EXPANDING THE BOUNDARIES: HEALTH EQUITY AND PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICE

KATHERINE SCHAFF, ALAMEDA COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT (ACPHD)

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Acknowledgements

The information presented in this presentation represents the ideas, hard work, and expertise of many Alameda County Public Health Department staff, partners, and community members.
Overview

- **Why** are we focused on health equity?

- **How** are we working to achieve health equity at Alameda County Public Health Department?

- **What** did it take to get here?
Why are we focused on health equity?

Alameda County Public Health Department’s Mission

To work in partnership with the community to ensure the optimal health and well being of ALL people through a dynamic and responsive process respecting the diversity of the community and challenging us to provide for present and future generations.
How are we working to achieve health equity in Alameda County?
The Alameda County Place Matters team promotes health equity through community-centered local policy and systems change focused on education, economics, criminal justice, housing, land use, and transportation.

Alameda County Place Matters is a part of the National Collaborative for Health Equity, Place Matters Initiative (funded by Kellogg Foundation) and is sponsored by Supervisor Keith Carson.
Foreclosures and Health

- **Problem**
  - Historical & ongoing systemic housing discrimination
    - Current crisis: targeted subprime loans →
    - Epidemic of foreclosures in low-income communities of color →
    - Poor health outcomes & potential to widen health inequities

- **Approach**
  - Partnered with Causa Justa::Just Cause (CJJC) to assess health impacts of foreclosures
  - Conducted door-to-door survey in hard-hit neighborhoods of East and West Oakland & interviews with impacted residents
  - Report release in front of foreclosed home garnered media coverage
Foreclosures and Health

Successes

- New research findings & 11 policy recommendations to mitigate and prevent further health impacts
- Local & national focus on foreclosures as a public health issue
- SB 1035 & end to utility shut-offs
- Vacant Property Registration Ordinance (netted Oakland over $1.6m)
- Linked Banking Ordinance

Gentrification, Displacement, & Health

Our approach

• Partnering with Causa Justa::Just Cause (CJJC) on a report on displacement and health.

• Combined data collection and analysis, policy recommendations, and stories from communities members to expose health impacts and amplify resident voices.
What do we each bring?

**CJJC**
- Analysis, data, & stories from on-the-ground experience
- People power + connection to affected communities
- Campaign strategy & infrastructure to move policies
- Outside pressure to demand change

**ACPHD**
- Credibility & resources of public agency
- Access to data & analytical capacity
- Inside influence on other public agencies & decision-makers
- Public health can speak to a wider audience & bring urgency

Photo: Carlos Avila Gonzalez, The Chronicle

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Gentrification, Displacement, & Health

Results

• Contributed key research to the report

• Significant media coverage

• Oakland passes rental protections: 1st in 10 years!

• Oakland passes Tenant Protection Ordinance

• Continuing to partner to implement policy recommendations
What else is Place Matters working on?

Criminal Justice
- Innovations in Reentry
- Truancy Court partnership

Education
- Addressing Absenteeism
- Health Impact Assessment on funding formulas for Oakland schools
- Wellness policies
- Linked learning

Economics
- Healthy Credit Initiative
- Prosperity Project

Housing
- Code enforcement
- Supporting plans for long-term affordable housing

Land Use & Transportation
- Healthy Development Guidelines for Oakland
- Health Elements in General Plans
- Crematorium in East Oakland
- Participation in local and regional planning processes
What did it take to get here?

- Engage staff from across the health department
- Partner with community organizations, leaders, government institutions
- Improve responsiveness & accountability to community identified policy issues
- Find and foster strong leadership
- Understand and use institutional power
- Contribute to building grassroots power
- Address root causes
- Dedicate staff resources
- Build staff & organizational capacity
Our Vision: Health Equity

Everyone in Alameda County, no matter who you are, where you live, how much money you make, or the color of your skin, has access to the same opportunities to lead a healthy, fulfilling, and productive life.
Stay Connected to Place Matters

- **Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/PlaceMattersAC](http://www.facebook.com/PlaceMattersAC)
- **Twitter:** [@ACPlaceMatters](http://twitter.com/acplacematters)
- **Place Matters Newsletter:** [http://tinyurl.com/lpccw2u](http://tinyurl.com/lpccw2u)
- **The California Endowment Health Equity Award Winner Video:** [http://youtu.be/DFbzdapU4fs](http://youtu.be/DFbzdapU4fs)

**Addressing the Social Determinants of Health through the Alameda County, California, Place Matters Policy Initiative.** *Public Health Reports.* [http://www.publichealthreports.org/issueopen.cfm?articleID=3050](http://www.publichealthreports.org/issueopen.cfm?articleID=3050)

- **Katherine Schaff:** katherine.schaff@acgov.org
Extra slides
Bus Funding and Access HIA

Problem

• Many low-income riders, people of color, youth, seniors, and people with disabilities depend on public transit
• Buses connect people to goods and services essential for their health
• Declining funding for bus transit → Service cuts and fare increases

Approach

• Partnered with over 15 community organizations and local agencies
• Goal of informing the Regional Transportation Plan and beyond
• Conducted over 400 surveys and 6 focus groups
Bus Funding and Access HIA

**Successes**
- Findings:
  - Increased commute time due to service changes correlated with experiences of frequent stress & anxiety (dose response)
  - Service cuts reduce access to critical destinations and create safety concerns (long waits at bus stops)
  - Fare increases affect money spent on housing, health care, and food and increase social isolation for seniors and youth
- Used findings to help avoid a AC Transit fare increase in Fall 2013
- Engaged many community-based organizations and bus riders directly in the research process (research design, data collection, analysis, and dissemination)

**Next Steps**
- Continue to use findings to influence policy
- Stay connected to partners from HIA
- Use as an example of strong community participation in HIA
Gentrification and displacement significantly affect the health of individuals, communities, & our society.

Urban development often excludes the voices of those who have lived in the neighborhood the longest, which are often communities of color and low-income communities.

These are often the same families who have faced previous displacement from urban renewal and the foreclosure crisis.

However, displacement is NOT inevitable.

Local government can play a role in preventing displacement.
What are the public health impacts of displacement?

For longtime residents in gentrifying neighborhoods

- Overcrowding
- Rent burden
- Eviction
- Widening health inequities
- Exclusion or alienation from new development

For those who are displaced

- Financial strain
- Disruption to work, school, and health care access
- Loss of community support networks
- Psychological distress
- Unhealthy relocation

For our broader society

- Increased segregation
- Resource strain on outlying areas of the region
- Increased driving and greenhouse gas emissions
Benefits of Partnerships: Health Departments and Community Based Organizations

More is possible when we work together

- Stronger & richer evidence
- Real changes in practice & policy
- More nuanced understanding of problem & solution
- Organizing is essential for policy change
- Shift in institutional power → community-driven change