

# Health Equity Charter

Partnership  
Health equity  
Human  
rights  
Humility  
Anti-racism  
Social justice  
ACCESS  
Transformative Change

## Join the movement for the best possible health and wellbeing for everyone.

The Alliance for Healthier Communities is a vibrant network of community-governed organizations committed to advancing health equity through comprehensive primary health care. Our collective commitments are embodied in the Health Equity Charter, a foundational document that outlines **bold, strategic and relentless actions** the Alliance and member organizations undertake to challenge barriers to equitable health and address the needs of the people and communities we serve every day. **Our vision is the best possible health and wellbeing for everyone living in Ontario.**

We work in what is now called Ontario — a land governed by 46 treaties, agreements and land purchases, as well as unceded territories. In the Health Equity Charter, we also commit to building allyship relationships that honour the strengths of the diverse First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples who have lived in this place since time immemorial, as well as recognizing and upholding Indigenous rights to self-determination across all spheres of life including health. We also commit to sharing and upholding responsibilities to the land itself and all who now live here.

The Health Equity Charter is based on understanding **health** as the highest attainable state of **wellbeing**. Our individual and collective wellbeing is determined not only by access to medical care but by structures and processes that govern access to other **social, economic and ecological determinants of health**, from food and housing, to social inclusion, to receiving culturally safe services in our own language, to a life free from discrimination. Today in Ontario, not all people have a fair opportunity to achieve their full health potential. People in certain population groups live shorter-than-expected lives, face discrimination in accessing health services and the determinants of health, or live with preventable health conditions. Recognition of **intersectionality** also guides the Charter. We commit to taking actions that account for the ways in which people's political and social identities combine to create unique modes and experiences of discrimination and produce health disparities.

These health disparities are rooted in conditions and environments that create vulnerability, not factors inherent to these communities. Major gaps in population health outcomes have deep

**Solidarity** Wellbeing  
 Health care  
 Systemic inequities  
 Anti-oppression  
 ACCOUNTABILITY  
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**ACTION** Bold, strategic, relentless  
 Determinants of health  
 INCLUSION  
 Digital equity  
 Indigenous Health in Indigenous Hands  
 Intersectionality  
 Allyship  
 HEALTH

roots in **historical and current systems of power**. The colonial legacy of Canada, which continues to govern our health and wellbeing, perpetuates structures of exploitation, white supremacy, patriarchy and misogyny, ableism, racism, homophobia and transphobia, assimilation, discrimination and exclusion. Under these conditions, some people and communities are treated as expendable, marginalized and excluded from decision-making, and have inadequate access to resources in our society. The results are evident in health disparities that are avoidable and unjust. The goal of **health equity** is to eliminate these unjust and remediable differences among groups of people to ensure good health and wellbeing are attainable for all.

The Health Equity Charter is a collective expression of our belief in the power of solidarity, humility and accountability to advance health equity.

In **solidarity**, we stand together to serve people who face the biggest social, economic, environmental, linguistic, cultural and other barriers to health and wellbeing — whoever they are in different communities across Ontario — and support our colleagues in advancing health equity in policy and practice.

In **humility**, we are led by the people in our communities. We work in anti-oppressive and anti-racist ways, guided by the knowledge, strength and expertise of people with lived experience from populations who face barriers to health equity, and in the governance structure of the Alliance and its member organizations.

In **accountability**, we commit to hold ourselves responsible for advancing health equity through community governance and the regular, open evaluation of our progress in closing health equity gaps. We commit to using data to target and improve services in a learning health system, and to ensure equity and inclusion in governance.

The Health Equity Charter is a living document — oriented to advancing health equity through a human rights and social justice approach, and to driving change at all levels: systems, policies, as well as organizational and individual practices. We invite you, whether as individuals or organizations, to commit to this Charter as well. You can read the full Charter here: <https://www.allianceon.org/Health-Equity-Charter>

