relevant healthcare data with public health departments in a timely and efficient manner, allowing data linkages and disaggregation of subgroups and geographic regions.

NONPROFITS

- Build trust in data as a public good in the community and among constituents and ensure that such data do not further marginalize or bring harm to populations.
- Work locally to develop data-sharing strategies with government, and, where appropriate and where there is health benefit, reciprocity, and equitable access.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

- Develop strategies to improve data completeness and quality, particularly with respect to equity and drivers of health and well-being.
- Actively work with professional associations from other sectors that influence health (e.g., education, social services, environment) to align efforts, particularly around standardization and data use.

SCHOOLS

- Help students monitor and evaluate structural and systemic inequities and understand what data systems must include to signal those inequities.
- Train the next generation of public health practitioners and researchers to meaningfully partner with local stakeholders, and to value lived experience and community expertise as much as formal training

PHILANTHROPY

- Promote a national, unifying health goal that can be understood and executed, with a focus on the role of structural racism and the values of health equity and well-being.
- Leverage convening and funding opportunities to meaningfully engage leaders, including those from non-health sectors and community organizations, who can advance the importance of public health data.
- Focus funding on key parts of data systems modernization, such as improving governance and using new forms of data and analytic methods to convey better stories of health equity and well-being.