

**VA**



**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**

Veterans Health Administration  
*Office of Health Equity*

# **VHA Health Equity Action Plan FY2020 Operational Plan**

VHA Office of Health Equity (10EB)

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## Aim 1: Awareness

Goal: Increase awareness of the significance of health disparities, their impact on the nation, and the actions necessary to improve health outcomes for racial, ethnic, and underserved populations.

FUNCTION	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	RESPONSIBILITY	DATE
Leadership	OHE provides leadership, education, and coordination for the HEC in advancing the HEAP in support of VA FY2018-2024 Strategic Plan, Goal 2—"Veterans receive highly reliable and integrated care and support and excellent customer service that emphasizes their well-being and independence throughout their life journey."	OHE and HEC will work collaboratively to be engaged and support OHE's Awareness activities by co-authoring or contributing to at least one information brief each Fiscal Year and sharing at least one relevant publication (e.g. information briefs and newsletters) or trainings to be highlighted in OHE's publications and website, across their networks each Fiscal Year.	OHE (Korshak), HEC	FY2020 Q4
Partnerships	Pursue strong strategic partnerships for implementing the HEAP with internal and external organizations.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Distribute monthly newsletters highlighting OHE accomplishments, disparities research highlights, and opportunities for trainings.</li> <li>2. Host quarterly Cyberseminars on relevant and timely health equity topics</li> </ol>	OHE (Korshak, Jordan)	FY2020 Q4
Comprehensive Communication Planning	Develop a comprehensive communication plan, reviewed at least annually, to address existing disparities and highlight interventions and other efforts to promote equity within VHA.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prepare monthly information briefs highlighting health disparities and efforts throughout VA to reduce disparities through health interventions.</li> <li>2. Regularly update OHE website with new information briefs, newsletters, Cyberseminar announcements, and other relevant publications, announcements, and updates.</li> </ol>	OHE (Korshak)	FY2020 Q4



## Aim 2: Leadership

Goal: Strengthen and broaden leadership for addressing health disparities at all levels.

FUNCTION	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	RESPONSIBILITY	DATE
Equity Leadership	Establish HEC presence on the National Leadership Council (NLC) or Leadership Governance Board via addition of Chair HEC/Executive Director OHE.	Provide briefing to VHA and service line leadership on equity, disparities, and diversity.	OHE (Moy)	FY2020 Q4
Equity Resources	VHA Leadership, program offices, HEC and Veteran Integrated Service Networks (VISNs) commit resources (financial, human, information, etc.) to implement HEAP and health equity projects with outcome evaluation strategies.	Develop and propose FY2021 spend plan to VHA leadership.	OHE (Moy)	FY2020 Q4
Equity Training	Establish and expand access to leadership trainings to equip leaders with the capacity to engage all VHA members on activities for health prevention and equity work.	Partner with Integrated Ethics and Diversity and Inclusion to propose leadership training on equity, disparities, and diversity.	OHE (Moy)	FY2020 Q4

### Aim 3: Health Outcomes

Goal: Improve health and healthcare outcomes for racial, ethnic, and underserved populations.

FUNCTION	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	RESPONSIBILITY	DATE
Variation in Services	Help VA understand variations in use, preferences, and barriers to VHA care and Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) benefits across different groups of Veterans to increase numbers of eligible Veterans of all groups receiving services.	Produce report on variation in health, access to care, and health care quality among Veterans.	OHE (Moy)	FY2020 Q4
Equity Dashboard	Help VISNs and VA medical centers (VAMCs) identify best opportunities for improving outcomes with an Equity Guided Improvement Strategy (EGIS) and identify evidence-based treatments for identified opportunities.	Complete Equity Dashboard and identify one clinical test site to pilot new improvement strategy.	CHERP (Hausmann)	FY2020 Q4
Social Determinants	Help VISNs and VAMCs identify social risks and match at-risk Veterans with appropriate social services.	Expand use of eScreener, resource guides, and other data tools for social determinants.	VISN 1 (Russell)	FY2020 Q4
Support VHACO	Help VHA central offices understand variations in the services they support across different groups of Veterans.	Partner with at least one VHA central office to examine disparities in the services they support.	OHE (Moy)	FY2020 Q4
Community Care	Help Community Care access data on variations in the services purchased by their program across different groups of Veterans.	Partner with Community Care to understand data needs.	OHE (Moy)	FY2020 Q4

## Aim 4: Workforce

Goal: Improve cultural and linguistic competency and the diversity of the health-related workforce.

FUNCTION	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	RESPONSIBILITY	DATE
Workforce Engagement	Support and/or provide training and learning resources in the areas of health equity, cultural and linguistic competency, and shared decision-making tools for all levels of the workforce and Veterans.	Distribute training/learning resources for the workforce and Veterans via the monthly OHE newsletter and announcements.	OHE (Jordan)	FY2020 Q4
Leadership	Partner and collaborate with appropriate program offices to incorporate cultural and linguistic competency into education activities and programs within and outside VA, new and established.	Co-host Health Equity Day at one local facility and establish a plan to expand this activity at multiple locations to promote equity related resources.	OHE (Jordan) HEC	FY2020 Q4
Partnerships	Promote best practices, share resources, and create programs for diversifying the clinical workforce.	Establish relationships with two professional organizations and/or key VHA offices to initiate programs to diversify workforce.	OHE (Jordan) HEC	FY2020 Q4
Cultural and Linguistic Competency Resource Development	Support and/or provide resources that address: the inequities and needs of specific Veteran populations (women; racial and ethnic minorities; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender; seniors; rural; etc.) health literacy, and language barriers in all forms of communication.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Update the OHE website and add specific population web pages that include resources that address equity and competency needs.</li> <li>2. Establish usage monitoring and user feedback mechanisms.</li> </ol>	OHE (Jordan)	FY2020 Q4

## Aim 5: Data, Research, and Evaluation

Goal: Improve data availability and coordination, utilization, and diffusion of research and evaluation outcomes.

FUNCTION	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	RESPONSIBILITY	DATE
Data Sources	Identify VA and non-VA data sources for health equity and related information.	Conduct an environmental scan of equity related activities by surveying VHA program offices and VA medical centers.	OHE (Jones)	FY2020 Q4
Data Analysis	Conduct data analyses and maintain inventory of data, research, and evaluation activities occurring within and outside of VA related to Veterans.	Produce a report based on OHE analyses of the All Employee Survey to examine issues of equity, diversity and inclusion.	OHE (Jones)	FY2020 Q4
Data Reporting	Identify strategies for capturing data for vulnerable populations and social determinants of health and promote data collection, evaluation, and reporting for such populations.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft a report based on the use of natural language processing to identify vulnerable groups that are not systematically identified using existing CDW data field (e.g., sexual orientation and gender identity).</li> <li>Document the completeness and accuracy of VHA race/ethnicity data in a report that will be used to develop recommendations to VA offices/leadership for improvement.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OHE (Jones)</li> <li>OHE Partnered Evaluation Center (Washington)  CHERP (Hausmann)  VISN 1 (Russell)</li> </ol>	FY2020 Q4
Data Strategy	Develop strategy for prioritizing, monitoring, and tracking identified disparities.	Submit topic nomination for Evidence Synthesis Program review of Veteran health equity issues.	OHE (Jones)	FY2020 Q4

