

# The AHA Population and Community Health Advisory Committee on the Future of Community Health

During this year's **Community Health Improvement Week**, we honor the hospitals, health systems, community-based organizations, public health departments and community members who work together to make it possible for all people to receive care and comfort, especially during these challenging times.

We recognize the creative ways they connect daily, culturally and deeply with the populations they serve.

This work is not easy. And there is so much more we need to do to ensure a healthier and happier future for all people.

So we asked the American Hospital Association Population and Community Health Advisory Committee to share their insights on the future of community health in a COVID-19-informed world – and action steps we can take to make sure we learn from this crisis. Here's what they had to say.

---

"For years before the pandemic, the American Hospital Association's Association for Community Health Improvement (ACHI) was "the hub of my community health wheel" for best practices, innovation, tools and resources – not to mention the most amazing like-minded member colleagues.

In these days, the assets of AHA and ACHI are magnified and more critical than ever before. For all of its awfulness, COVID has shined the light on the pre-existing root causes of poor health – the social determinants – and the inequitable structures behind even these. Now everyone can see the profound potency of racial and economic health disparities. There is no turning back.

During this Community Health Improvement Week, I want to pay tribute to ACHI and the people who make it happen – its smart, committed American Hospital Association staff and leaders. Only the AHA has the full-circle credibility of health systems and hospitals to accomplish this mission so effectively and sustainably."

**NANCY COMBS**

*Director, Community Health, Equity & Wellness*  
Henry Ford Health System

---

"It might sound crazy to say that in the midst of an unprecedented global pandemic I find hope, but I do. Having spent years trying to shine the spotlight on the need to bring together the right stakeholders to address the bigger socioeconomic issues our patients face every day, I am seeing the COVID situation force us to reevaluate our silos and respond to the threat as a community. When we address inequities and allocate the appropriate time, resources and leadership to help the most marginalized of society, we all benefit.

My hope for the future of community and population health is that we learn from this COVID experience and prioritize our engagement of patients, families, communities, legislators and health care systems. We are all important in this fight against COVID and in the fight against health care inequities. As a leader within the post-acute sector, like others in various roles across the continuum, I am not the biggest voice but I am nonetheless an important voice and a humble partner in finding solutions to transform health care delivery during the COVID situation and beyond. We must gain the public's trust by providing sound public health science, transforming that into meaningful legislation and working across systems and communities."

**LORI JARBOE**

*CEO, Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Lakeview*

---

"Hats off to our community health professionals that implement daily, culturally competent approaches connecting deeply with the populations we serve. As hospitals we are united on our quest to eliminate health disparities."

**MARCOS PESQUERA**

*System VP, Health Equity, Diversity & Inclusion and Community Benefit*  
CHRISTUS Health

---

"My hope is that hospitals and local health departments will continue to build upon their strengths as integral community partners, applying the lessons learned from COVID-19 to make even greater, sustained progress cultivating community resilience and addressing the social and structural determinants of health."

**PETER HOLTGRAVE**

*Senior Director, Public Health Infrastructure and Systems*  
National Association of County and City Health Officials

---

"Our hopes for the future in a COVID-informed world include addressing social, behavioral and health needs in a way that creates greater equity in the communities we serve. In the face of heightened psychological stress associated with the pandemic, there should be increased collaboration with system, public and community partners to implement tools and treatment options across the continuum of care, with a focus on telebehavioral options. Work in the social determinants of health will continue to be significant as we identify and address the needs of patients, members and employees and devote our assets to improving well-being in our communities."

**MIKELLE MOORE**

*Senior VP, Chief Community Health Officer, Intermountain Healthcare*

---

## **About the AHA Population and Community Health Advisory Committee**

The AHA Population and Community Health Advisory Committee is comprised of population health, community health and health system leaders who contribute to the strategic direction of AHA's community and population health activities and programming. They serve as the voice of the field, by providing intel on trends and emerging priorities in population health management, community health, equity and inclusion, and related topics. To learn more about the committee members, click [here](#). To learn more about the AHA's Population Health work, click [here](#).