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ADVANCE HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

UT CoPHII's Recommendations:

- Integrate population health in medical and health professions education.
- Incorporate the social determinants of health into the education and training of current and future health care professionals.
- Advance the skill sets of the health and health care workforce to improve population health in Texas.

ADVANCE HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Building a Diverse Workforce

Addressing the population health issues presented in this strategic plan and future challenges will require a diverse and highly educated workforce that is skilled not only in clinical aspects, but also in technology, database management, epidemiology, health care policy, health economics, health information systems, population health management, community engagement, and more. Current and future health providers must be cognizant of the important role of the social determinants of health (SDoH) in shaping health and health outcomes. Several national reports have identified this type of diverse and interdisciplinary workforce as a key element in reducing health disparities. For example, the Institute of Medicine report “Unequal Treatment: Confronting Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care” recommended increased participation of underrepresented minorities in the health workforce. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ “Action Plan to Reduce Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities” has as one of its major goals a plan to strengthen the health and human services workforce through fostering an

understanding of the SDoH, community-based engagement, and cultural competency. The National Academy of Medicine, in its “Workforce for 21st-Century Health and Health Care” report, recommends a diverse, interdisciplinary health workforce that can work “collaboratively in interdisciplinary teams, is technically skilled, and can adeptly implement the capabilities of modern health information technology.”

Given the ongoing disparities in health and the well-documented, disproportionate burden of illness in specific populations across rural and urban Texas, a focus on educating and training a diverse workforce will be critical to reduce health disparities. The extensive scope and reach of the UT System (221,000 students, health care services to 7.4 million patients) enables it to be at the forefront of innovative educational and practice approaches to improving population health.

Three Realms of Workforce Development

To truly develop a future workforce capable of addressing population-level health challenges,

education and training will have to change in several different realms.

Academic

Recent trends in health and health care delivery have highlighted the need for a shift from a sickness-oriented to a preventive model of health and have resulted in a growing focus on the importance of the SDoH in addressing health disparities and improving population health. Educating health and medical professionals to embrace population health concepts is a key strategy for ensuring a future health workforce capable of delivering a holistic, culturally-competent coordinated approach to health and health care delivery.

Clinical Practice

Although physicians recognize the importance of SDoH in influencing health outcomes, there is a perception that addressing them is outside the scope of clinical practice. This is exacerbated by the absence of reimbursement for services addressing the SDoH, and the paucity of guidance available on how to integrate them in clinical settings. Raising awareness of the SDoH among health care providers is essential to future workforce development,

as is the provision of resources and technical assistance on how to collect and utilize data on the SDoH in clinical settings. The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) framework for education health professionals to address the SDoH (see Figure 6-1) is an essential resource for integrating the SDoH into primary care.

Public Health and Health Care

The ongoing transformation of the health care system, from a fee-for-service model to value-based models that are patient-centric and efficient, is highlighting the need for new skill sets among the nation's health workforce. These include skills in telehealth facilitation, business processes management, data analysis

to support program planning and assessment, evidence-based practice, collaborative practice, and quality improvement processes, among others. It is also important to recognize non-traditional health care workers who play a significant role in reaching vulnerable communities.

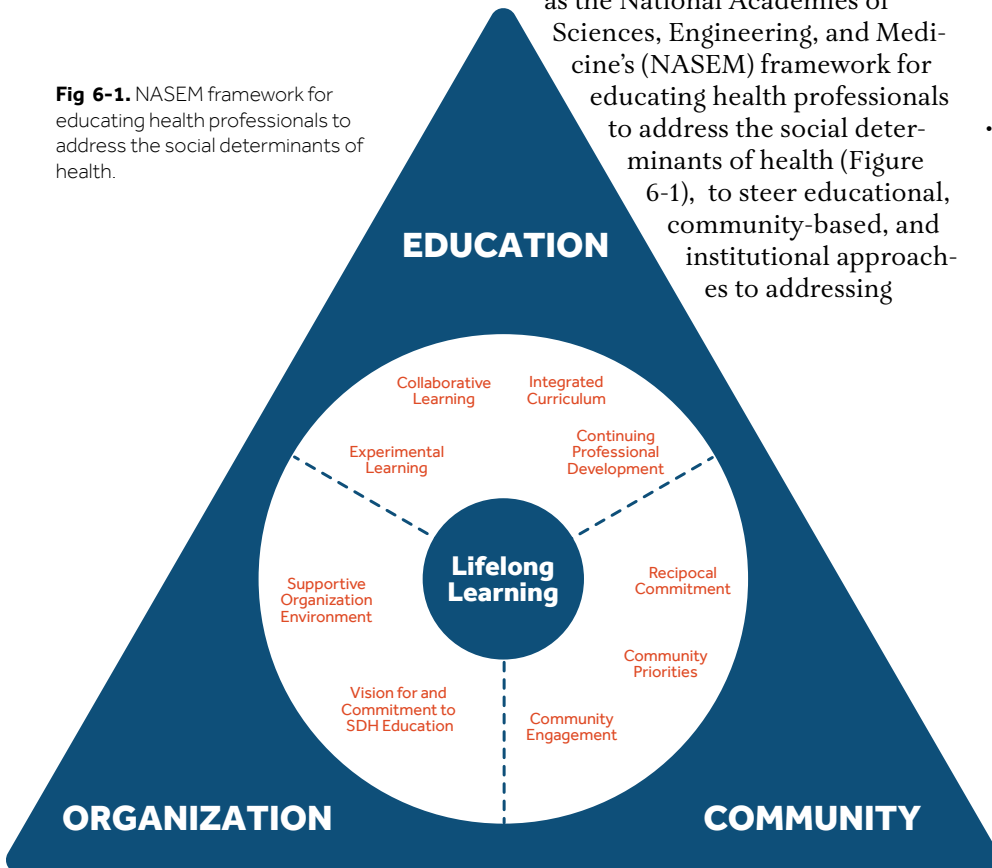
As next steps in advancing health and health care workforce development, the members of UT CoPHII recommend the following:

- Integrate population health in medical and health professions education.
- Incorporate the social determinants of health into the education and training of current and future health care professionals.
- Advance the skill sets of the health and health care workforce to improve population health in Texas.

Methods to achieve these goals:

- Develop and implement a systemwide set of competencies in population health for inclusion in undergraduate, graduate and professional schools.
- Adopt strategies that promote the diversity of the future health care workforce.
- Assess current screening practices for the SDoH at UT System health centers and at select Federally Qualified Health Centers in Texas.
- Support screening for SDoH in clinical settings.
- Facilitate and foster collaborations between clinical care and community partners to pursue evidence-based interventions to address the SDoH.
- Utilize a guiding framework, such as the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine’s (NASEM) framework for educating health professionals to address the social determinants of health (Figure 6-1), to steer educational, community-based, and institutional approaches to addressing health disparities and promoting population health.
- Provide resources to advise clinicians on innovative ways to integrate the SDoH into clinical practice.
- Design data systems that collect and aggregate data on the SDoH to inform community- and national-level policy debates.
- Contribute evidence-based research that supports the investment in addressing the SDoH in clinical and community settings.
- Provide training and career development opportunities for public health professionals.
- Develop an inventory of current training opportunities and certificate programs across institutions to capitalize on existing successful models and to facilitate the sharing of best practices.
- Strengthen, promote, and integrate the non-traditional health workforce into health care delivery systems including community health workers (CHWs), or *promotores de salud*.

Fig 6-1. NASEM framework for educating health professionals to address the social determinants of health.



Examples

- The new UT Health Science Center at Tyler's School of Community and Rural Health, through its educational programs, is addressing the public health workforce shortage and is providing training opportunities for public health professionals.
- Area Health Education Centers (AHECs) affiliated with UT Health San Antonio serve a 38-county area, and have extensive continuing education and training opportunities for the health workforce.
- The UTRGV School of Medicine, in collaboration with the UTRGV College of Health Affairs, and in partnership with various community groups, is developing three AHECs that aim to educate inter-professional student teams about the SDoH and health disparities.
- The UTRGV School of Medicine is planning to develop UTRGV-wide courses in population health.
- The UTRGV College of Health Affairs is developing an experiential Population Health Equity course for UTRGV students to further understanding of the SDoH through experiential learning opportunities at large community health events.
- Combined degree programs: UTHealth School of Public Health in Houston and its campuses across Texas offer medical students the opportunity to simultaneously earn a medical degree and a master's degree in public health in four to five years. UTMB also offers a dual MD-MPH degree as well as a combined MD-PhD degree that leads to a PhD in Population Health Sciences with a focus on minority health and aging.
- UT System institutions have successfully integrated CHWs as conduits for health education in vulnerable populations. Several training centers and programs, funded through mechanisms such as the Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment (DSRIP) Program and Clinical Translational Science (CTSA) awards across four of the UT System institutions, have not only developed methods for the training and integration of CHWs in health care delivery, but have also found that CHWs can improve care in a number of realms, including cancer screening, type 2 diabetes management, and obesity prevention and management.
- UTRGV has incorporated CHWs in program and project delivery to colonia residents and is educating future physicians about CHWs' role in health promotion and team-based care.

A rendering of the new School of Community and Rural Health at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler.

