



HEALTH
BEGINS

2020
ANNUAL REPORT



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OUR YEAR TOGETHER & OUR WORK AHEAD

2020 was a stress test of the highest order—for our families, our communities, our organizations, and our country, as well as our Upstreamist mission. 2020 also stress tested our hearts and souls.

It was a year of loss and suffering. But it was also **an immeasurably important year for equity**, in which police violence and an unrelenting pandemic made unseen injustices seen. Racial and economic inequities long tolerated or ignored by many were revealed to be grossly unjust and impossible to deny.

In the U.S. we starkly saw our shortcomings as a country. But we also found some of our strength.

We saw the acceleration of social movements, as more people than ever engaged in issues of health and democracy. We saw breathtaking acts of courage, compassion, and kindness every day.

We also confronted what happens when we collectively stray from facts, equity, and compassion as our guides—and reinvigorated our commitment to center those values in a new era of change. **Our new future will be healthier, kinder, more equitable, and more just, because we will make it so.**

We are deeply proud of how our team met the moment. **HealthBegins' work was important in 2020 not only because of *what* we did, but because of *how* we did it.**

In each action, we demonstrated the essential working principles of the Upstream Movement: collaboration, equity among partners and allies, humility, rigor, and a commitment to leveraging our positions of privilege to elevate others. We underscored that **moving upstream at all three levels of action—individual social needs, community-level social determinants of health, and society-level structural determinants of health equity**—is not only necessary, it's possible. Especially when we do it together.

Throughout it all, we recognized that **our own humanity**—our hopes and fears, aspiration and grief—is not an impediment or an inconvenience, but a central concern and an essential force in this work.

So through the fight against the pandemic and the broader fight for equity we repeatedly created space not only for the work but for ourselves and our allies in this movement. For example, in September, we hosted "[Grieve, Breathe, Rest](#)," a virtual gathering for health leaders to mourn patients, colleagues, and loved ones lost to the pandemic. It was a powerful moment of restorative rest, a space to nurture our hearts and nourish our souls on this journey toward health equity.

We look at 2021 as another immeasurably important year—but one infused with more hope and measurable progress than the year we've just weathered. As always, we'll continue to create a space for the growing ranks of Upstreamists to work with, learn from, and find solidarity with each other.

Best,

Rishi & Sadena



RISHI MANCHANDA, MD, MPH
PRESIDENT & CEO



SADENA THEVARAJAH, JD
MANAGING DIRECTOR

HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2020 INCLUDE:

- **Strategy Consulting**

- » Working with local institutions, we convened stakeholders across South Carolina to develop a statewide strategy for addressing social determinants of health, resulting in a bold roadmap for action.
- » In ongoing work with the **American Medical Association**, we are helping the nation's largest physicians association develop its upstream strategy to improve health and equity at all three levels (individual, community, societal/structural).

- **Learning Collaboratives**

- » We helped guide an intrepid set of hospital leaders in Virginia to respond to the explosion of unmet social needs because of the pandemic while simultaneously improving the way health and social care work together. With our help, more than 1 in 3 **Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association** member institutions is now moving upstream!
- » Physician groups from coast to coast have tackled a similar challenge in our inaugural learning collaborative with **America's Physician Groups**. We're proud that we've challenged these teams to address not only immediate social needs but also broader issues of structural racism—and that they've vigorously accepted that challenge.

- **Training and Education**

- » Before COVID-19 struck, we set a moonshot to **train at least 25,000 Upstreamists by the end of 2021**. Pandemic notwithstanding, we are now pursuing that moonshot through a partnership with the **American Medical Association**, through which we will soon offer six free e-learning modules, available for continuing education credit for physicians, nurses, social workers, pharmacists, and other healthcare professionals.

- **Advancing Equity & Accelerating the Upstream Movement**

- » Part of HealthBegins' role as a catalyst is to continuously propel ideas and practices in the Upstream Movement forward. This year that meant convening allies and leaders to help elevate a critically important division in the health equity army, by forming **the national Community-Based Workforce Alliance**. As Congress considers how to deliver vaccines and relief to our hardest-hit communities and President Biden plans a U.S. Public Health Jobs Corps, our collective advocacy for this trusted workforce is more timely than ever. (Read our recent op-ed in *The Hill*, referenced on page 27.)
- » HealthBegins Managing Director Sadena Thevarajah stepped up to **co-chair the Complex Care Committee for Health Justice and Racial Equity** with the Camden Coalition and its National Center for Complex Health and Social Needs.
- » With HealthLeads, John Snow Inc., UCSF's SIREN, and Human Impact Partners we are developing a **health equity guide for healthcare systems** to meaningfully advance racial and health equity.

VISION

We envision a just and equitable future

in which all people can live their healthiest, most joyful lives possible.

To realize this future, health care, public health, community partners, and policymakers will work together in new ways and take bold action to improve social drivers of health and equity at all levels—for individuals, communities, and society.

We do this by “moving upstream”

which means helping clients and partners to equitably and effectively address individual health-related social needs, improve community-wide social determinants of health, and dismantle deeper structural determinants of health inequity.

MISSION

We inspire and drive radical transformation in health equity

by equipping healthcare, public health, and community partners to address the root causes of health inequities and improve the structural and social drivers of health for all people.

VALUES

Moving upstream is transformational work and must be rooted in core values. In our workplace culture, our client and partner relationships, and our role in the broader Upstream Movement, we seek to uphold these values:

1. Equity

We center our work in racial equity. From the way we show up for our teammates to the way we work with clients and allies, we understand that racial equity is not just an outcome, it's an ongoing practice.

2. Growth

With clients and colleagues alike, we create opportunities for continuous learning, improvement, and professional development. We grow only when we help ourselves, our partners, and our community grow.

3. Joy & Hope

We share joy and practice disciplined hope. We recognize the human suffering caused by health inequities and racial injustice, just as we understand the energy and commitment required to combat them. To nourish and sustain ourselves and our partners in this work, we intentionally create spaces to share joy, setbacks, and hope.



MEET OUR TEAM

**Sara Bader, MCD, CPHQ**

Senior Manager, Upstream Quality Improvement

Sara Bader is an experienced QI strategist and coach with a passion for helping organizations make health care more equitable and safer. She began her career as an urban planner before transitioning to health care and quality improvement. She has worked on quality initiatives for state hospital associations and a health system, coaching organizations to plan, assess, implement, and evaluate interventions to promote safe and reliable care. She has a master's degree in civic design from the University of Liverpool, a Lean Six Sigma Black Belt from Dartmouth College, and is a certified professional in healthcare quality and patient safety.

**Roza Do, MPH, MCP**

Consultant

Roza Do has spent the last decade working with nonprofit organizations, health systems, and cross-sector initiatives to support learning and collaborative action at the intersection of primary care and community health improvement. She brings experience in program development and management, coaching, and application of human-centered design principles. She launched various grantmaking initiatives and learning collaboratives for community health centers and hospitals focused on addressing social determinants of health and creating technology innovation hubs to improve care for marginalized communities. She holds master's degrees in public health and city and regional planning from the University of California, Berkeley.

**Toni Hancock Counts**

Business Operations Manager/ Senior Project Manager

Toni Hancock Counts has more than eight years of business operations experience and 14 years of project management experience. Toni is adept at managing businesses and seamlessly transitioning across industries varying from construction to pharmaceuticals, tech, legal, and health care. She is well versed in developing operational policies, procedures, and processes; ensuring regulatory compliance; project management methodologies; organizational change management; risk management; team building; communication; and technical implementations of organizational change. She is a graduate of Temple University, Philadelphia, with a BA in biological anthropology.



Ellen Lawton, JD
Senior Fellow

Ellen Lawton is a national expert in the integration of legal professionals into health care to address the social determinants of health. She helped found and then led the National Center for Medical-Legal Partnership at George Washington University. An expert in poverty law, she is internationally recognized for her leadership in developing the medical-legal partnership model and has published an array of articles in clinical and legal journals.



Maricela Lopez
Executive Assistant

Maricela Lopez supports executive leadership with administrative needs. She assists with communications, strategy development, and online communication efforts. Before joining the HealthBegins team, she worked in direct client services for the Child Care Alliance, Los Angeles. She is a graduate of California State University, Northridge with a BA in liberal studies with a focus in anthropology.



Rishi Manchanda, MD, MPH
President & CEO

Dr. Rishi Manchanda is a physician, author, and healthcare leader who has developed novel strategies to improve health in resource-poor communities. He has served as director of social medicine for a network of community health centers in South-Central Los Angeles, lead primary care physician for homeless veterans at the Greater Los Angeles VA, and chief medical officer for a self-insured employer with a large immigrant workforce. His 2013 TED Book, *The Upstream Doctors*, introduced the Upstreamists, a new model of healthcare workers who improve care by addressing patients' health-related social needs, such as food, financial, and housing insecurity.

MEET OUR TEAM



Grace Rubenstein

Editorial & Communications Director

Grace Rubenstein is a journalist, editor, and podcast coach specializing in health science. She tells stories through words, sounds, images, and video while maximizing the unique storytelling power of each medium. Grace's award-winning work has appeared in the *Atlantic* online, *New York Times*, *Boston Globe*, *STAT News*, *Longreads*, and the Center for Investigative Reporting (*Reveal*). Her radio tales have reached the airwaves of *Morning Edition*, KQED's *The California Report*, and PRI's *The World*. She is also the story editor of TED podcasts including *WorkLife with Adam Grant* and *The TED Interview*. She earned a BA in psychology from Williams College.



Sadena Thevarajah, JD

Managing Director

Sadena Thevarajah has spent over 10 years at the intersection of health law, policy, and stakeholder engagement. She led the first external affairs department at the USC Schaeffer Center for Health Policy and Economics and shaped patient programs at the American Cancer Society. Previously, she served in the Obama Administration, both in the Office of the HHS Secretary as well as in the White House during the passage and early implementation of the Affordable Care Act. She holds a law degree from Washington University School of Law in St. Louis and a public health degree from Johns Hopkins University.



Keandra Wilson, PMP

Project Manager

Keandra Wilson spent five years working in a variety of project management roles within the AEC and tech industries. Most recently, she managed the implementation and onboarding of clients onto a leading SAAS platform. At the same time, she led an internal project that resulted in a unified approach to managing contracts, projects, resources, and reports. Before that, she managed large design builds for several Fortune 500 companies at Gensler. Her unique background allows her to develop and implement solutions for a host of client pain points. She graduated from Monroe College with a BS in information technology.

**Vsem Yenovkian**

Communications Associate

Vsem Yenovkian comes to HealthBegins with more than 14 years of marketing and communications experience, including positions at a technology startup and a medical genetic testing company. At these organizations, he focused on developing a comprehensive content marketing strategy designed to raise brand awareness and generate demand. He understands the power of words and is able to connect with an audience on all marketing channels. With this approach he successfully grew the social media outreach and market footprint at each company. Vsem holds a BA in sociology from York University in Toronto.

“ Dr. Manchanda and the HealthBegins team are rare. When our health system spun off a national philanthropic initiative to improve community wellbeing, they were invaluable in our strategy design process. Now they’re helping us blaze new trails to connect the practice of medicine with upstream health. The HealthBegins team are not only thought leaders in the field, but also understand the strategic, tactical, and cultural nuances needed to execute plans. ”

— Dora Barilla, DrPH, VP of Community Health Investment, Providence St. Joseph Health

MEET OUR ADVISORS



Catherine M. Baase, MD, FAFP, FACOEM

Dr. Catherine Baase is a distinguished communicator on the topics of health strategy, prevention, occupational health, and public health. She has co-authored more than 30 publications and received many awards for leadership in the health field. She is a fellow in the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, a fellow in the American Academy of Family Physicians, and serves as the board chairperson of the Michigan Health Improvement Alliance (MIHIA).



Sarah C. DeSilvey, DNP, FNP

Sarah C. DeSilvey balances practice as a nurse practitioner with advocacy for addressing the social determinants of health in clinical and community practice. She has collaborated with Children's HealthWatch, the Food Research and Action Center, and SIREN. She serves as the director of clinical informatics at the Gravity Project, helping to weave social care, community-based approaches, and the literature of social risk into healthcare terminology and interoperability.



Leslie Scotland-Stewart

Leslie Scotland-Stewart is the director of healthcare innovation at Project Angel Heart. Her work is focused on creating clinical-community linkages in order to integrate an important social determinant of health within healthcare models. She serves on the Colorado Food Policy Network and the Colorado Blueprint to End Hunger workgroup. She has an MBA from the University of Denver and teaches fitness and meditation classes on the side.



Loel Solomon, PhD, MPP

Dr. Loel Solomon is a professor in the Department of Health Systems Science at the Kaiser Permanente School of Medicine. Previously, he served as deputy director of the California Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD) for Healthcare Quality and Analysis. He was also a member of Senator Edward Kennedy's health staff. He received his PhD in health policy from Harvard University and a Master of Public Policy at University of California, Berkeley.



Josie Williams

Josie Williams is the executive director for the Greensboro Housing Coalition (GHC), a leading housing advocacy nonprofit in Greensboro, NC. She developed her passion for community and addressing social determinants of health from her personal experience with housing insecurity. She has been honored for her work with a number of awards and recognition, among them the 2019 Sojourner Truth Award, which is the Greensboro Club of The National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs (NANBPWC) highest recognition, and is given to a woman whose life parallels the life and qualities of Sojourner Truth.



BY THE NUMBERS

LEARNING COLLABORATIVES



6

LEARNING
COLLABORATIVES
LAUNCHED

22

LEARNING
COLLABORATIVE
TEAMS

49

UPSTREAM GOALS
DEVELOPED & BEING
PURSUED BY PARTICIPANTS

REACH



27

STATES WHERE WE
WORKED

TRAINING & EDUCATION



3,462

REGISTRANTS ACROSS ALL
WEBINARS IN 2020



ADVOCACY

2 ALLIANCES
SUPPORTED
AND LAUNCHED
DURING THE
PANDEMIC



43

ORGANIZATIONS
SUPPORTED WITHIN
ALLIANCES

>15,000

LEARNERS EDUCATED SINCE 2012

HEALTHBEGINS TEAM

EXPANDED
HEALTHBEGINS TEAM BY

50%



15

CHILDREN OUR TEAM CARED
FOR DURING THE PANDEMIC

TEAM ZOOM MEETINGS
VISITED BY KIDS

>75



DESIGNING STRATEGY

STRATEGIC CONSULTING

HealthBegins draws on years of direct, real-world experience and expertise to help clients design bold, concrete strategies to move upstream. With goal-directed strategic consulting, we help clients engage key stakeholders and focus and align their efforts to improve social drivers of health and equity at all levels: individual social needs, community-wide social determinants of health, and broader structural determinants of health equity. We've helped design strategies for a range of vanguard organizations—from health systems and insurance plans to foundations, employers, and cross-sector collaboratives.

“I’m grateful to have HealthBegins as a key partner for the AMA and the Center for Health Equity at this historic moment as we educate, enable, and equip physicians to advance health equity and racial justice. With their deep subject matter expertise and strategic planning support, HealthBegins has been essential in helping the AMA develop its first ever enterprise-wide Upstream Strategy.”

— Aletha Maybank, MD, MPH
Chief Health Equity Officer, GVP
American Medical Association



CLIENT STORIES

HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR WORK IN 2020:

TRAINING FOR UPSTREAMISTS WITH AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

When it comes to health equity, this past year has marked a turning point for the **American Medical Association** (AMA), the nation's largest and most iconic physicians group in organized medicine—and HealthBegins has played a major role in this historic moment. Starting with the hiring of Dr. Aletha Maybank, AMA's first chief health equity officer (see our profile of this leading Upstreamist at healthbegins.org) in 2019, the organization has begun to elevate health and racial equity in bold ways. New initiatives include a greater focus on social needs, social determinants of health, and structural determinants of health inequity such as structural racism. Since early 2020, HealthBegins has partnered with the AMA to support this critical work.

Working closely with AMA's new Center for Health Equity, HealthBegins developed and facilitated a strategic planning process that engaged senior leaders across AMA's business units to design AMA's enterprise-wide Upstream Strategy. With a clear vision and shared understanding of what it means to move upstream at all levels, AMA leaders are now using the Upstream Strategy to define how they will support physicians and health systems to engage in this transformative work for years to come. The AMA has also partnered with us to achieve a shared goal of educating thousands of Upstreamists across the country. In early 2021, the AMA will provide access to "Core Competencies for Upstreamists"—six free e-learning modules developed by HealthBegins.

MOVING UPSTREAM STATEWIDE IN SOUTH CAROLINA

This year, we helped an entire state design its upstream strategy. With support from local institutions, we convened stakeholders across South Carolina to develop a statewide strategy for addressing social determinants of health. Starting in January and continuing through the pandemic, we facilitated a robust, iterative design process, engaging stakeholders from health care, social, and public health sectors to build upon past efforts and align and accelerate existing efforts in South Carolina.

Aided by HealthBegins, a statewide design committee established two key goals for the state: to reduce food insecurity and housing instability, and to reduce racial disparities in these social needs, by 2023. The committee also endorsed a statewide roadmap—a bold framework for action and path to build the infrastructure to achieve these goals.

To translate this statewide roadmap into action, HealthBegins has been funded to launch and run a 14-month learning collaborative, which will help cross-sector teams from four regions across the state to advance health and equity in South Carolina by addressing food security at all levels—from program-level work to reduce individual food insecurity, to community-level efforts to reduce food deserts, to statewide policy efforts to strengthen food systems.

A MULTI-STATE HEALTH SYSTEM TACKLES HOUSING INSTABILITY

From 2019-2020 HealthBegins supported the regions of **Providence St. Joseph Health System** across seven states to design goals and improvement strategies to address housing instability and homelessness in the communities they serve.

With expert facilitation by HealthBegins, each region held a housing workshop, convening dozens of key health system and community stakeholders to identify opportunities for the health system to lead, partner, and support existing and future work to prevent and reduce homelessness. With aid from HealthBegins, regional health system leaders then developed and officially adopted strategic goals to help expand or build new housing stock, increase supportive services for people experiencing homelessness, support policy/advocacy efforts to preserve and expand affordable housing, and dramatically improve community-level coordination between health and housing services.

UPSTREAM INVESTMENT PLANNING

For leaders exploring ROI, making a business case for upstream care, or trying to align social determinants investments, HealthBegins uses our signature Upstream Investment Planning services and tools to help health systems and community partners refine their upstream strategy's value propositions. Using a combination of best practices and tools from impact investing and community health improvement, we also help clients assign metrics, set goals, align investments, and track the performance of their system-wide portfolio of proactive investments in social needs, social determinants of health, and structural determinants of health inequity.





CLIENT STORY

DOING THE MATH ON HEALTH EQUITY AND UPSTREAM CARE

With support from **The Commonwealth Fund**, HealthBegins and the **Nonprofit Finance Fund** have provided training and technical assistance to a number of health systems and community-based organizations across the country. Many are looking to form or strengthen partnerships to integrate health care and social care but need help understanding and making the business case for their work. Through bootcamps and 1:1 support, we've helped healthcare and community partners understand how to use financial analysis and planning tools like the Commonwealth Fund's ROI Calculator for Partnerships to Address the Social Determinants of Health.

Earlier this year, we also helped leaders at **Blue Shield of California** estimate the economic impact of racial health disparities for the plan. Aided by HealthBegins' analysis and support, health plan leaders have authorized significant year-over-year increases in health equity-directed investments and initiatives for 2020 and beyond. We're now supporting plan leaders by developing a robust evaluation plan for enterprise-wide health equity & racial equity training efforts.

DRIVING IMPROVEMENT

IMPROVEMENT & TRANSFORMATION

We work with clients and partners who understand that moving upstream is not just a technical challenge—it's transformational work. It requires continuous improvement and learning, new ways of working and communicating together, and sustained engagement and commitment from everyone involved in bridging clinical and community approaches to health.

Drawing on years of experience and tools like our Upstream Capability Assessment, we helped a number of clients and partners this year to refine their upstream strategies and develop improvement campaigns to translate their strategic vision for upstream care into reality. With specialized expertise in health- and social-care integration, screening and referral processes, and workflow redesign, we helped organizations and associations build on their strengths and bolster areas that need improvement. Through bold initiatives like the **CMS Accountable Health Communities model**—which HealthBegins has been supporting since 2017—we've already started to see impressive results.

Beyond helping clients improve individual social needs, HealthBegins also became a national leader this year in helping the Upstream Movement drive deeper transformational change through place-based, cross-sector work. We helped health systems like **Providence St. Joseph Health** and national nonprofits like the **YMCA of the USA** align and accelerate efforts to improve community-level social determinants of health and dismantle structural determinants of health inequity, like structural racism and economic inequity.

TRAINING & EDUCATION

Since 2012, HealthBegins has been a pioneer in upstream education and training for healthcare professionals. Our practical, skills-oriented educational content and training materials, along with our signature Upstream Quality Improvement approach, are routinely used across the country as part of curricula in universities, medical schools, and other graduate schools and continuing medical education (CME) courses.

Through in-person training, webinars, and online educational modules developed with partners including the AMA, AHA, and Medscape, we have educated over 15,000 learners and cumulatively provided more than 11,000 hours of education on topics such as Social Determinants and the Quadruple Aim, Social Needs Screening & Care Redesign, Clinical-Community Partnership Development, Community Health Data & Informatics, and Community Health Financing. Working closely with clients, we continue to customize education to meet the needs of learners and organizations seeking to advance strategic upstream priorities.

In 2020, we made major progress toward a moonshot goal: to educate at least 25,000 health professionals about how to move upstream by the end of 2021.

With new partnerships, including one with the AMA, we're excited and optimistic about the year ahead.

LEARNING COLLABORATIVES

Drawing on best practices and tools from our entire suite of upstream services, HealthBegins runs and supports a series of national and regional learning collaboratives. Through a shared longitudinal experience, we provide goal-directed coaching, faculty support, and technical assistance to help teams achieve mutually agreed-upon milestones and drive upstream learning, improvements, and transformation.

By applying our tested Upstream Quality Improvement approach, teams develop and implement rapid-cycle campaigns, not only to improve health outcomes and social needs such as food and housing security for priority populations but also to build cross-sector capacity to address broader social and structural determinants of health.

While we have always defined action to dismantle structural racism and other structural determinants of health inequity as a core part of what it means to move upstream, we worked to raise the bar this past year. For example, from coast to coast, all of our learning collaboratives now explicitly engage and support clients and partners to advance racial equity as a demonstrable goal on their journey upstream.

“ We are truly grateful to HealthBegins for helping us target and accelerate our efforts to address social determinants of health. The team is knowledgeable, able to help us solve problems, and fun to work with. The coaching and collaborative sessions are consistently well planned, relevant to our efforts, and valuable.

Our work in the collaborative has helped us launch a standardized SDoH assessment, optimize our use of an online community resource guide, develop a framework for a ‘preferred network of CBOs,’ identify ways to calculate ROI, and connect with other organizations to share best practices and resources. Additionally, the collaborative has created a forum for us to identify, discuss, and address upstream drivers. ”

—Robert W. Fields, MD MHA, SVP & CMO Population Health,
Mount Sinai Health System



CLIENT STORIES

IMPROVING TOGETHER TO MAKE TANGIBLE GAINS ACROSS VIRGINIA

The **Virginia Health and Hospital Association**/HealthBegins Upstream Learning Collaborative formed in January 2020 with the goal of improving outcomes for diabetic patients across Virginia by addressing the social determinants of health. We engaged with five health systems from across the state to design and implement Upstream Quality Improvement campaigns to achieve individual and community-level goals. These teams came together in solidarity to accelerate, advance, and innovate to address the increasing food security needs of their communities. As that first cohort continues to drive improvements, we have just launched a new cohort of five other Virginia health systems ready to move upstream with rigor.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM PARTICIPATING TEAMS INCLUDE:



Screening 9,000 patients for food insecurity over the course of the learning collaborative.



Reassigning staff who would have otherwise been furloughed, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, to do outreach to seniors in their community to screen for social needs.



Leveraging the learning collaborative to accelerate and align enterprise-wide upstream interventions, including community health worker hiring and training for social care integration.

PHYSICIAN GROUPS ADDRESS EQUITY AMID THE PANDEMIC

In partnership with **America's Physician Groups**, we launched the Social Needs Learning Collaborative in April 2020, engaging four physician groups across the country. As the pandemic hit, teams continued to receive critical coaching and support from HealthBegins to design and implement targeted Upstream Quality Improvement campaigns to address social needs in their communities. The collaborative—now renamed the Social Drivers of Health Equity Learning Collaborative (SDLC)—is expanding as 2021 begins to include new teams from across the country with a renewed focus on advancing racial equity through upstream improvement campaigns.

AS PART OF THIS EFFORT, THESE TEAMS:



Engaged in robust discussions and planning to shift priorities amid limited resources, tackling the social impacts of COVID-19 head-on with tactics ranging from building internal data collection systems and workflows to creating a network of community-based organizations to better coordinate health and social services.



Advanced racial equity as a component of their work by collecting and analyzing clinical and social needs data by race/ethnicity and geography to target interventions for priority populations and regions.



Addressed the social needs of the patients and communities they serve through improved screening/referral processes and community partnerships in the priority areas of food insecurity, transportation, digital literacy, and social isolation.



“

The HealthBegins team led the way in the emerging field of integrating partnerships to better address health related social needs. By creating some of the first approaches for financially sustainable, practical partnerships, HealthBegins supported an important turning point in the evolution of our healthcare system toward whole person care.

—Tanya Shah, MBA, MPH
Former Vice President, Delivery System Reform
The Commonwealth Fund

”

ADVANCING EQUITY



HealthBegins' steadfast commitment to advancing equity through our work has always been clear and direct. So as the business case for health and social care integration got stronger and societal demands for health equity and accountability grew, we were ready to meet the moment.

In 2020, as the pandemic and police violence brought longstanding racial and economic inequities into the spotlight, we doubled down on our core values. Across our service lines, we leveraged our relationships and reputation to center equity within upstream transformation efforts. We continued to challenge ourselves to be an organization that not only preaches about equity, but practices it too. And we forged new commitments and national alliances to advance racial equity, support and improve the health of marginalized communities, and transform society.

HealthBegins will continue to serve as a trusted partner in the health equity movement, through actions from advancing racial equity in population health management and social care integration efforts, to centering community-level social determinants of health interventions with an equity lens, to convening and supporting coalitions to undo redlining and other forms of structural racism.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR WORK ADVANCING EQUITY THIS YEAR



In April 2020, shortly after COVID-19 struck the U.S., HealthBegins convened a national strategy call, bringing together more than 400 leaders from across the country to discuss ways to elevate and include community health workers and other trusted community-based workers in pandemic response and recovery efforts. Within a few short weeks, we convened national organizations and helped form the **Community-Based Workforce Alliance**, a network of 16 national groups mobilized around a set of six common principles and strategies. Since then, this alliance has shaped federal policy, helped expand public discourse, and brought a large, diverse coalition together to support local health departments and ensure that response efforts such as contact tracing, testing, and vaccination campaigns are equitable and effective.



In early March, just days before stay-at-home orders were issued and nearly three months before George Floyd's murder sparked global outcry, HealthBegins hosted a national webinar titled **"Redlining & Health Systems: What Health Systems Can Do to Dismantle Structural Racism."** Through expert insights from Angela Glover Blackwell, founder of PolicyLink; Josie Williams, executive director of the Greensboro Housing Coalition; and Sadena Thevarajah, managing director at HealthBegins, hundreds of attendees from across the country learned about redlining, its influence on health outcomes, and ways to #UndoRedlining.

"HealthBegins was instrumental in bringing together multisector actors to strategically address a critical gap in the US Covid-19 response: a community-based workforce. These efforts laid the foundation for the launch of the Community Based Workforce Alliance. As a founding member of this Alliance, the National Association of Community Health Workers (CHWs) has an authentic partner and ally in HealthBegins, one whose commitment to racial equity and social justice respects CHWs' unique roles and cultural alignment with community and amplifies CHWs' leadership capacity to transform health and wellbeing among communities that experience vulnerability."

— Denise Octavia Smith, MBA, CHW
Executive Director, National Association of Community Health Workers

In late September, we recognized that we and our allies, including many front-line workers and advocates, were burning out due to the chronic wear and tear of fighting the pandemic and fighting injustice in the absence of effective and empathetic national leadership. In response, we organized an open video call to **Grieve, Breathe, and Rest**. Nearly 100 mission-driven leaders in health care, public health, and health equity shared in a collective moment of mourning, reflection, and restorative rest. The outpouring of positive feedback about that incredible event has inspired us to continue to create these shared and necessary spaces in all of our work with leaders in the Upstream Movement.

EVENTS & MEDIA

Michigan Health Improvement Alliance Tenth Annual Conference: The Region's Health and Healthcare Systems Achieving Excellence and Accountability

Rishi Manchanda gave the keynote at this annual regional community health conference. The audience included health system administrators, board members, physicians, and other healthcare providers.

UCLA Ziman Center's Housing as Health Care Symposium (Virtual Convening)

Sadana Thevarajah was a panelist at this symposium, which explored the needs of policymakers, payers, and housing and healthcare providers for synchronizing the right care at the right time outside the doctor's office or hospital, especially for vulnerable populations.

National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions: Race, Health & Equity Employer Town Hall

Rishi Manchanda was a panelist for this town hall, which explored the impact of racism and systemic racism on social determinants of health. This knowledge can be a key motivator for organizations to "own" these issues and change their historically hands-off approach to social determinants.

Putting Care at the Center 2020 Virtual Plenary: The Next Four Years

Sadana Thevarajah was a speaker at this event to discuss what to expect from the next administration around coverage, financing, economic recovery, housing, and racial justice. She used a disaster management framework to present what we need from the Biden administration.

Ohio State Department of Family and Community Medicine — Health Equity Innovation Showcase

Rishi Manchanda was among the leading national experts in health equity who presented attendees with cutting-edge models addressing social determinants of health and gave insight on how to address disparities with innovative training and education resources.

SC Thrive - Virtual Annual Training

Sadana Thevarajah presented during this annual training for SC Thrive - whose mission is to lead South Carolinians to stability by providing innovative and efficient access to social resources. She laid out actions that health care partners and community based organizations can take to level the playing field between them.

WEBINAR: HealthBegins — Redlining & Health Equity: How Health Systems Can Help Dismantle Structural Racism

Redlining and its associated inequities might seem far afield from the practice of health care, but in fact they are key determinants of health for many communities and should therefore be a key concern of upstream health care. These highlights from the HealthBegins webinar identify what can be done at an individual, institutional, and policy level to address these issues.

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/3736671980173290763>

BLOG: HealthBegins — Navigating These Times Together: HealthBegins' COVID-19 Policy

When the pandemic began to spread in the U.S., we took immediate actions to support our team, stay connected with you, and provide solidarity to our broader community. This note spotlights key actions of our internal policy. We share this in hope that it can serve as a touchstone for other organizations as they think about how to support their own teams.

<https://healthbegins.org/navigating-these-times-together-healthbegins-covid-19-policy/>



BLOG: Health Affairs — Three Workforce Strategies To Help COVID-Affected Communities

Rishi Manchanda considers three ways state and federal leaders can ramp up a community-based workforce to protect marginalized communities and augment the efforts of hospitals and public health leaders.

<https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hblog20200507.525599/full/>

NEWS PACKAGE: Scripps National News — Medical Professionals Help With Basic Needs

News story about HealthBegins' work with America's Physician Groups to put social determinants at the center of health care.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=heWUMpYy30&feature=youtu.be>

GUIDE: HealthBegins — Community-Based Workforce Principles

We urge states to adopt these "Community-Based Workforce Principles" to ensure that contact tracing efforts are effective, equitable, and shaped by disproportionately impacted communities.

<https://healthbegins.org/community-based-workforce-principles/>

BLOG: HealthBegins — Upstreamist in Action: Aletha Maybank Pushes from Within to Move the AMA Upstream

As the AMA's first-ever chief health equity officer, Aletha Maybank is pushing the organization to keep reckoning with the impact of racism on the health of people of color. She's also nudging the AMA to prioritize public health and prevention as a part of medicine. Learn how the AMA is helping upstream practices make their way into clinics and hospitals across the country.

<https://healthbegins.org/upstreamist-in-action-aletha-maybank-pushes-to-move-ama-upstream/>

PODCAST: WorkforceRX with FuturoHealth — Episode #5: Dr. Rishi Manchanda, CEO of HealthBegins: Adding Trusted Community Voices to Healthcare

Rishi Manchanda discusses why you can't have an effective response to public health challenges without putting racial and social equity at the center of your approach, and one key way to do that is supplementing the healthcare workforce with trusted voices from underserved communities.

<https://futurohealth.org/podcast/dr-rishi-manchanda-ceo-of-healthbegins-adding-trusted-community-voices-to-healthcare-2/>

ARTICLE: The Hill — Build Trust in Vaccines by Investing in Community Workers

This op-ed outlines the importance of community workers in the fight against the pandemic.

<https://thehill.com/opinion/healthcare/530096-build-trust-in-vaccines-by-investing-in-community-workers>





HealthBegins is a mission-driven consulting and training firm that is creating solutions to address upstream social factors that impact health.

Founded in 2012 by physicians and public health experts, we believe that health care is better when it routinely addresses social and environmental conditions that make people sick, especially for our most vulnerable patients and communities.

We build system capabilities and support practice redesign through strategic consulting, technical assistance, education, and training solutions.

We have activated thousands of providers, educators, payers, and community partners around the world who improve care and the social factors that make people sick in the first place.

With headquarters in Los Angeles and employees based in Oakland, Seattle, New York, and the Boston area, HealthBegins is well-positioned to provide support throughout the country.

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