



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**Meeker McLeod Sibley**  
Community Health Services

# Advancing Health Equity in Meeker, McLeod and Sibley Counties

Health Equity Charter

## EQUALITY *SOUNDS* FAIR



## EQUITY IS FAIR



**Meeker, McLeod and Sibley counties started the health equity coalition in hopes of creating equal opportunity for our residents to reach their maximum level of health possible, by closing avoidable health gaps related to health outcomes.**

The coalition works collaboratively with community partners that have interest and experience in health equity, by working together with a comprehensive approach to tackle health inequities.

### **Background:**

Health equity is when every person has the opportunity to realize their health potential – the highest level of health possible for that person – without limits imposed by structural inequities. Health equity means achieving the conditions in which all people have the opportunity to attain their highest possible level of health (Minnesota Department of Health).

Meeker, McLeod, Sibley Healthy Communities along with its supporting partners are addressing health equity in its Community Health Assessment and Improvement Plan and have the opportunity to implement health equity into our institutional practices. We have identified the need to include more inclusive data, as well as opportunities for authentic community engagement by our populations experiencing health inequities. In 2014, 40% of people of color in our region are more likely to have a lower income compared to 29% of white, non – Hispanic residents. Results in Meeker, McLeod and Sibley’s 2014 Community Health Assessment demonstrated the health inequities between income groups. Residents with an income at or below \$35,000 were more likely to report having chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease (MMS Community Health Survey).

## Goals:

Taking a collective action approach, Healthy Communities is working together through a Health Equity Coalition to address health inequities. The Health Equity Coalition is dedicated to advancing health equity in Meeker, McLeod and Sibley counties by identifying health gaps related to health outcomes and providing ongoing community education and awareness across the three counties by breaking the narratives that go along with health equity.

## Scope:

The Health Equity Coalition will provide education to the public about what health equity is, and provide presentations to the public including the county board members and community leaders, about the work of the Health Equity Coalition.

## Milestones:

In December of 2018, the Health Equity Coalition completed Facebook posts about health equity on the Meeker – McLeod – Sibley Community Health Services Facebook page.

In February 2019, the Health Equity Coalition completed 100 Behavior Health Surveys within the Hispanic community while collecting authentic community input and engagement throughout the process. Using the data collected from the Hispanic Behavior Health Surveys and the Community Health Assessment, the coalition will work on bringing awareness and educating Meeker, McLeod and Sibley's community members on our local health inequities.

## Stakeholders:

- **Becky Thomes:** Health Educator with Sibley County
- **Nicole McLain:** Public Health Nurse with Sibley County
- **Soraida Palacios:** Hispanic Outreach Coordinator for Sibley East
- **Cecilia Zendejas:** GFW Cultural Liaison
- **Heidi Schwarze:** Registered Nurse for TriValley
- **Nancy Mellsmoen:** Early Childhood Coach with TriValley
- **Jade Blekestad-Kral:** Social Work/Family Facilitator with Sibley County
- **Julie Kloeckl:** Emergency Preparedness Coordinator for MMS
- **Lynn Tollefson:** Family Resource Coordinator with Minnesota Valley Action Council
- **Charlie Eichten:** Chief of Police for Gaylord
- **Maria Rosenthal:** Community Health Worker with Sibley County
- **Nick Olson:** Family Facilitator for Sibley East
- **Lennie Albers:** Glencoe Food Shelf
- **Nicole Mourgos:** Attorney at Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services, Inc.