



RETURN TO THE CIRCLE

20
19

Building Community Through T'ai Chi Chih

Edward P. Ehlinger, MD, MSPH

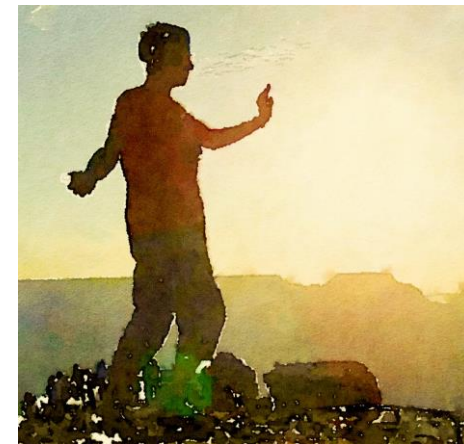
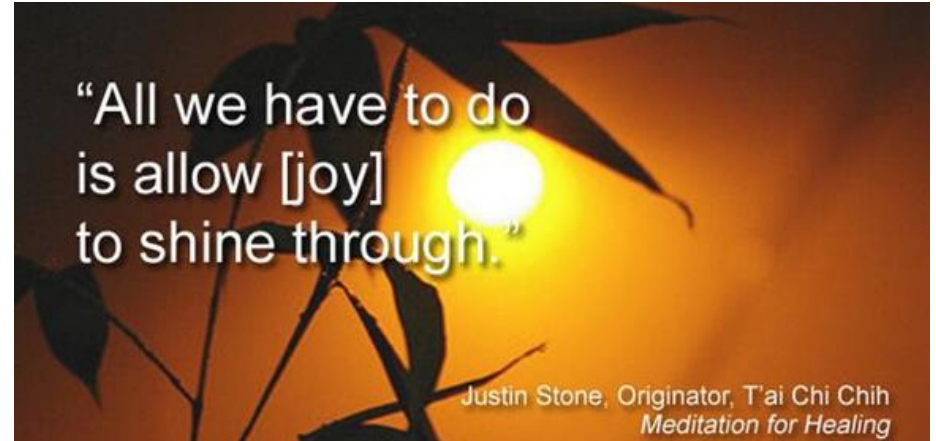
Public Health Metaphysician

June 28, 2019

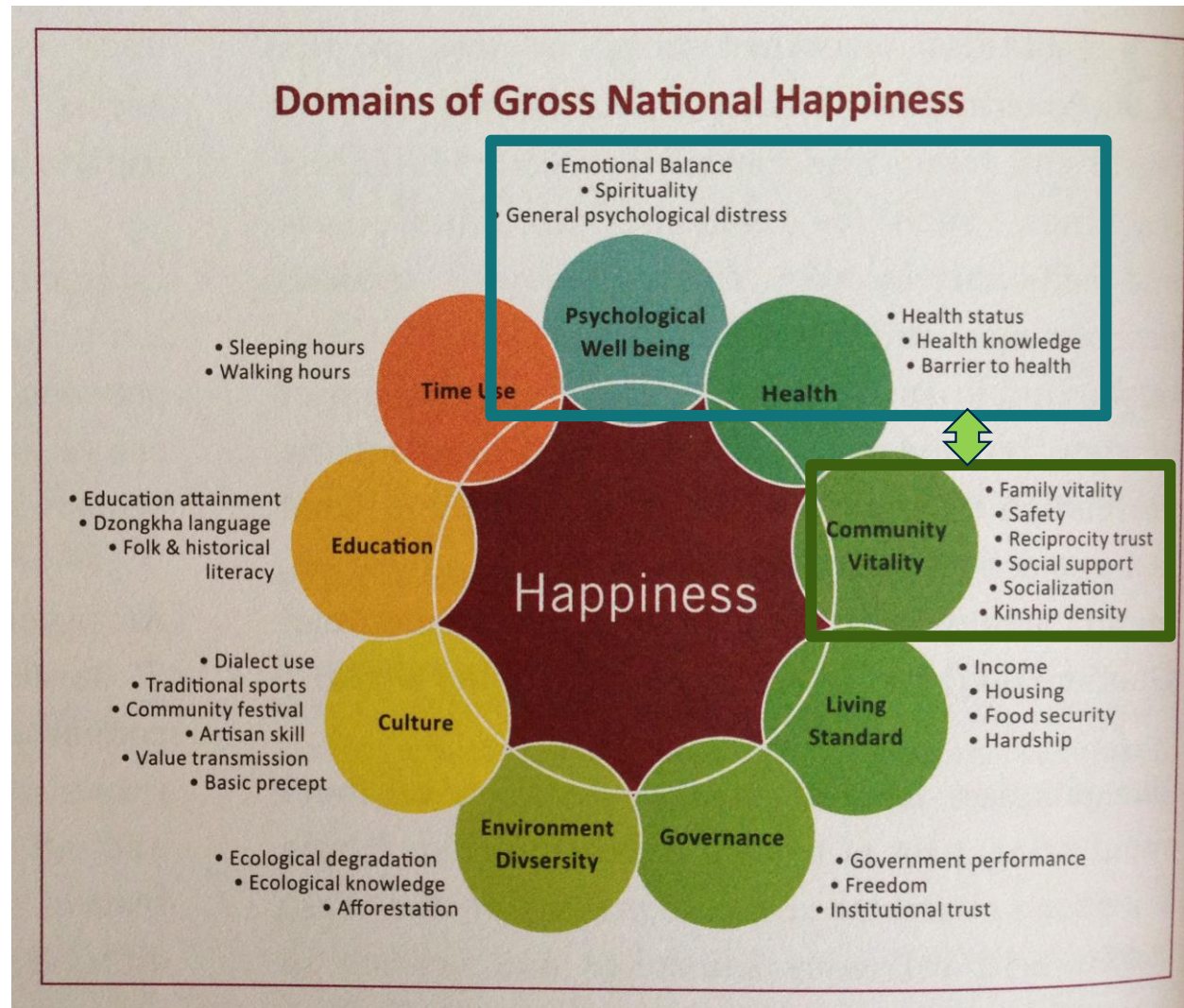
Return to the Circle of Health and Joy

“T'ai Chi Chih is a mindfulness moving meditation.

Benefits may include peace of mind, improved health and simply, joy.”



National Happiness (Joy) Index



National Happiness depends on “health” and “community”

Health is essential to the success of society

“When health is absent, wisdom cannot reveal itself, art cannot become manifest, strength cannot fight, wealth becomes useless, and intelligence cannot be applied.”

Herophilus of Chalcedon, 335-280 BCE

Physician to Alexander the Great



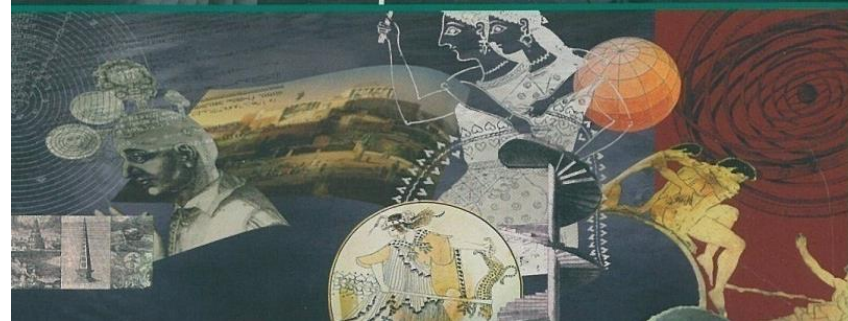
Gary Hallmann

Community assets (gifts) are essential for health

“Health is absent when (a community’s) wisdom cannot reveal itself, art cannot become manifest, strength cannot fight, wealth becomes useless, and intelligence cannot be applied.”

Ed Ehlinger, 6/28/2019 CE

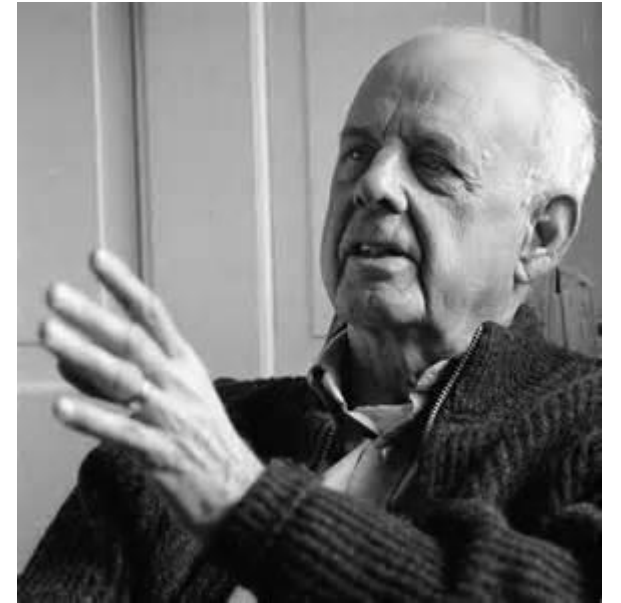
Former Physician to the State of Minnesota



Gary Hallmann

Health is Community

“...the community in the fullest sense is the smallest unit of health...to speak of the health of an isolated individual is a contradiction in terms.”



Wendell Berry

Health is in Relationships - Community

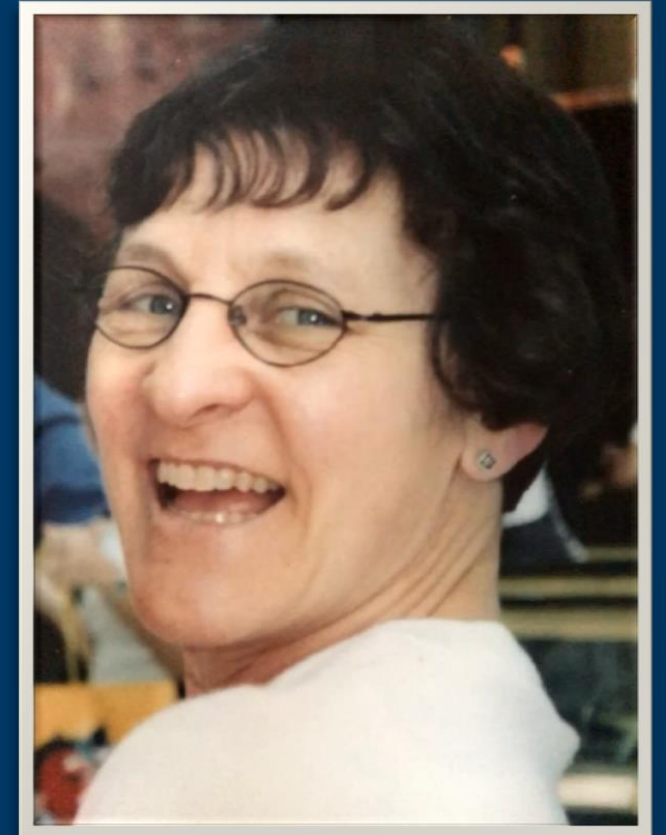
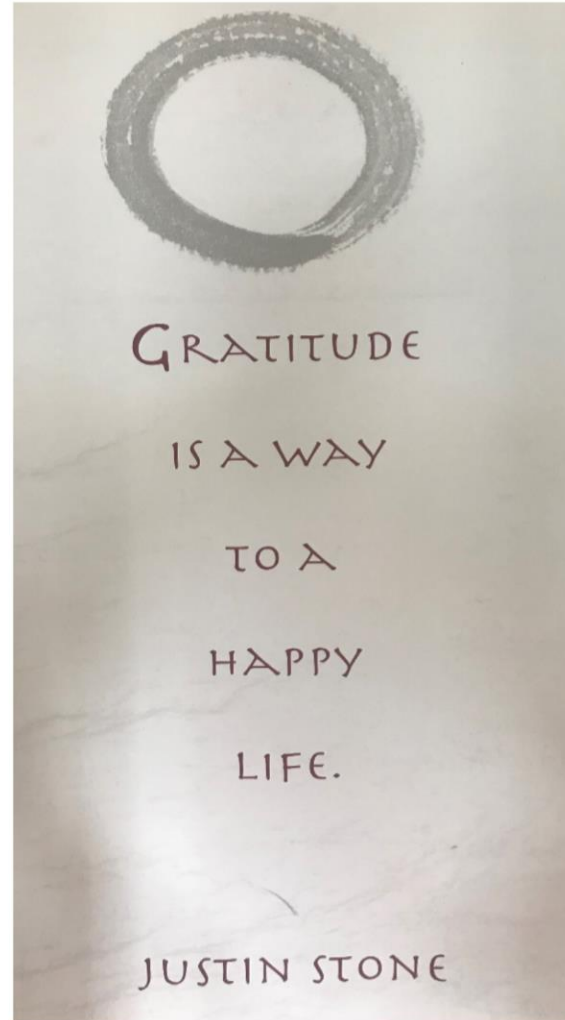
*“A proper community is a commonwealth:
...it answers the needs, practical as well as
social and spiritual, of its members -
among them the need to need one another.*

The Art of the Commonplace



Wendell Berry

I am grateful to be here today



Sally J. Ehlinger, Ph.D.

Gratitude to all of you – the T'ai Chi Chih Community

Old devil time, I'm gonna fool you now

Old devil fear, you with your icy hands

Old devil time

are me cold

When I feel

Old devil time, we're gonna fool you now

every round

And help me

Old devil time, you'd like to bring us down

are more time

Old devil time

When we feel low, our lovers gather round

us down

You thought

s further on

At that time

And help us rise to fight you one more time

er round

And helped me rise to fight you one more time And we will rise to sing it one more time

Old Devil Time by Pete Seeger

Sally J. Ehlinger, Ph.D.



- Not athletically gifted (in usual sense)
- Physical Education teacher – preconception through end-of-life – community-builder
- Hatha Yoga Instructor
- Advocate for gender equity
- Ph. D. in Early Childhood Physical Activity
 - Gender Differences in Early Childhood Physical Activity Choices
- Accredited T'ai Chi Chih teacher

Sally's philosophy about physical activity



- Physical activity is essential for health in body, mind, and spirit.
- Everyone can be physically active.
- Physical activity must be part of a community's DNA.
- All kinds of movement are good
- Everyone has a right to the opportunity to be physically active.
 - **It's a social justice issue.**

Just in Stone

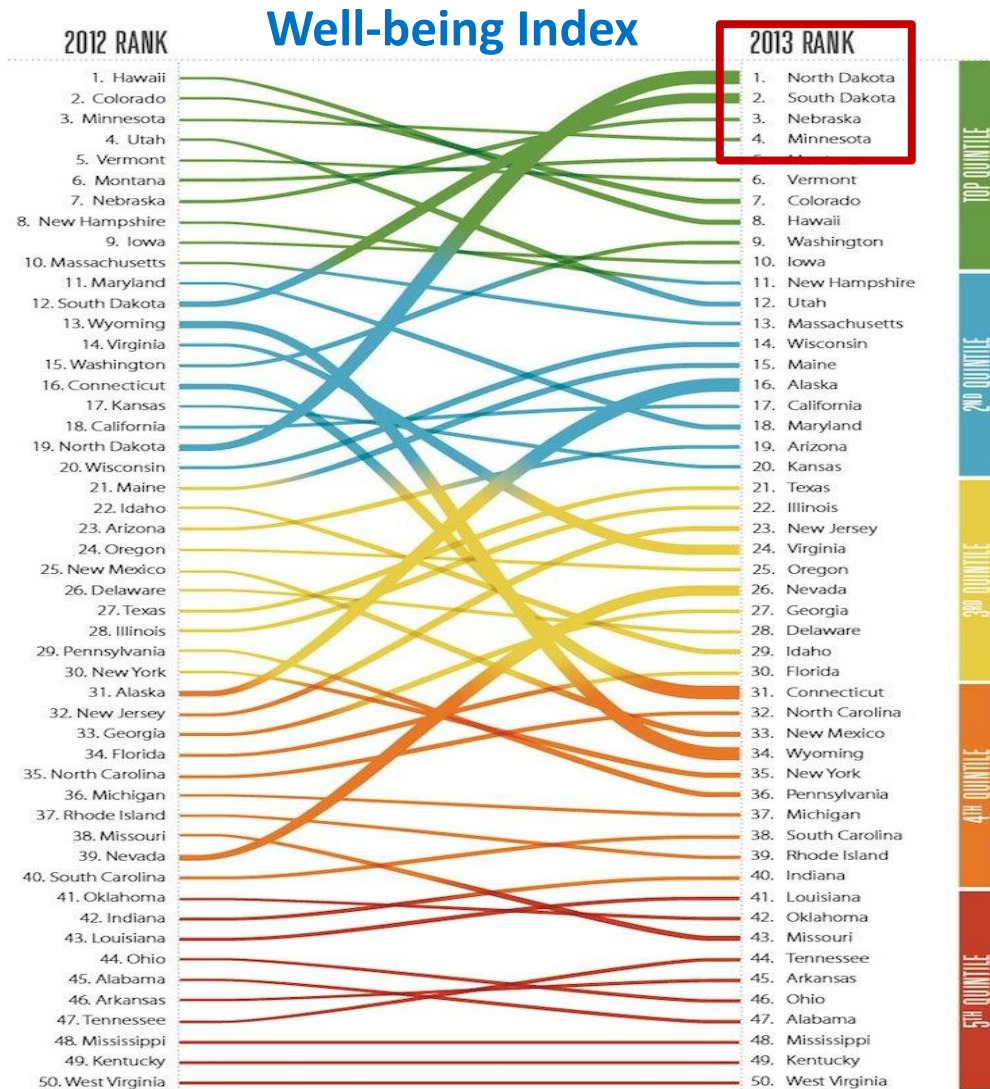
Everyone has the
opportunity to thrive.



No one benefits at
the expense of
someone else.

Everyone has their basic
human needs met.

Welcome to Minnesota: A Healthy and Happy State



Minnesota:

Healthcare system: #1

Health of Seniors: #1

Place to retire #1

Healthiest city Mpls #1

Well-being index: #4

Infant mortality: #4

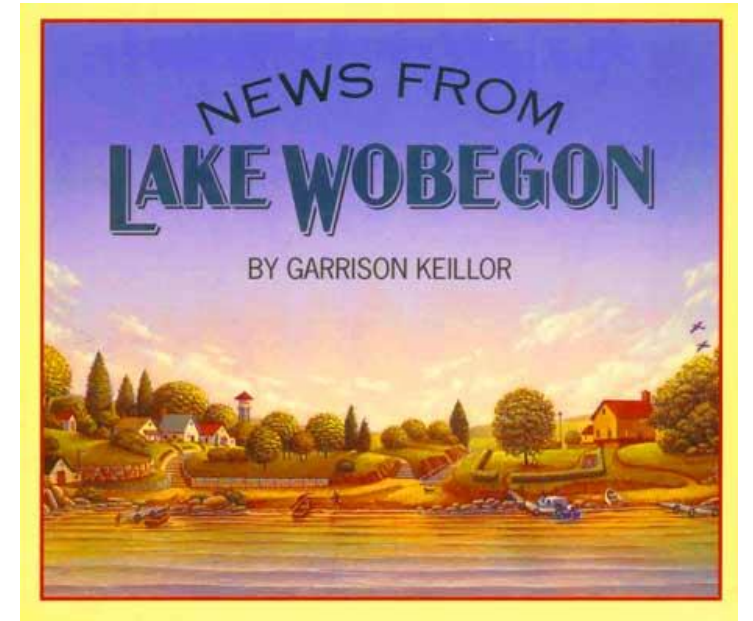
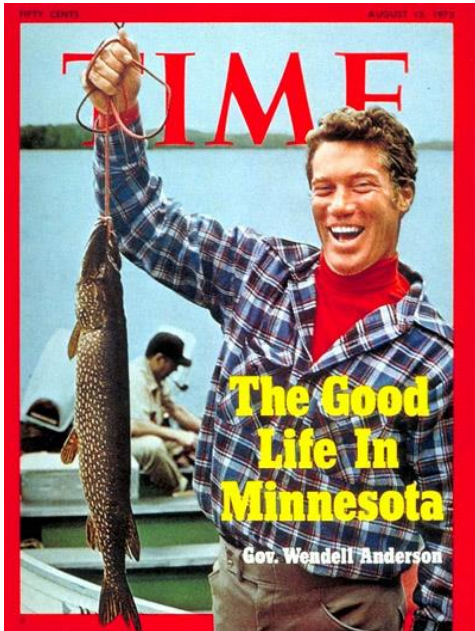
Life expectancy: #4

State Health Ranking #6

Welcome to Minnesota – a Healthy and Happy State

Minnesota!

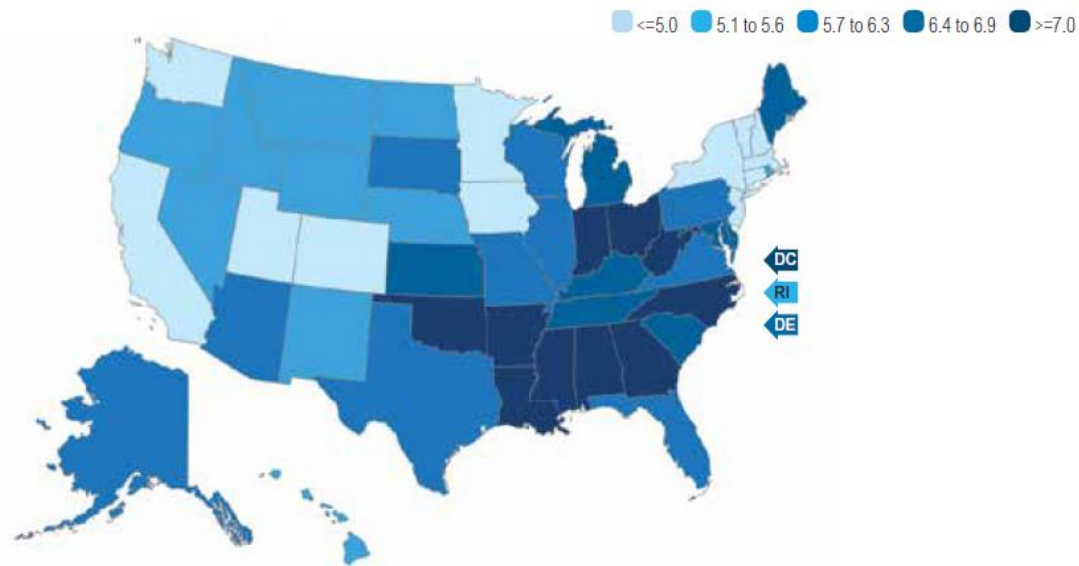
Where the women are strong,
The men are good looking,
And all our health statistics
are above average –
Unless you are
a person of color or
an American Indian or GLBTQIA or
have a disability.



The opportunity to be healthy is not equally available everywhere or for everyone.

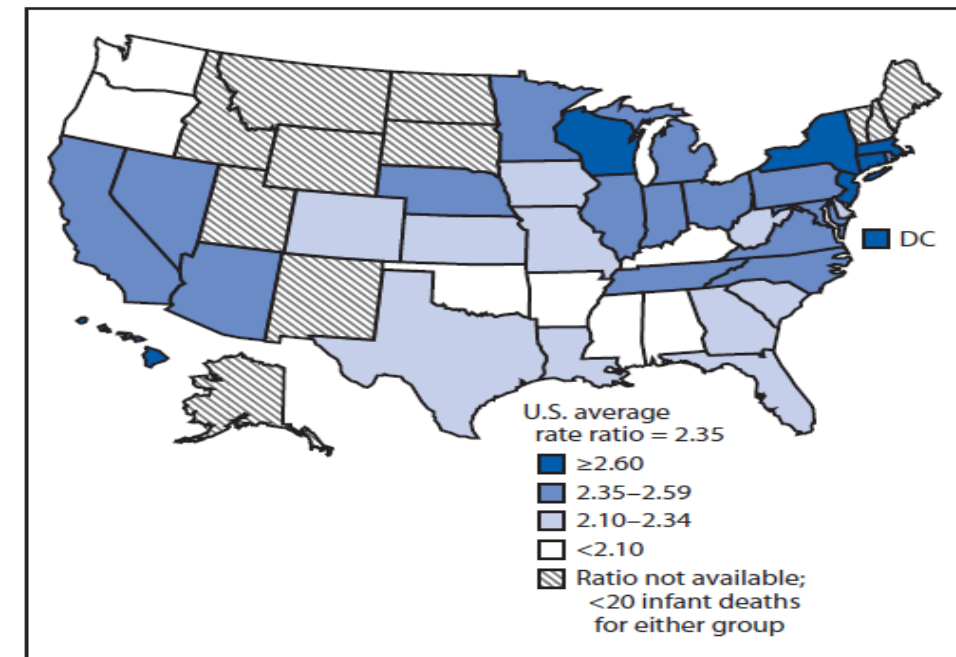
Infant Mortality by State

Number of infant deaths (before age 1 year) per 1,000 live births



AMERICA'S HEALTH RANKINGS® 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

Ratio of non-Hispanic black and non-Hispanic white infant mortality rates,* by state — United States, 2006–2008

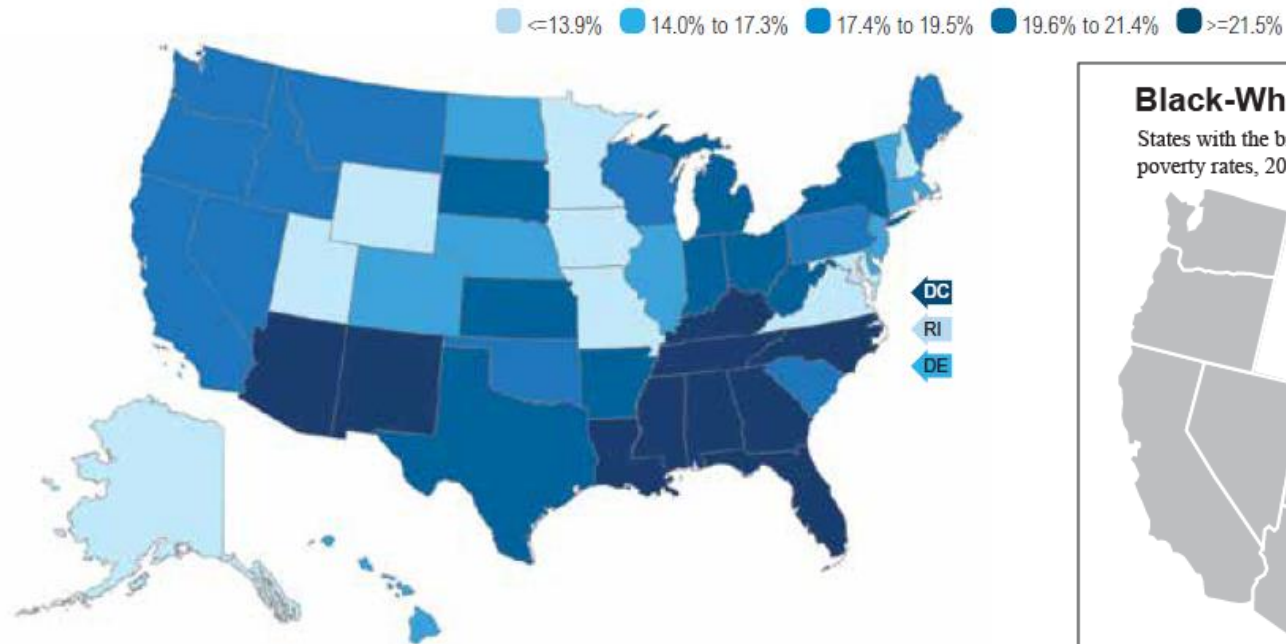


Source: National Vital Statistics System, NCHS, CDC

The opportunity to be healthy is not equally available everywhere or for everyone.

Children in Poverty by State

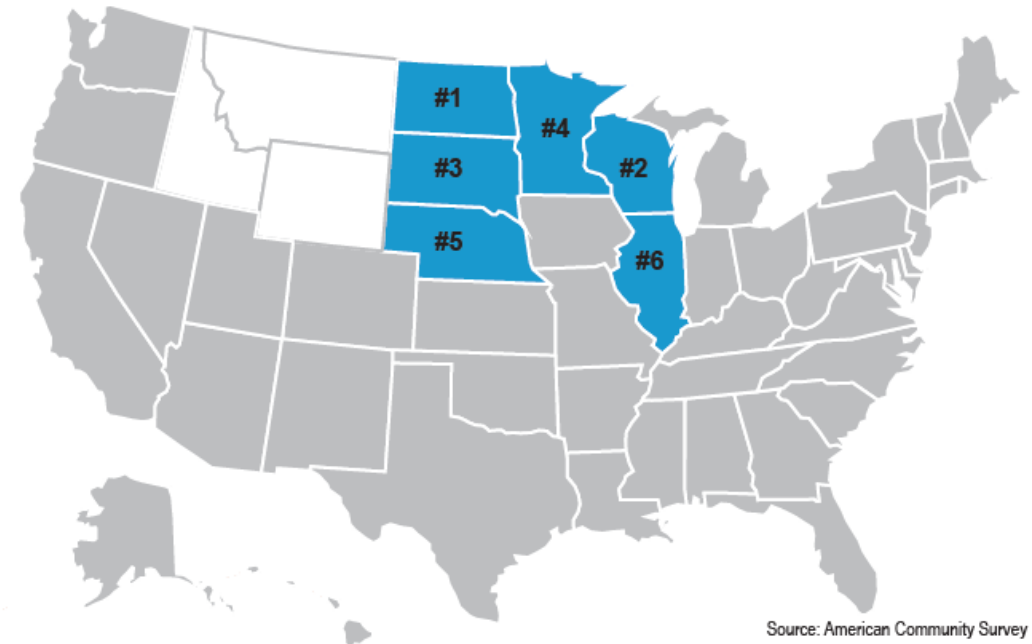
Percentage of children younger than 18 years who live in households at or below the poverty threshold



AMERICA'S HEALTH RANKINGS® 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

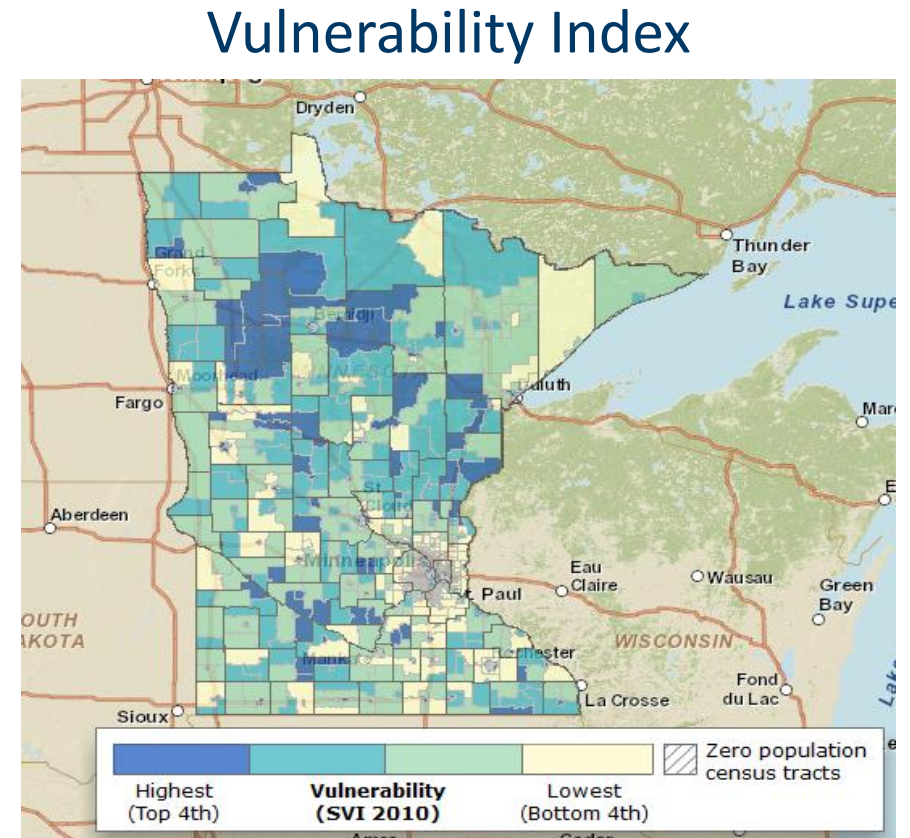
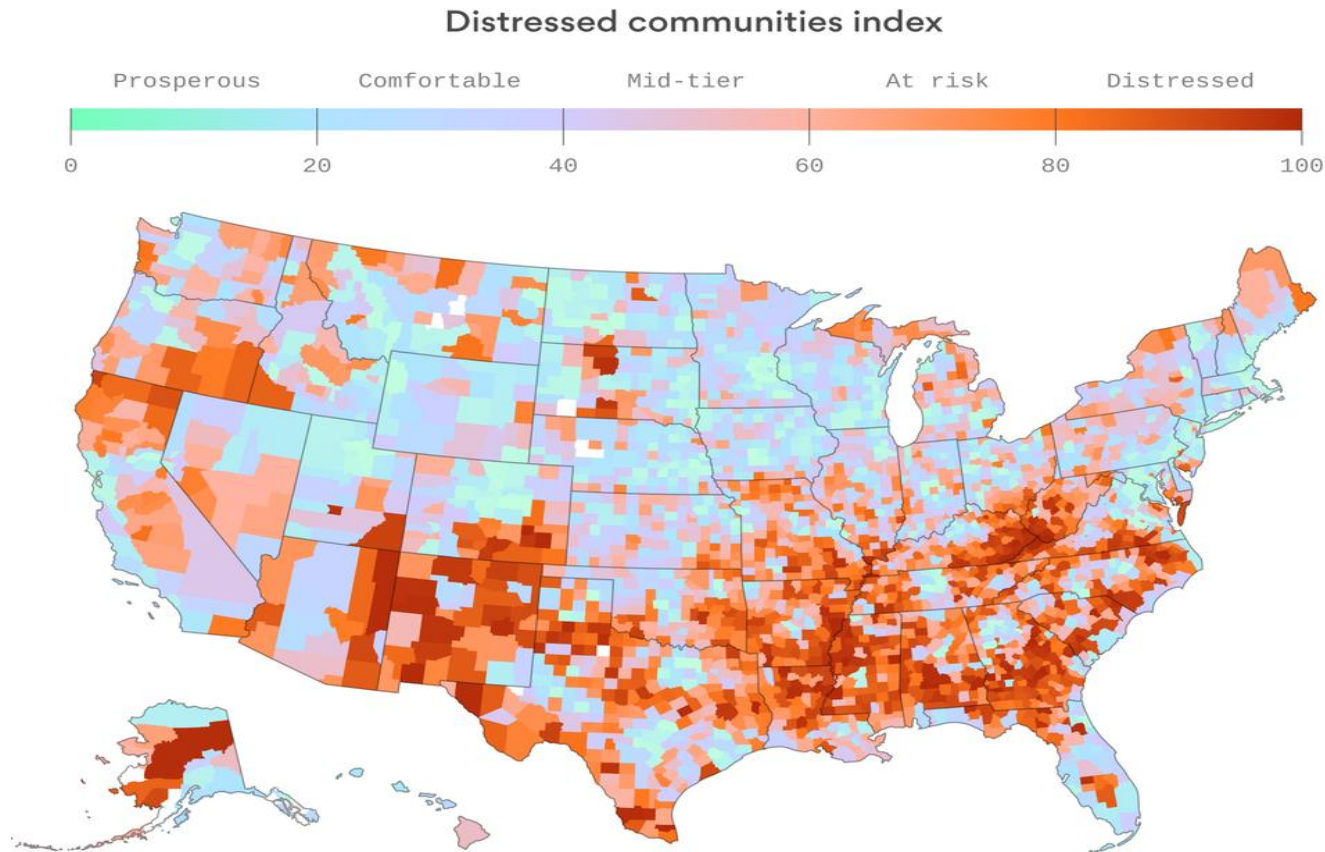
Black-White Gaps in Child Poverty are Biggest in Upper Midwest

States with the biggest percentage point gaps between black child poverty rates and white non-Hispanic child poverty rates, 2012.



Source: American Community Survey
WISCONSIN BUDGET PROJECT

Health inequities and disparities are a national issue

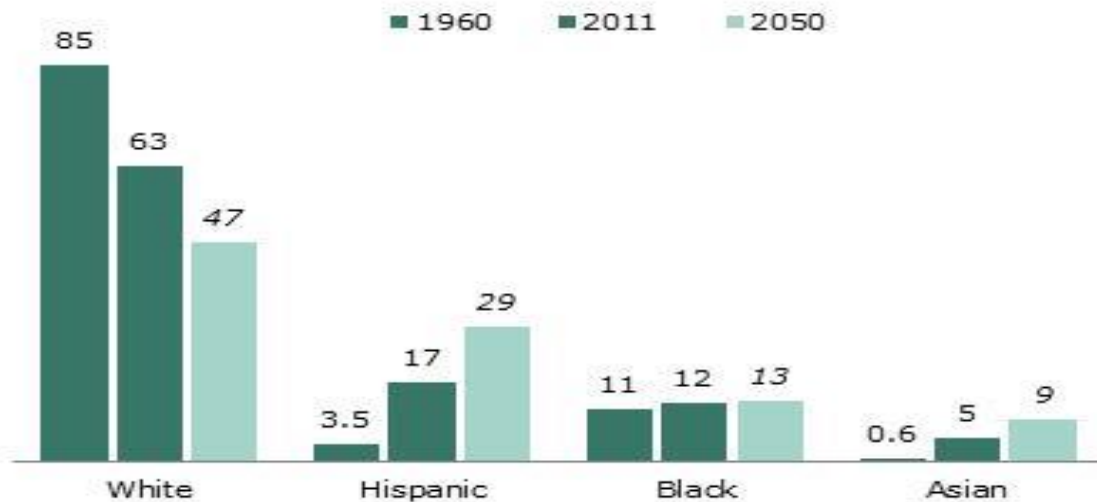


- People in distressed areas die five years earlier than people in prosperous regions.
- Mortality rates from mental health conditions 64% higher in distressed areas.
- DCI: no HS degree, unstable housing, adult unemployment, poverty, income ratio, employment rate change, change in # of business

Why Should People Be Concerned About Equity?

Population by Race and Ethnicity, Actual and Projected, 1960, 2011 and 2050

% of total



Note: All races are non-Hispanic; American Indian/Alaska Native not shown. Projections for 2050 indicated by light green bars.

Source: Passel, Jeffrey, and D'Vera Cohn. 2008. "U.S. Population Projections: 2005-2050." Washington, D.C.: Pew Hispanic Center, February; Census Bureau 2011 population estimates.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

"In these days of difficulty, we Americans must and shall choose the path of social justice..., the path of faith, the path of hope, and the path of love toward our fellow man."

Franklin D. Roosevelt

It's a math problem

It's a social justice problem...

Why Should We Care About Equity?

We have vested interests in the outcomes.



Martin Luther King , Jr.

*“We may have all
come on different
ships, but we're in the
same boat now.”*



Senator Paul Wellstone

*“We all do better
when we all do
better.”*



Michael Harrington
Author of “The Other America.”

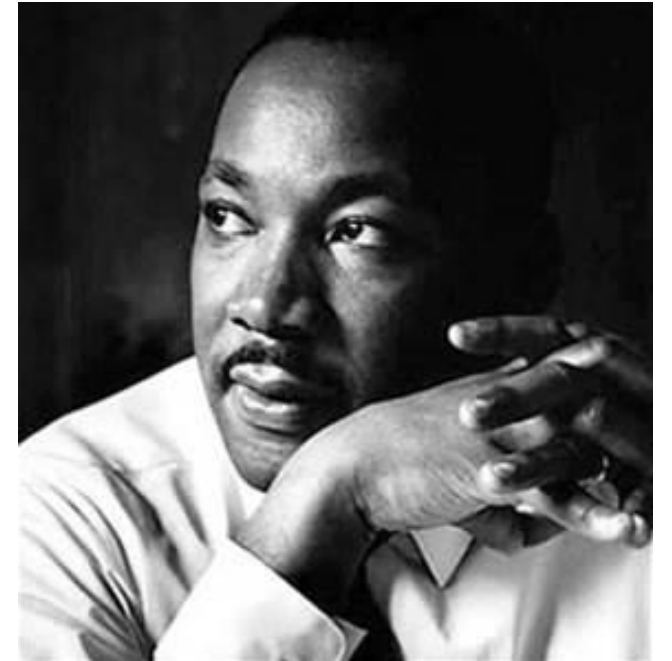
*“One cannot raise the
bottom of society
without benefitting
everyone above.”*

Equity and Social Justice are societal issues

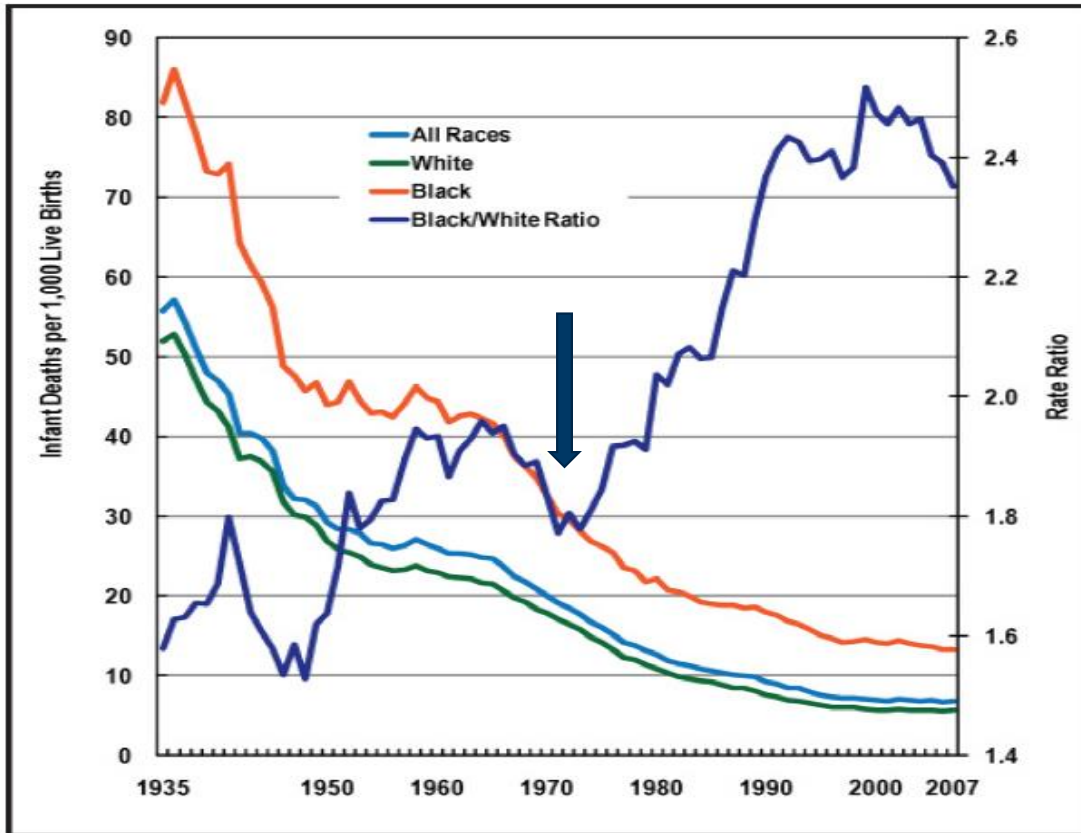
They affect everyone

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”

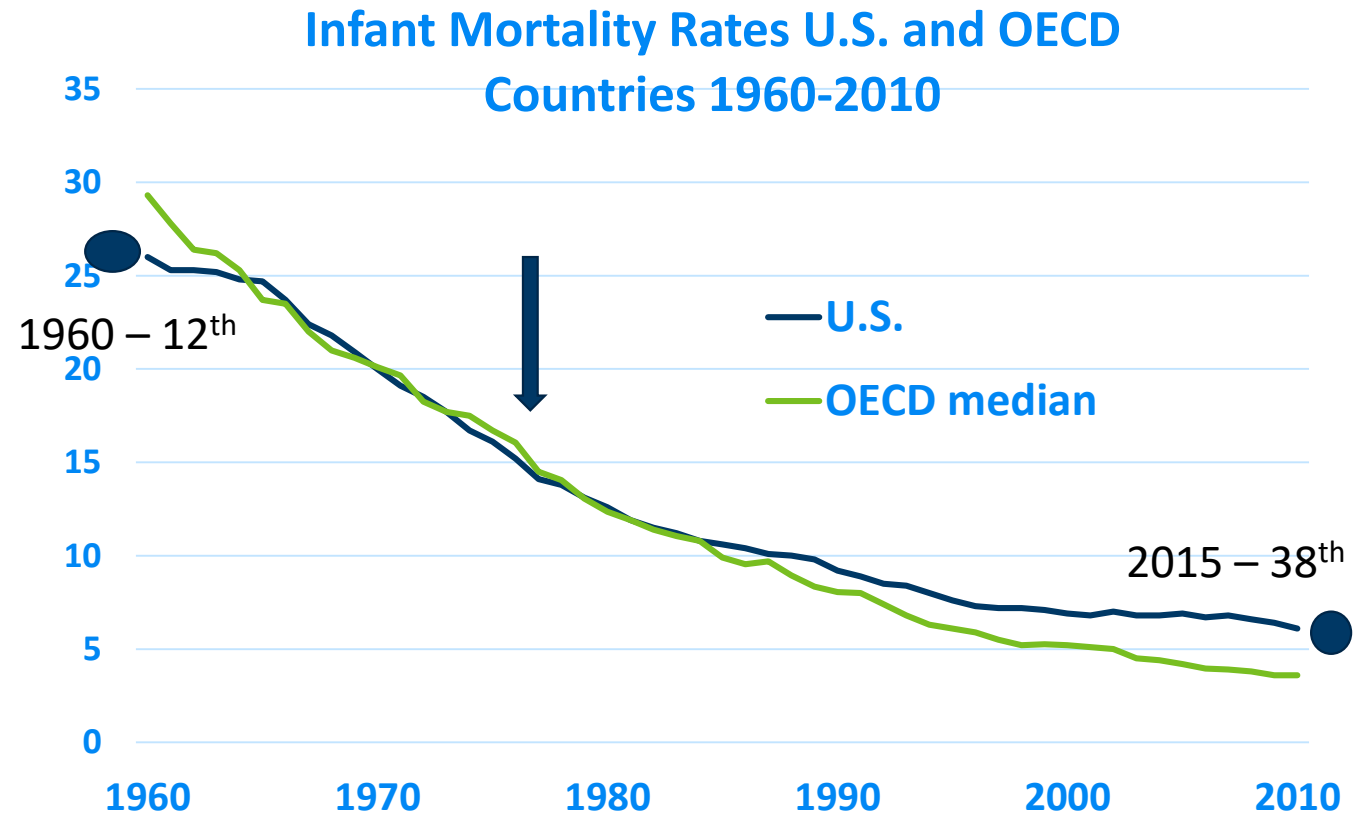
MLK, Jr, Letter from Birmingham Jail, April 16, 1963



“Injustice anywhere... ..is a threat to justice everywhere.”

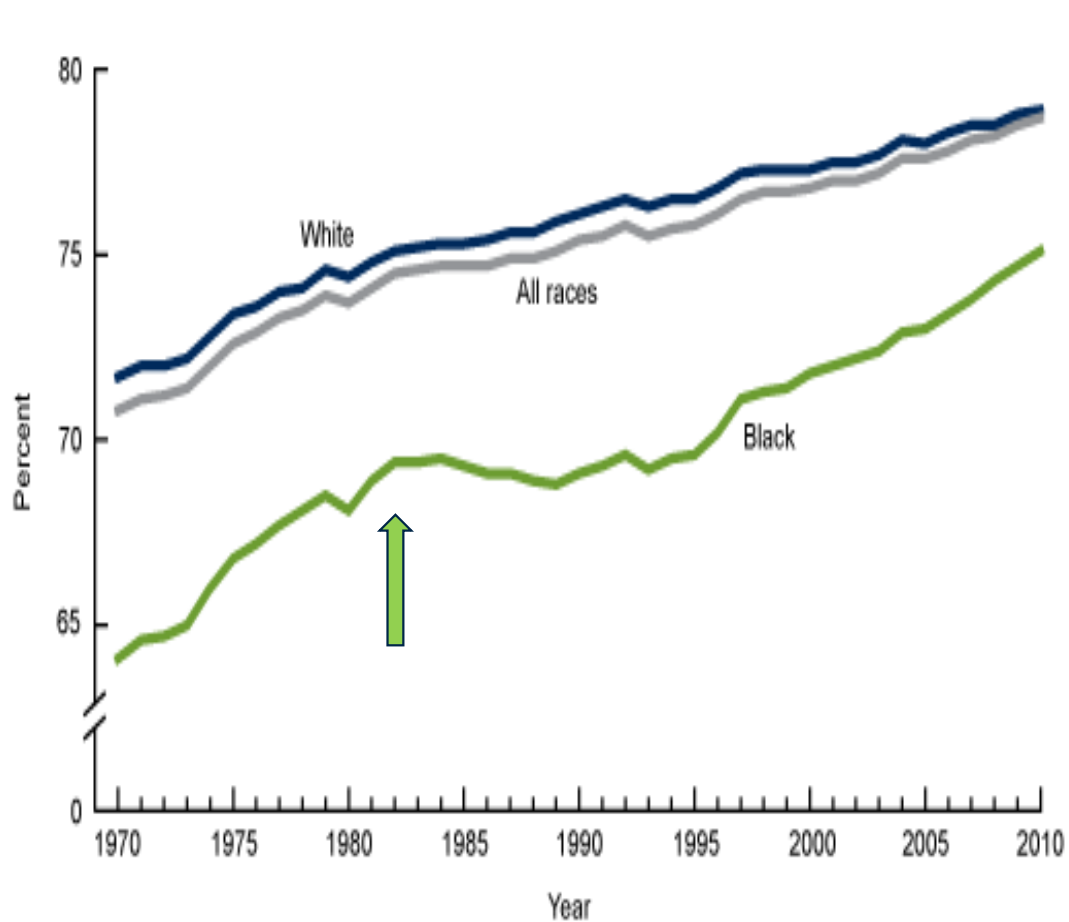


Mortality Rates by Race and
Black/White Ratio US, 1935 – 2007



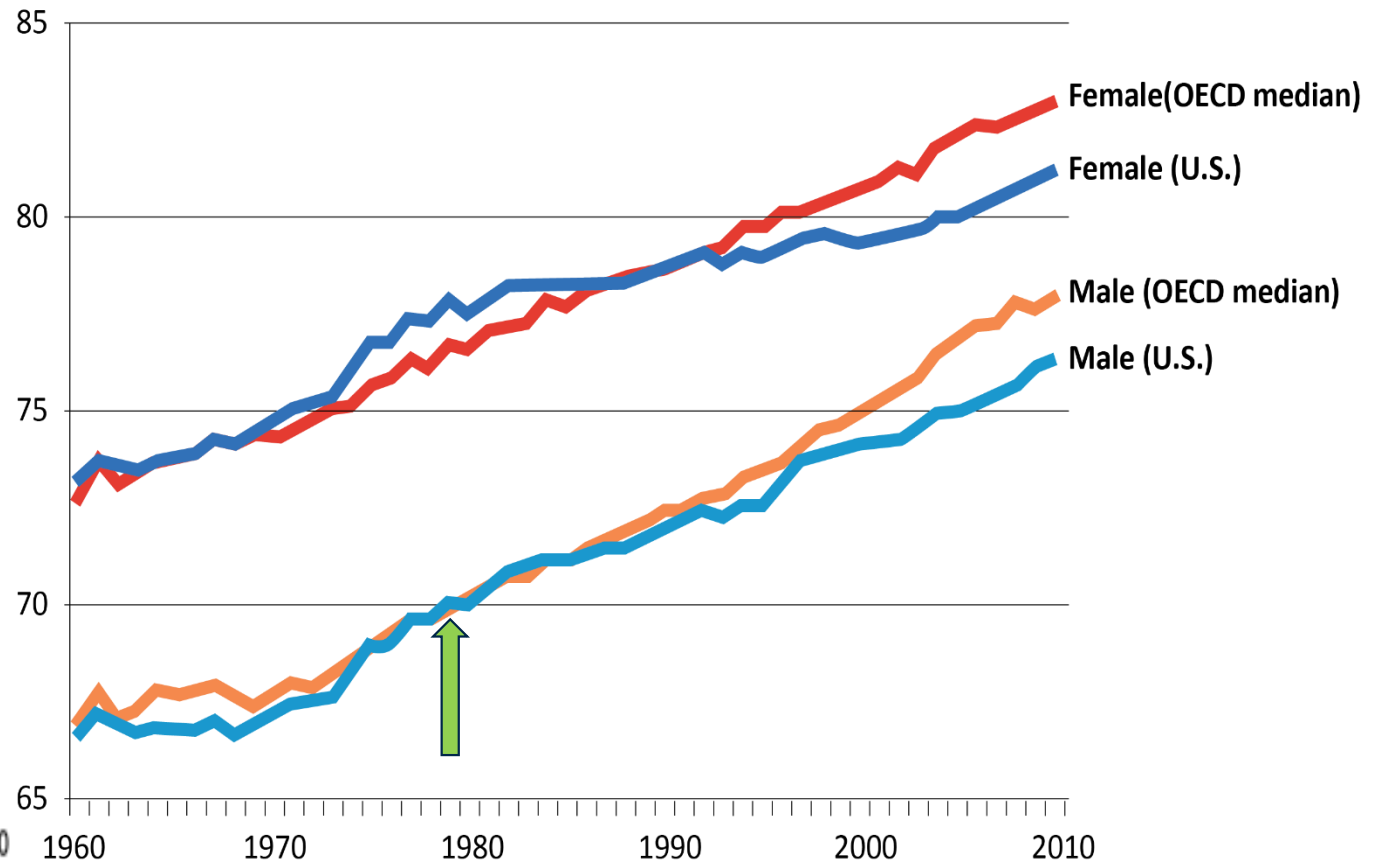
“Injustice anywhere...

...is a threat to justice everywhere.”



**Life Expectancy, by race: United States,
1970 - 2010**

SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, National
Vital Statistics System, Mortality.



**Life Expectancy at Birth US and OECD Countries by
Gender 1960-2010**

Life Expectancy in US has declined in the last 3 years

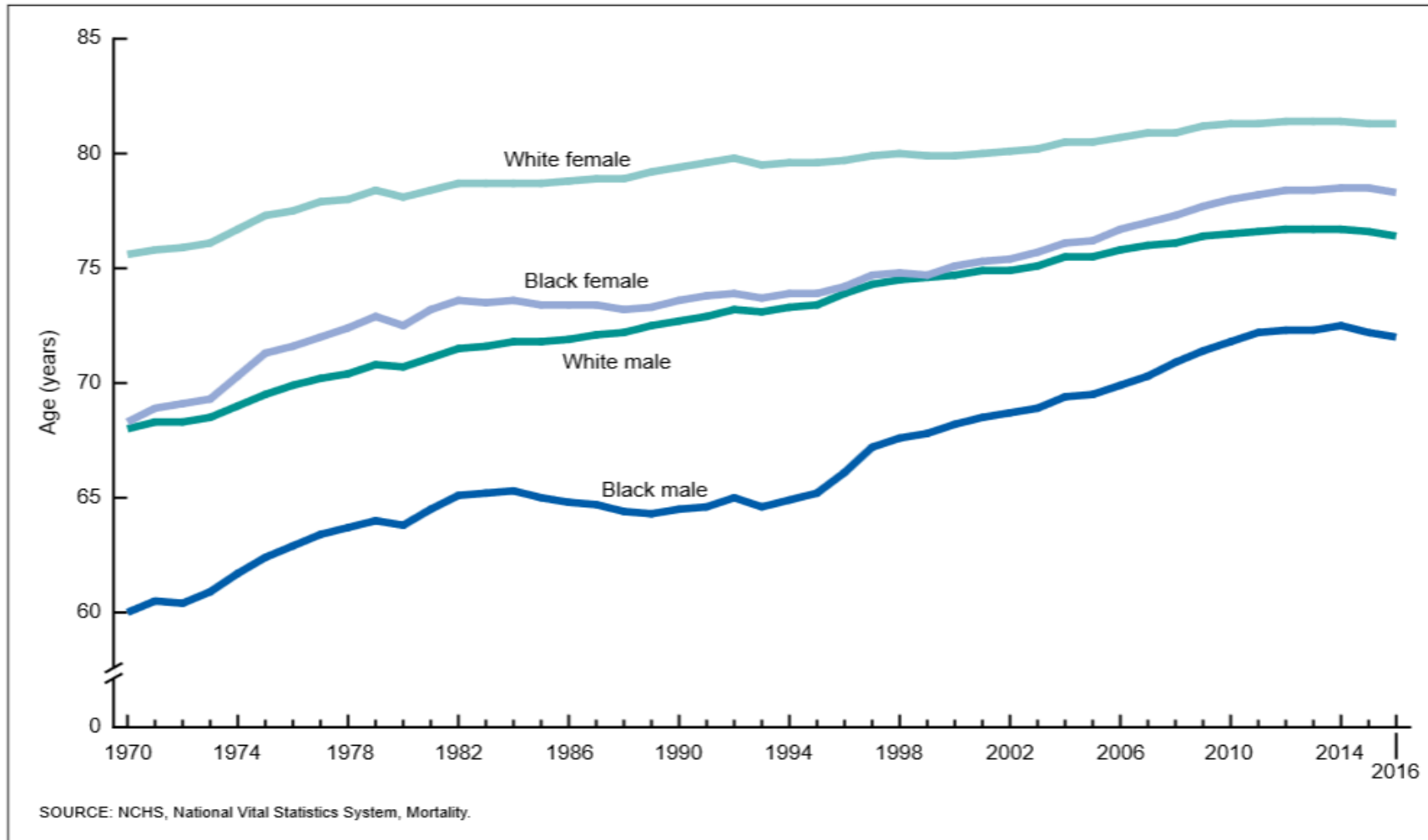
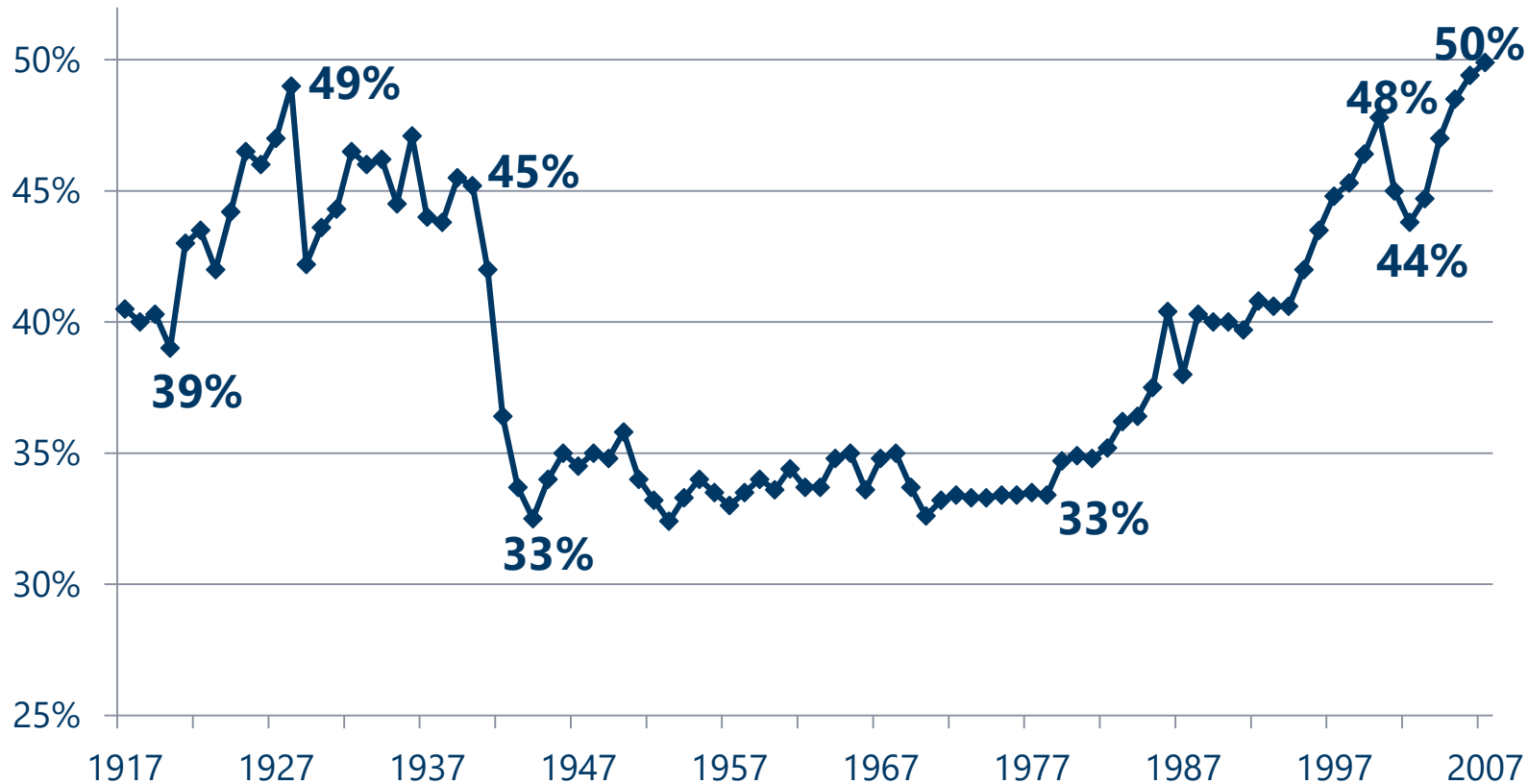


Figure 1. Life expectancy at birth, by race and sex: United States, 1970–2016

“Injustice anywhere... ..is a threat to justice everywhere.”

Top Decile Income Share in the United States, 1917-2007

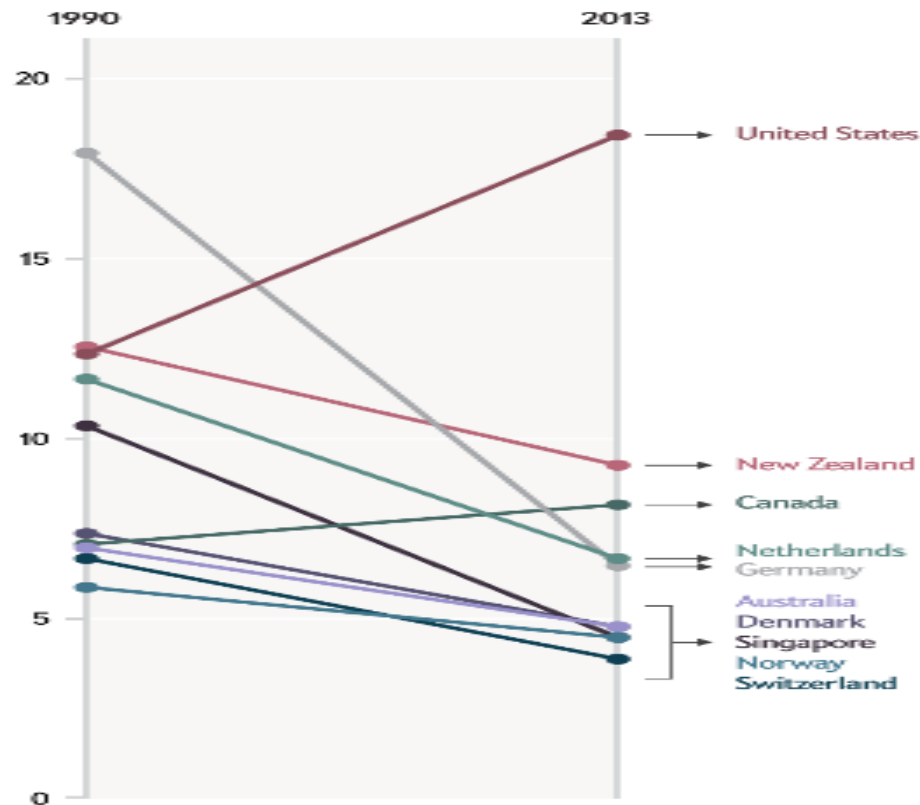


Each 1 % rise in income inequality is associated with a 4 % increase in deaths among persons on the low end.

In 2007, top decile includes all U.S. families with annual income above \$109,600.

U.S. Ranked 49th in Maternal Mortality in 2008

Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) by Developed Country
Maternal deaths per 100,000 live births



Source: Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation

Graphic by Tiffany Farrant-Gonzalez, for **SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN**

U.S. maternal mortality rates continue to climb even as other developed countries improve.

African-American women were 3.2 times more likely to die due to pregnancy/childbirth than white women.

African-American
34.8 DEATHS
per 100,000 live births



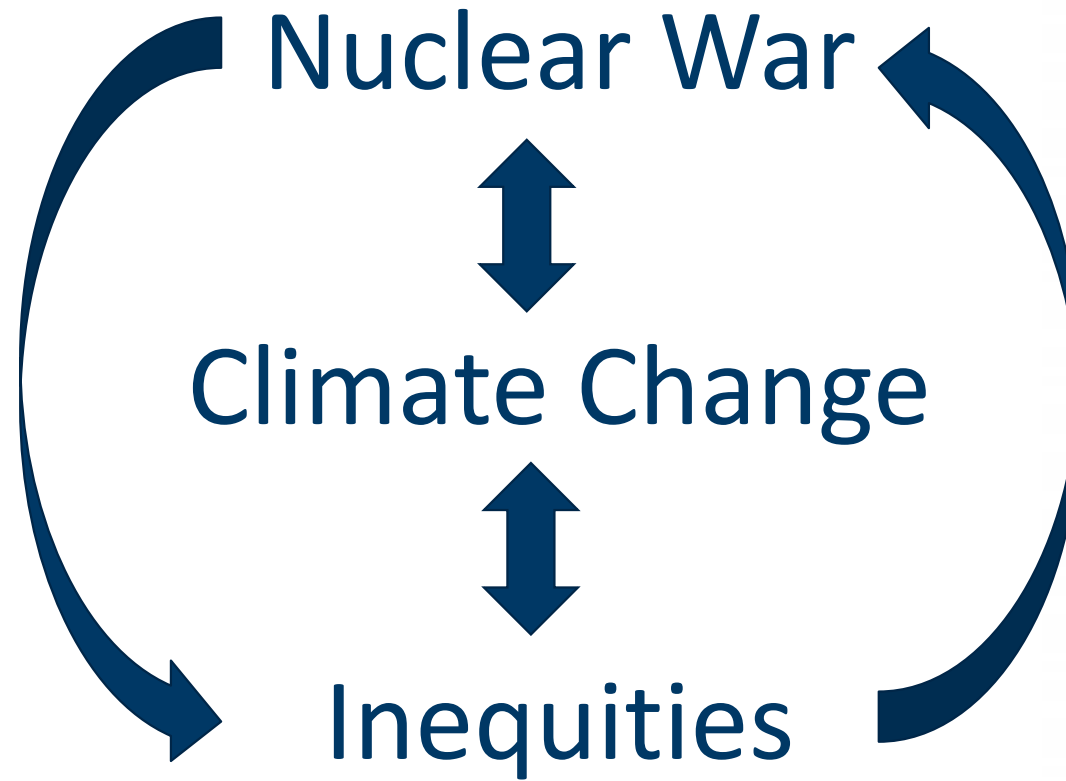
Caucasian

11 DEATHS
per 100,000 live births



Data from UNICEF, WHO, UN Population Fund, and World Bank with standardized methodology.

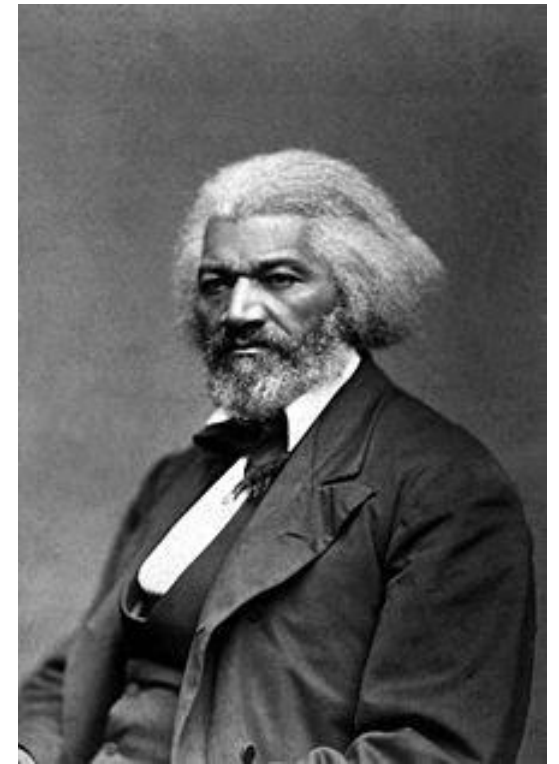
Equity and Social Justice are Existential Issues



Frederick Douglass

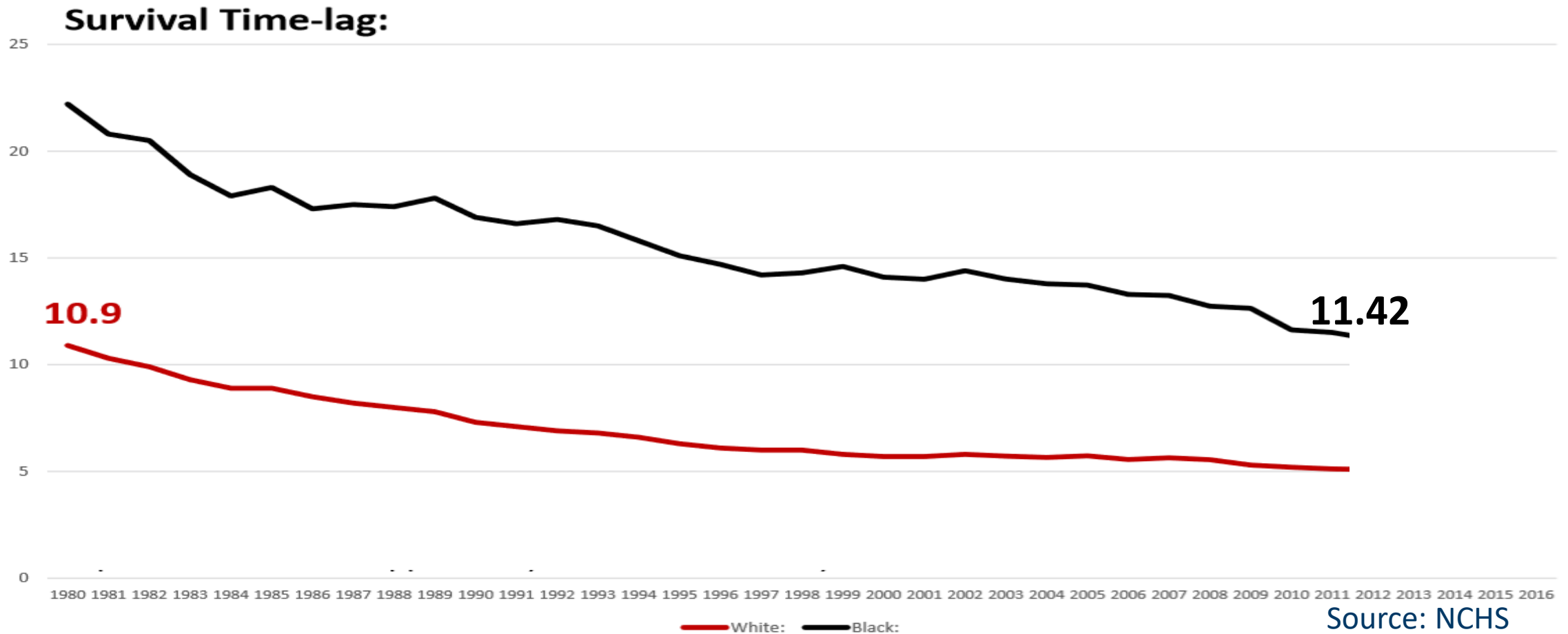
Social reformer, abolitionist, orator, writer, and statesman

“Where justice is denied, where poverty is enforced, where ignorance prevails, and where any one class is made to feel that society is an organized conspiracy to oppress, rob and degrade them, neither persons nor property will be safe.”



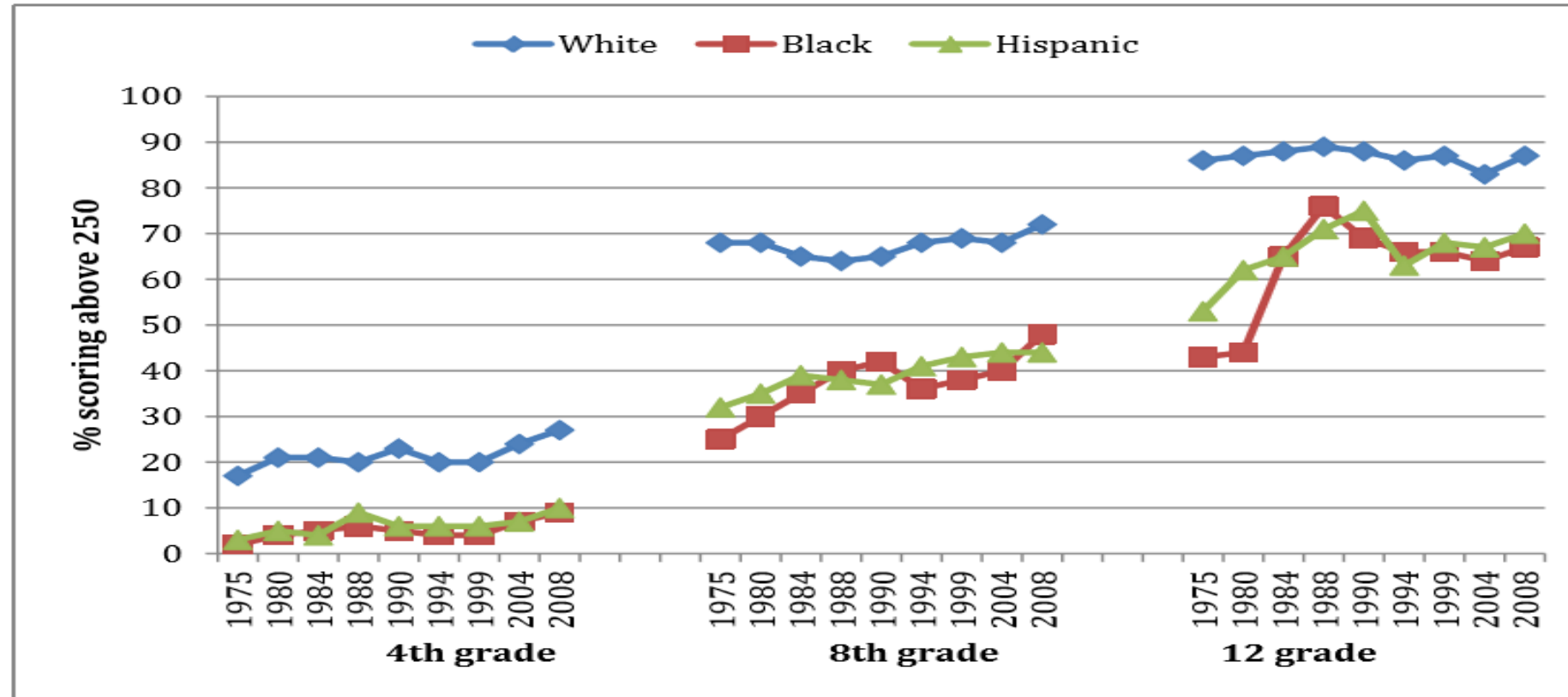
So how do we fix the problem?
What we are doing is not working for health.

US IMR, 1980-2016: White and Black Race



What we are doing to advance educational equity is not working. And may, in fact, be inhibiting progress.

Figure 2: Percent Reading Scores at or above 250 for 4th, 8th, and 12th grades



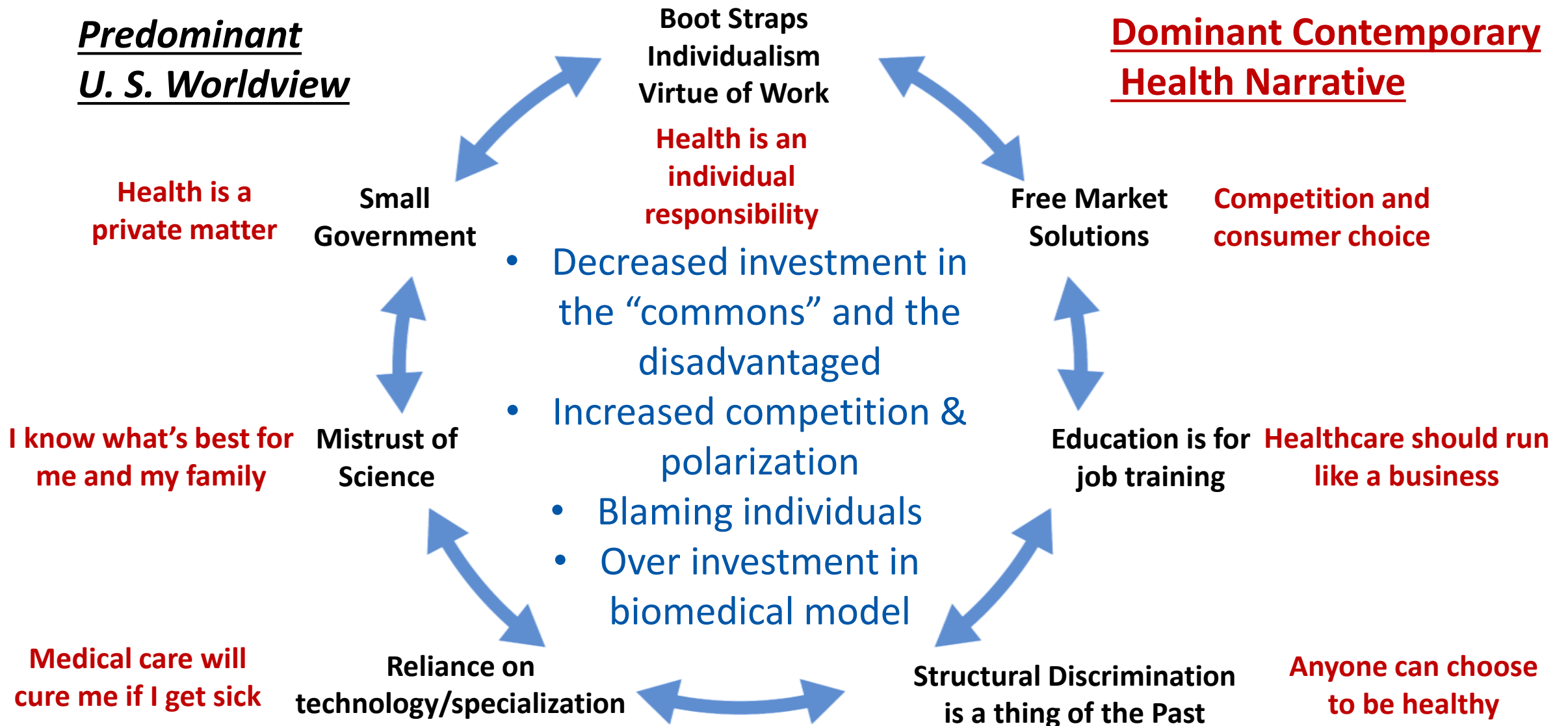
Source: Educational Digest, NAEP 2010; Reading scores above 250 reflect ability to search for specific information while reading, interrelate ideas and make generalizations about literature, science, and social studies materials.

Our approach has been based on the Dominant Narrative about what creates health

People would be healthy if they worked hard; made good choices about diet, physical activity, and substance use; and had good medical care.

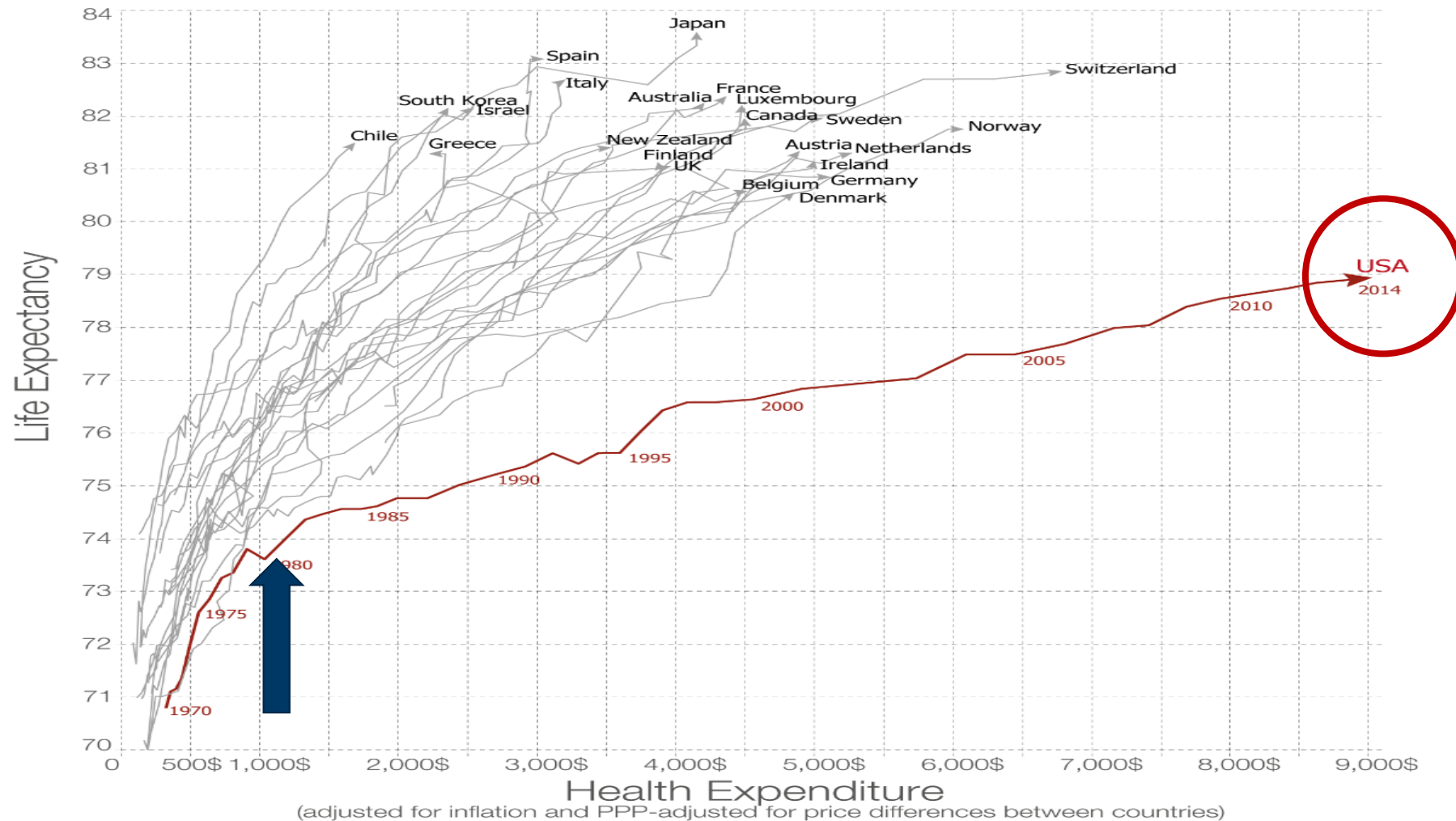
Health is the responsibility of individuals until they get sick, then it becomes the responsibility of the healthcare system.

What is the basis of this narrative?



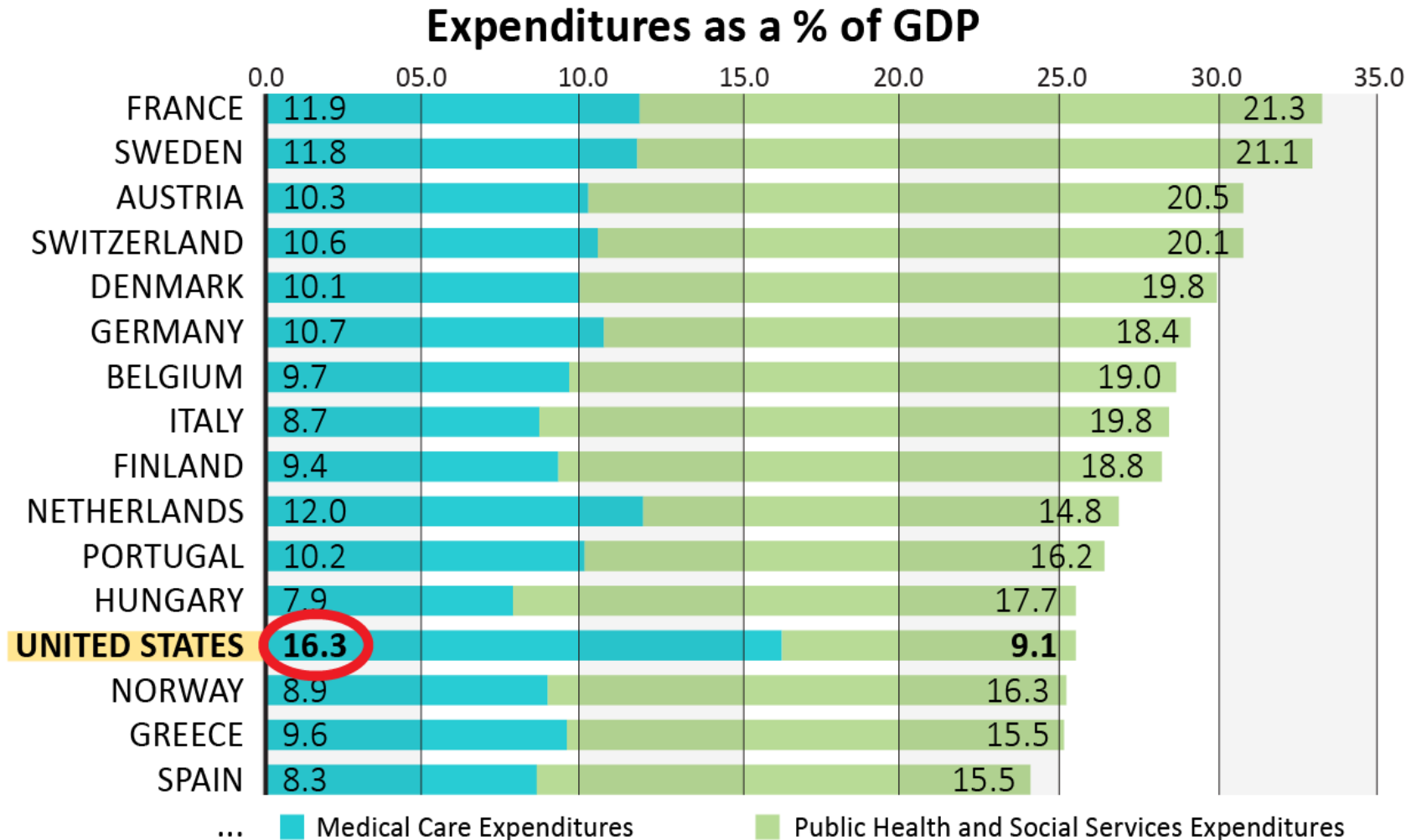
Improvements slowed when we started to overinvest in healthcare

Life expectancy vs health expenditures - U.S. and OECD Countries 1970 - 2014



Data source: Health expenditure from the OECD; Life expectancy from the World Bank. Licensed under CC-BY-SA by the author Max Roser. The data visualization is available at [OurWorldinData.org](https://ourworldindata.org) and there you find more research and visualizations on this topic.

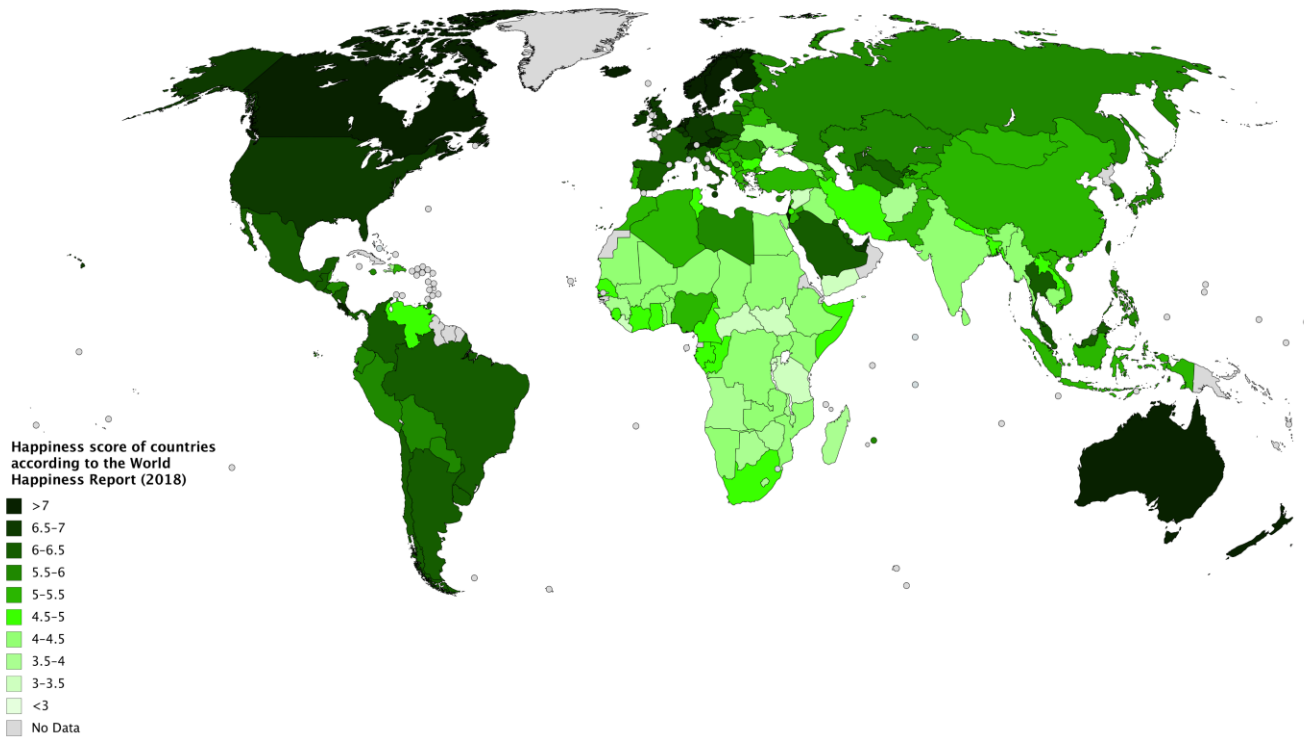
Total Investment in Health and Human Services



In OECD, for every \$1 spent on health care, about \$2 is spent on public health and social services.

In the U.S., for every \$1 spent on health care, about 55 cents is spent on public health and social services.

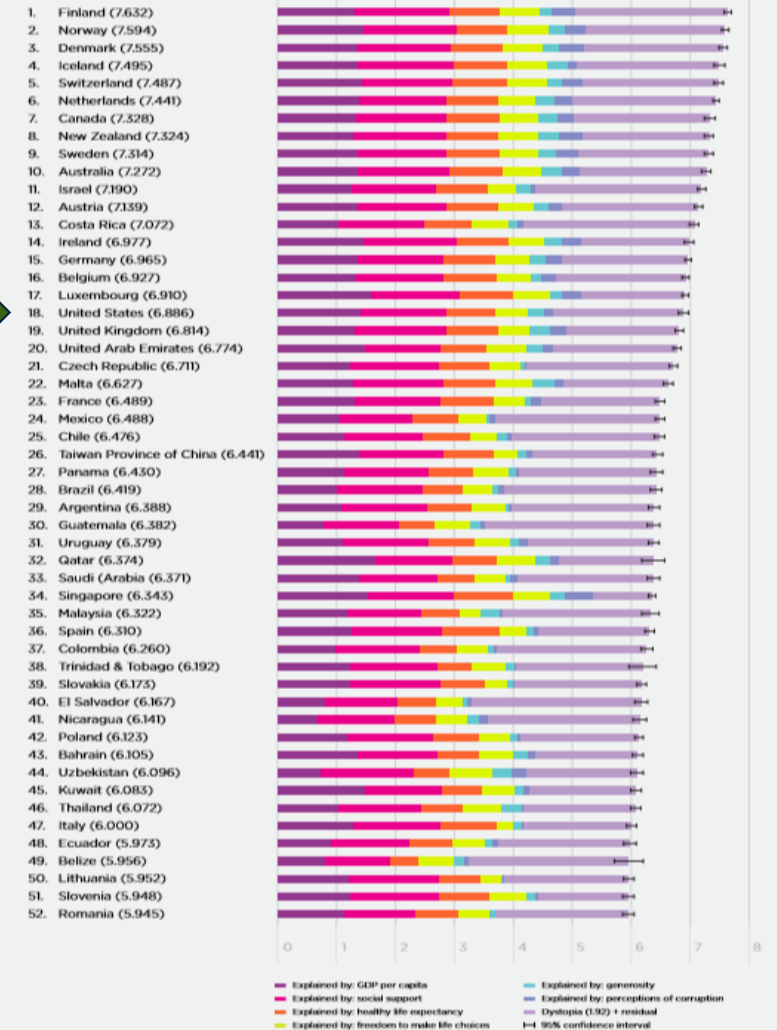
World Happiness Index



United States is going in the wrong direction

7/8/2019

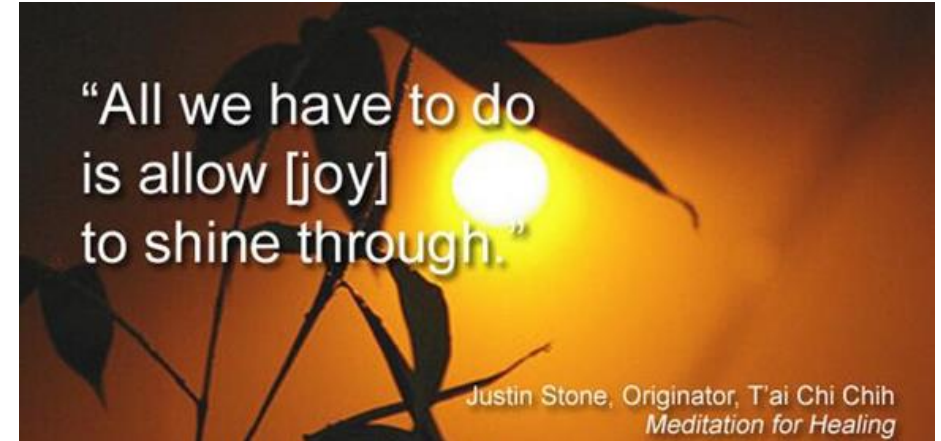
Figure 2.2: Ranking of Happiness 2015-2017 (Part 1)



This is where you come into the story
Return to the Circle of Health and Joy

*T'ai Chi Chih ... Benefits
may include peace of
mind, improved health
and simply, joy.*

*Not just for yourself but
for the community.*



You can help create the conditions in which all people can be healthy

“Public health is what we, as a society, do collectively to assure the conditions in which (all) people can be healthy.”

The Future of Public Health – Institute of Medicine, 1988

Public health is not a place of employment:
It's a philosophy of how you approach life (your practice).

You have a civic role (obligation), maybe an occupational role,
and a role as a practitioner of T'ai Chi Chih to help build
relationships and build community.

Three Practices (tools) That Can Change Communities

- Expand the understanding about what creates health and happiness.
- Foster partnerships.
- Build community resilience through those relationships.
- **All with a focus on social justice and social cohesion**

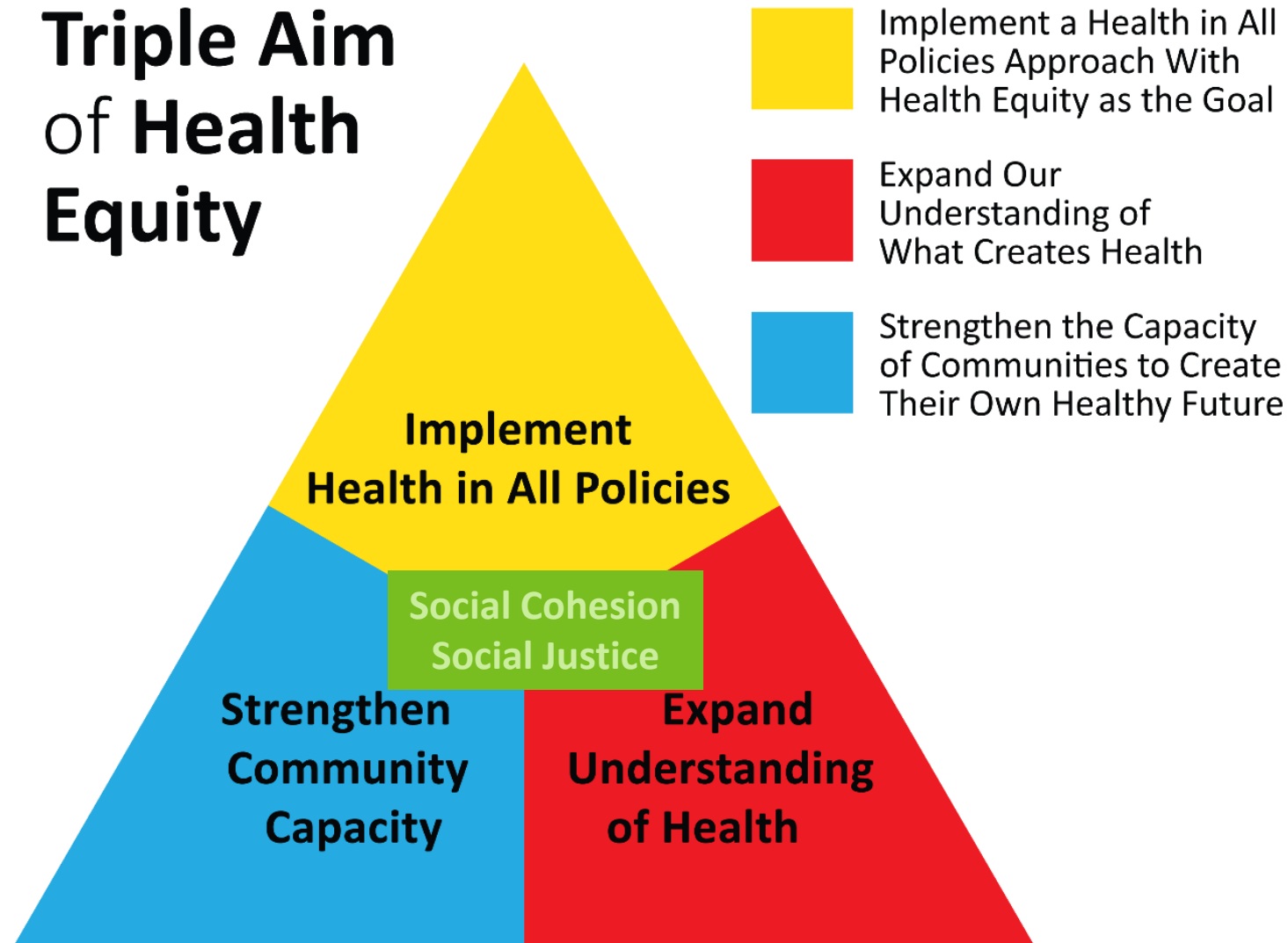


"Mere wishful thinking or a positive attitude will avail nothing; the meditator should choose proper tools and use them correctly."

Justin Stone, Originator Tai Chi Chih
Meditation for Healing

Change How We Do Our Practice

Triple Aim of Health Equity



What is health?

"Health is not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Health is being in safe, stable, and nurturing environments and relationships, having the opportunity to thrive, sharing power in society, and experiencing with all families and communities the best possible physical, mental and social well-being."

Living Conditions in Communities Impact Health

Communities of Opportunity

- Social/economic inclusion
- Thriving small businesses and entrepreneurs
- Grocery stores
- Parks & trails
- Sufficient healthy housing
- Good transportation options and infrastructure
- Financial institutions
- Home ownership
- Better performing schools
- IT connectivity
- Strong local governance

Good
Health
Status

Poor
Health
Status

Contributes
to health
disparities:

- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Asthma
- Cancer
- Injury

Low-Opportunity Communities

- Social/economic exclusion
- Few small businesses
- Fast food restaurants
- Unsafe/limited parks
- Rental housing/foreclosure
- Poor and limited housing stock
- Few transportation options
- Payday lenders
- Poor performing schools
- Pollution/contaminated drinking water
- Limited IT connections
- Weak local governance

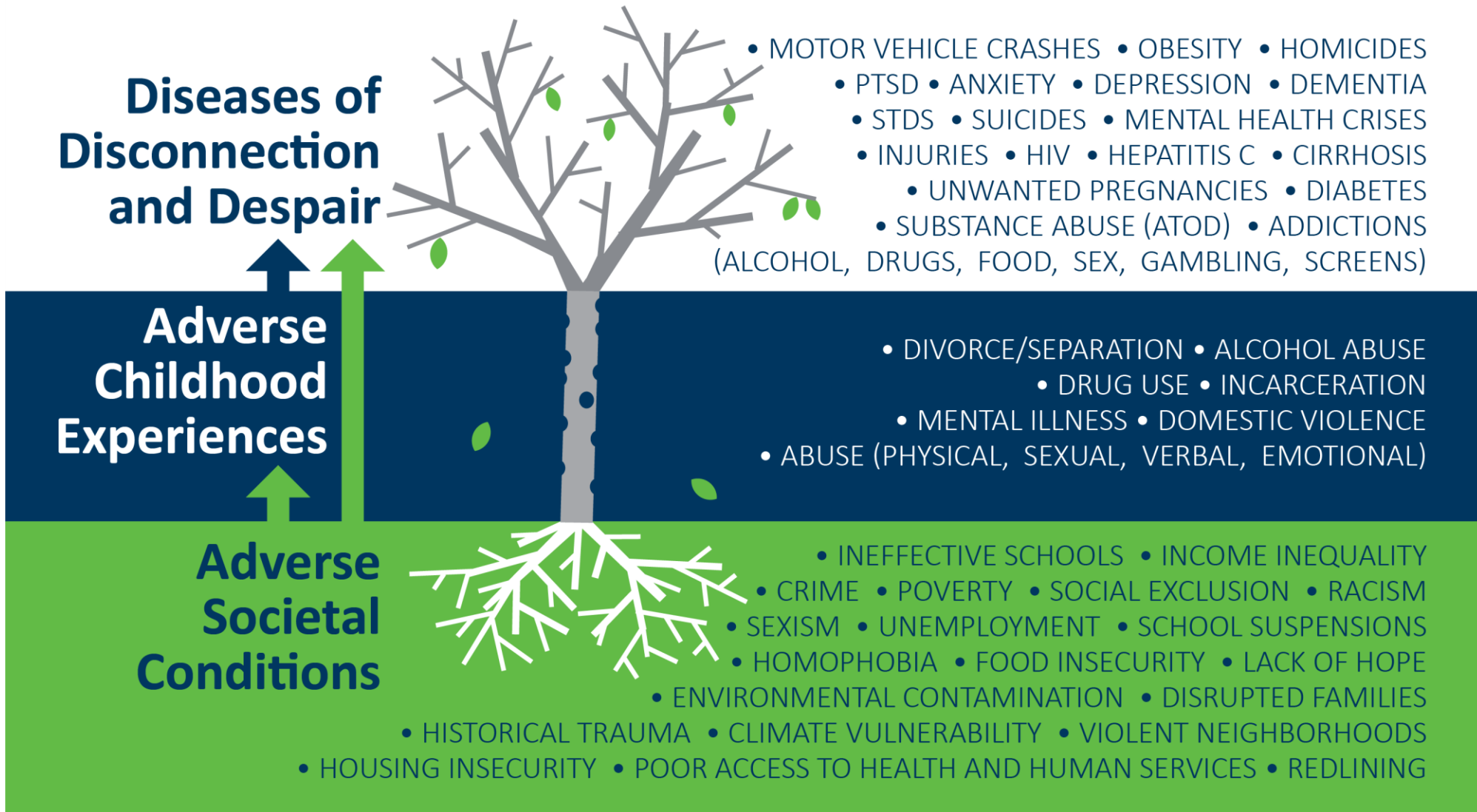
Diseases of Disconnection and Despair

Diseases of Disconnection and Despair



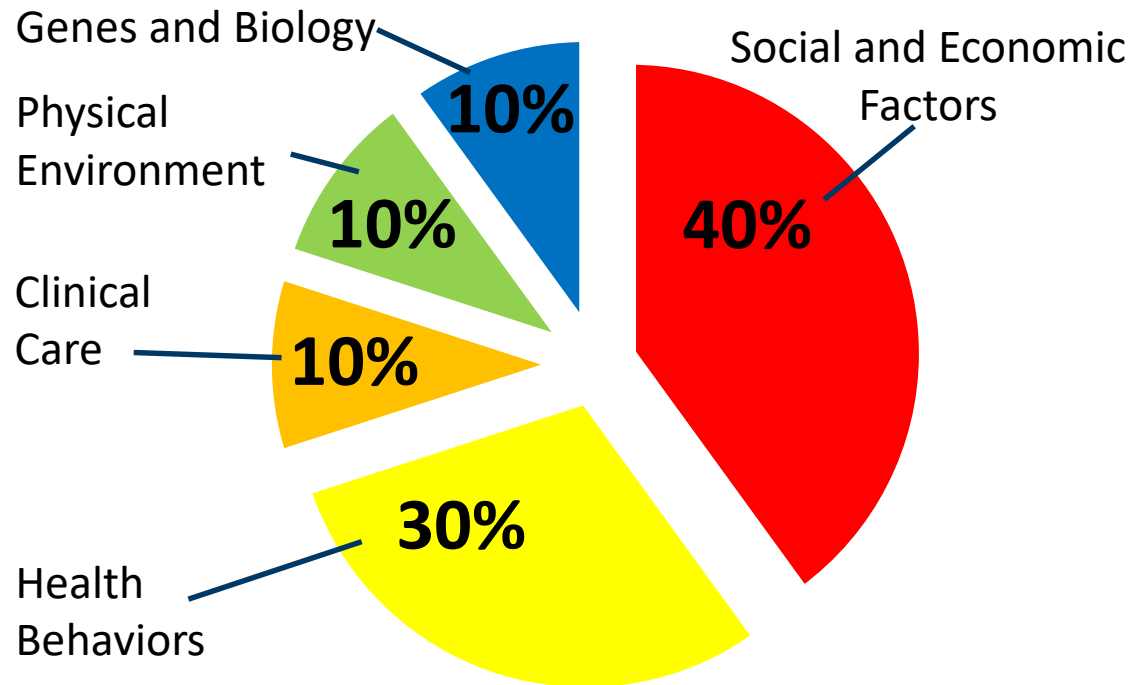
- MOTOR VEHICLE CRASHES • OBESITY • HOMICIDES
- PTSD • ANXIETY • DEPRESSION • DEMENTIA
- STDS • SUICIDES • MENTAL HEALTH CRISES
- INJURIES • HIV • HEPATITIS C • CIRRHOSIS
- UNWANTED PREGNANCIES • DIABETES
- SUBSTANCE ABUSE (ATOD) • ADDICTIONS
(ALCOHOL, DRUGS, FOOD, SEX, GAMBLING, SCREENS)

Living Conditions in Communities Affect ACEs and Foster Diseases of Disconnection and Despair



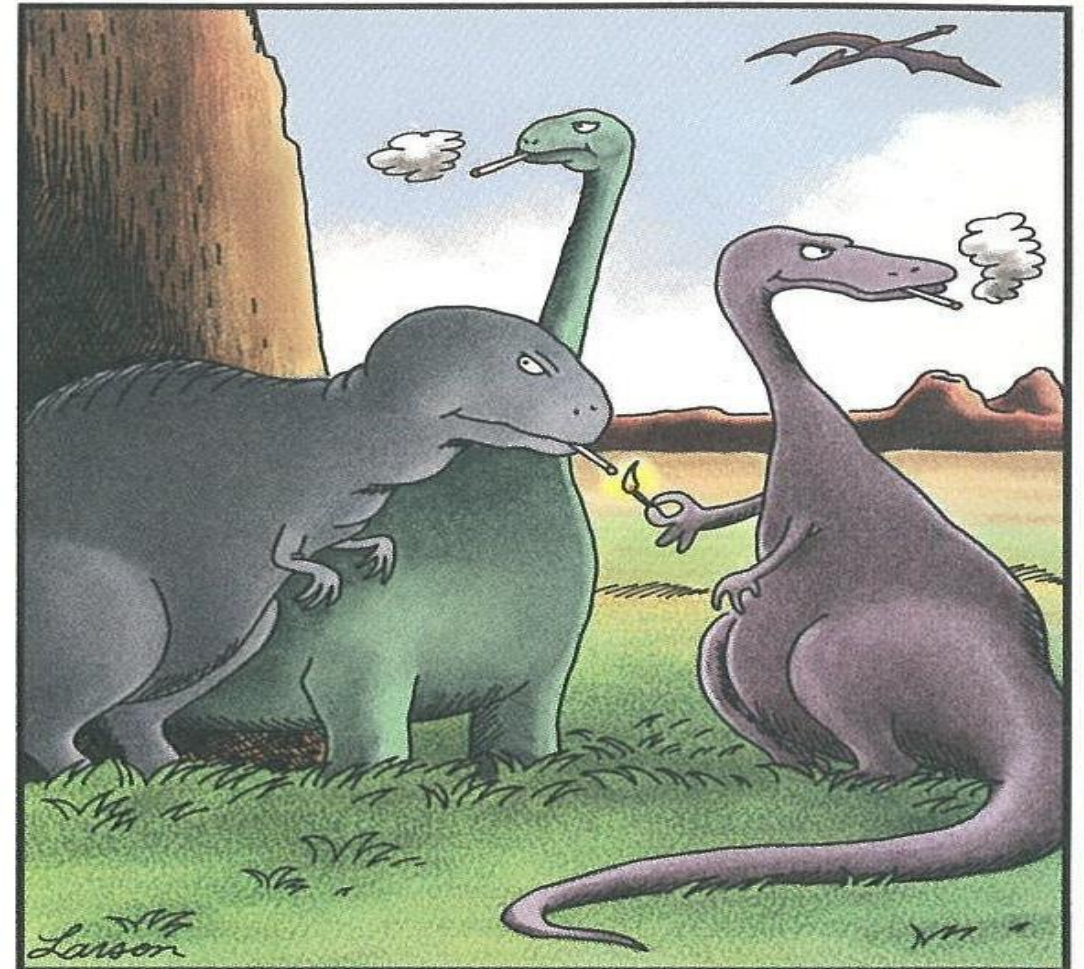
Expand the Understanding of What Creates Health

Determinants of Health



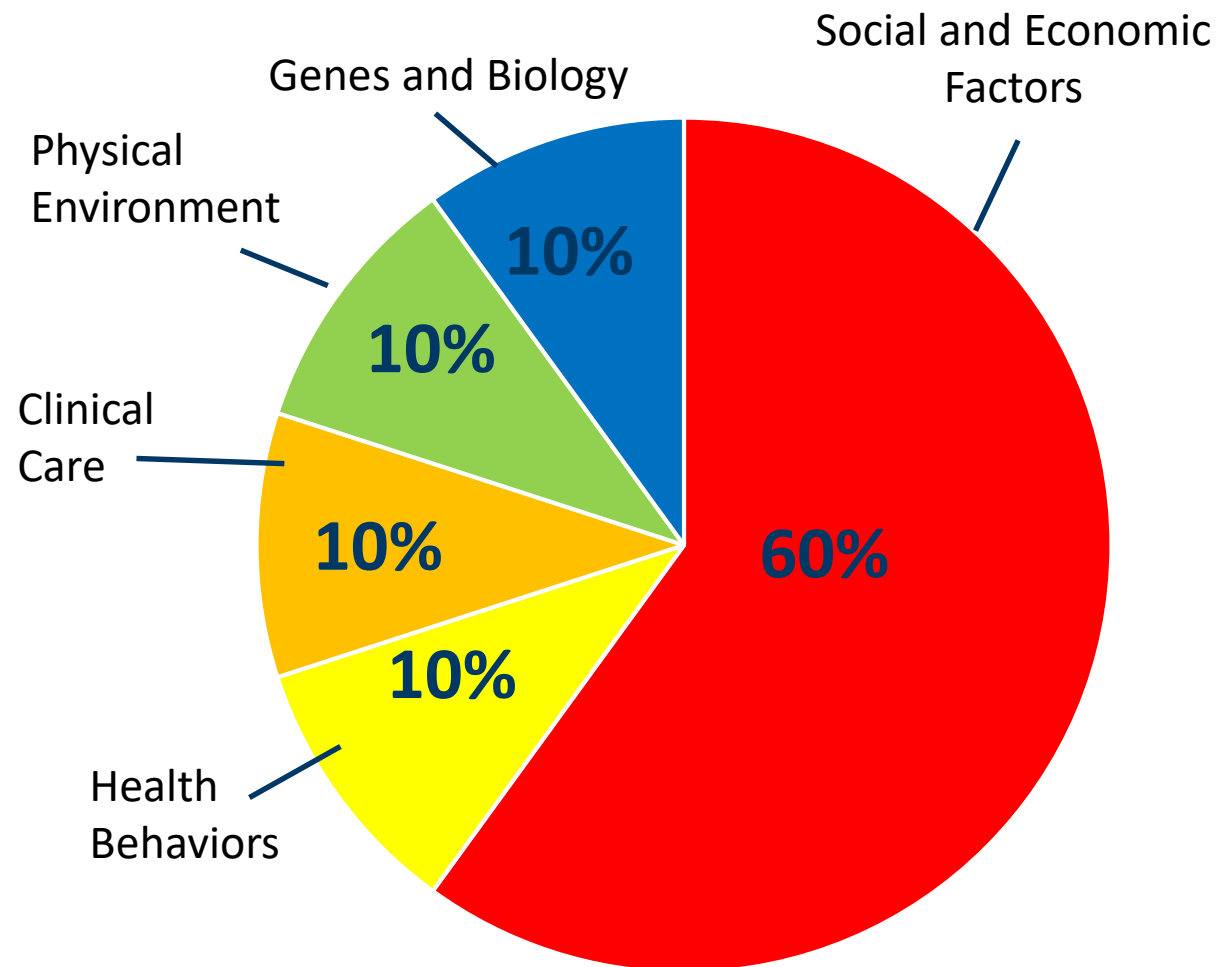
Determinants of Health Model based on frameworks developed by: Tarlov AR. *Ann N Y Acad Sci* 1999; 896: 281-93; and Kindig D, Asada Y, Booske B. *JAMA* 2008; 299(17): 2081-2083.

World Health Organization. Ottawa charter for health promotion. International Conference on Health Promotion: The Move Towards a New Public Health, November 17-21, 1986 Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, 1986. Accessed July 12, 2002 at <http://www.who.int/hpr/archive/docs/ottawa.html>.



The real reason dinosaurs became extinct

Expand the Understanding of What Creates Health



Social Determinants of Health **(Vital Conditions for Community Well-being)**

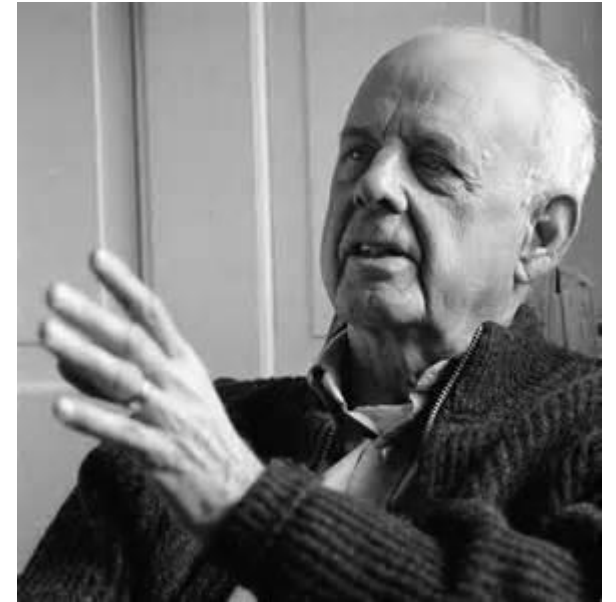
- The conditions and circumstances in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age –shaped by the distribution of money, power, social policies, and politics that are beyond the control of the individual.
- Social Determinants are created & enhanced mostly by policies and systems that impact the physical and social environment
- Disproportionately negatively affect people of color and American Indians
- Structural racism

Ehlinger's beliefs about the contributions to health determinants

Expanding the Understanding About What Creates Health Means changing the narrative

“We have lived by the assumption that what was good for us would be good for the world. We have been wrong. We must change our lives so that it will be possible to live by the contrary assumption, that what is good for the world will be good for us.”

Wendell Berry



Asking the Right Questions Can Foster Health and Joy in the World

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/chs/healthequity/>

Expand Understanding of What Creates Health

- *What values/world view underlie my approach to life and my practice?*
- *What narrative do I hold about what creates health and joy?*
- *What is assumed to be true about the world and my role and TCC in the world?*

“The character of the Chi influences our State of Mind, and our State of Mind influences our Chi... As the Yin-Yang elements are brought into balance, this not only balances the Chi but it also influences how we think. Ultimately we are what we think; this creates our Karma.” Justine Stone

(“Karma means action, work or deed; it also refers to the spiritual principle of cause and effect where **intent and actions of an individual influence the future**. Good intent and good deed contribute to good karma and future happiness, while bad intent and bad deed contribute to bad karma and future suffering.)

Foster Partnerships

Health is the responsibility of all sectors not just health care and public health

- **Minimum Wage**
- **Paid Leave**
- **Criminal justice**
- **Energy**
- **Transportation**
- **Broadband connectivity**
- **E-Health**
- **Housing/Homelessness**



- **Air/Water quality**
- **Ag Buffer strips**
- **Food Charter**
- **Marriage Equity**
- **Payday Lending**
- **Freedom to Breathe**
- **Health Care Reform**
- **Climate Change**

At local, state, and national levels in both public and private sectors.

Asking the Right Questions Can Foster Health and Joy in the World

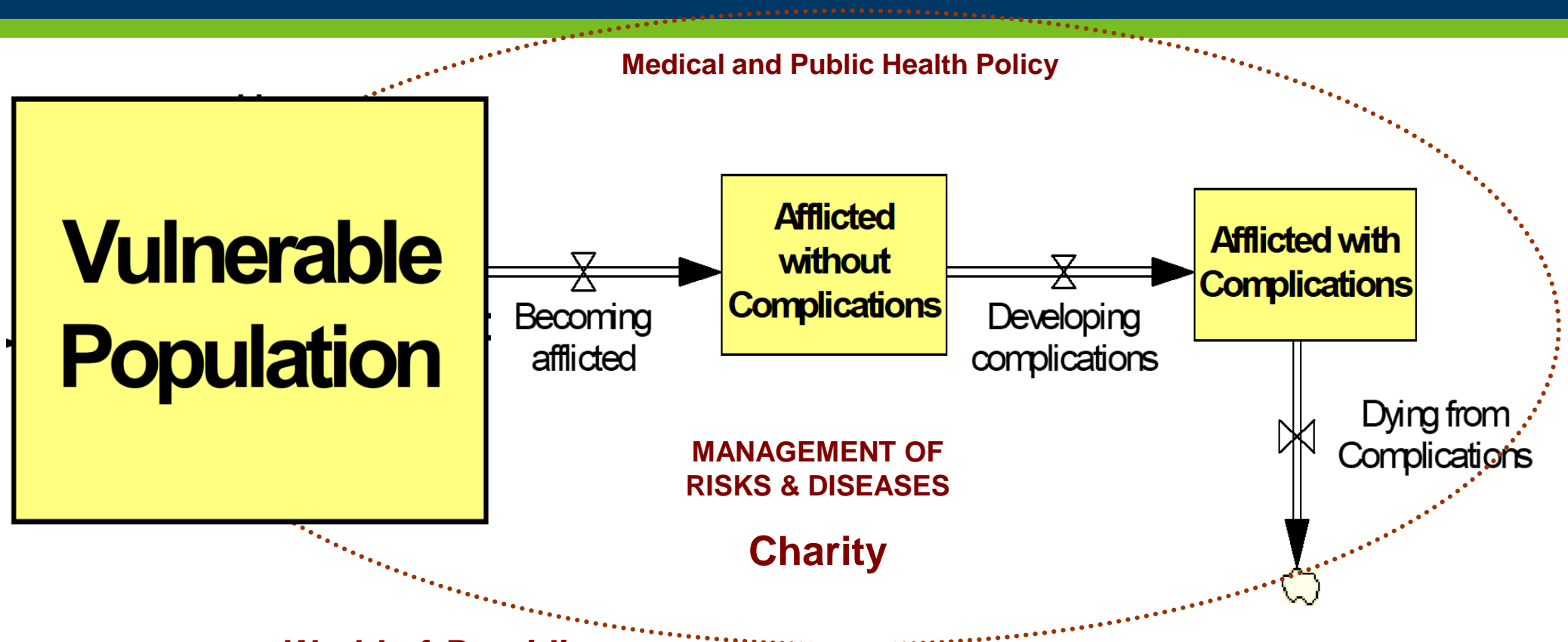
<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/chs/healthequity/>

Foster Partnerships

- *Am I incorporating and practicing the principles of TCC in all aspects of my life?*
- *Am I partnering with others and expanding my relationships?*

“I gave a talk in Minneapolis on “Merging Sense with Essence.” (most) people feel they must get away from family and work routine in order to practice Spirituality. That is far from the truth. I related how a Zen priest in Japan had said to me: “Stone-san, be the Big hermit; anybody can be the small hermit.” I remembered this phrase while meditating with the Yogis in the cold Himalayan foothills, eating once a day, etc. I then thought: “I should be able to do this at 42nd and Broadway!” and left the mountain seclusion the next day. Though I didn’t yet know the meaning of “Seijaku”—stillness in the midst of activity—the idea had already begun acting in my consciousness.” Justin Stone

Build Community Resilience

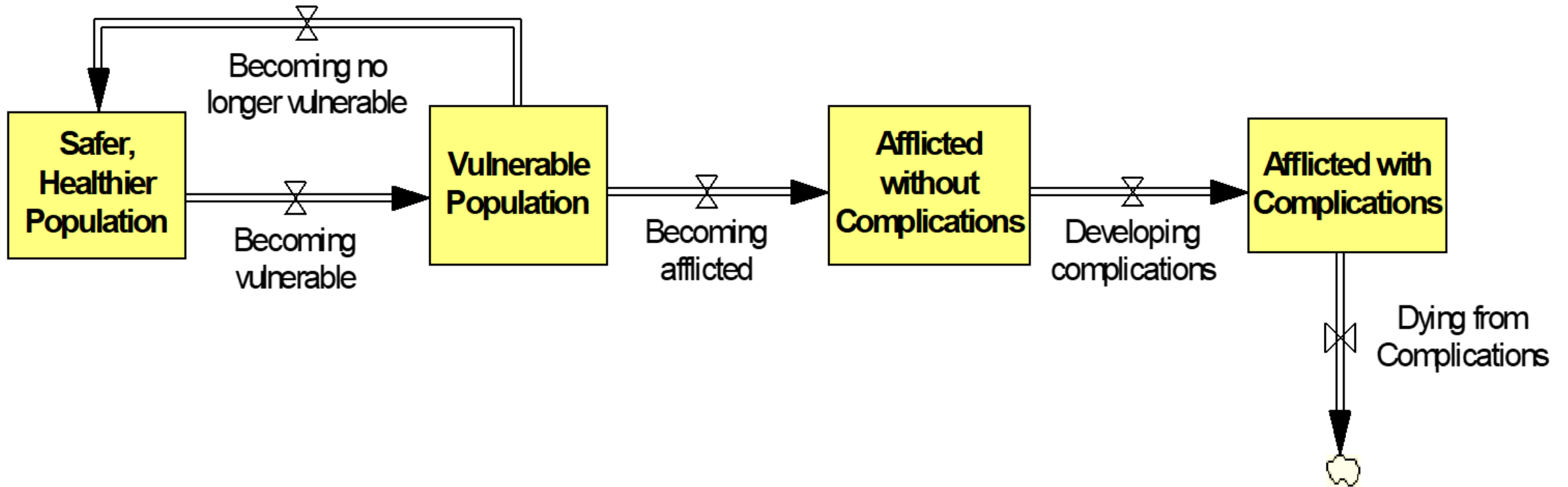


World of Providing...

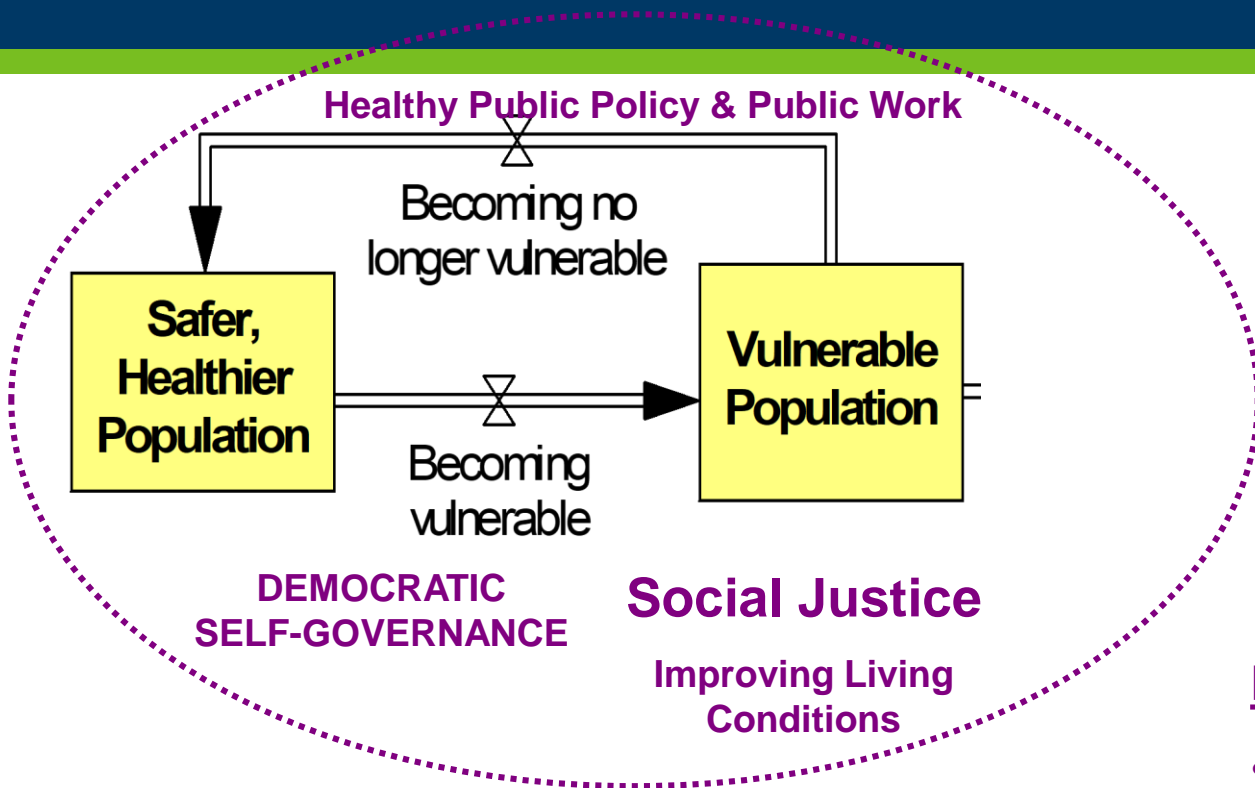
- Health education
- Screening tests
- Disease management
- Charity

- Pharmaceuticals
- Clinical services
- Physical and financial access
- insurance
- Etc...

Build Community Resilience



Build Community Resilience



"...the community in the fullest sense is the smallest unit of health...to speak of the health of an isolated individual is a contradiction in terms."

Wendell Berry

By Strengthening...

- Democracy
- Mutual accountability
- Leaders and institutions
- Plurality
- Freedom
- Foresight and precaution
- The meaning of work
- Etc...

World of Transforming...

- Deprivation
- Dependency
- Violence
- Disconnection
- Environmental decay
- Stress
- Insecurity
- Etc...

Asking the Right Questions Can Foster Health and Joy in the World

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/chs/healthequity/>

Build Community Resilience

- *Who is included and who is not?*
- *Who is being invited? Who has ownership? Who has accountability?*
- *Who is benefiting and who is left out?*
- *Am I building capacity in the community beyond today?*

“Nature has no interest in the individual. It oversees the evolution of the Species, and the somewhat illusionary individual just happens to be part of that Species. Greater awareness will bring us to the conclusion that ‘we’—and all life—consist of a constant flux of energies. The illusion of individuality (maybe this is painful to realize) is replaced by an identity much greater. Does this mean we now become insignificant dots in one of the innumerable Cosmic systems? No, quite the opposite. When we find out Who and What we are, it is as the Lotus Sutra says: “Man’s/Woman’s voice is a voice filling the Universe, his/her life is a life without limit.” Justin Stone

Step By Step

Step by step, the longest march
can be done, can be done.

Many stones can form an arch
singly none, singly none.

And by union what we will
can be accomplished still.

Drops of water turn a mill
singly none, singly none.

T'ai Chi Chih has nineteen movements
and one pose and one pose

Move by move, each soft and flowing,
your practice grows, your practice grows

The energy you circulate,
helps the Vital Force to propagate

Move by move and with each pose,
the Chi flows, the Chi flows

Step By Step

Step by step, the longest march
can be done, can be done.

Many stones can form an arch
singly none, singly none.

And by union what we will
can be accomplished still.

Drops of water turn a mill
singly none, singly none.

Through all of you in T'ai Chi Chih,
the Chi flows, the Chi flows

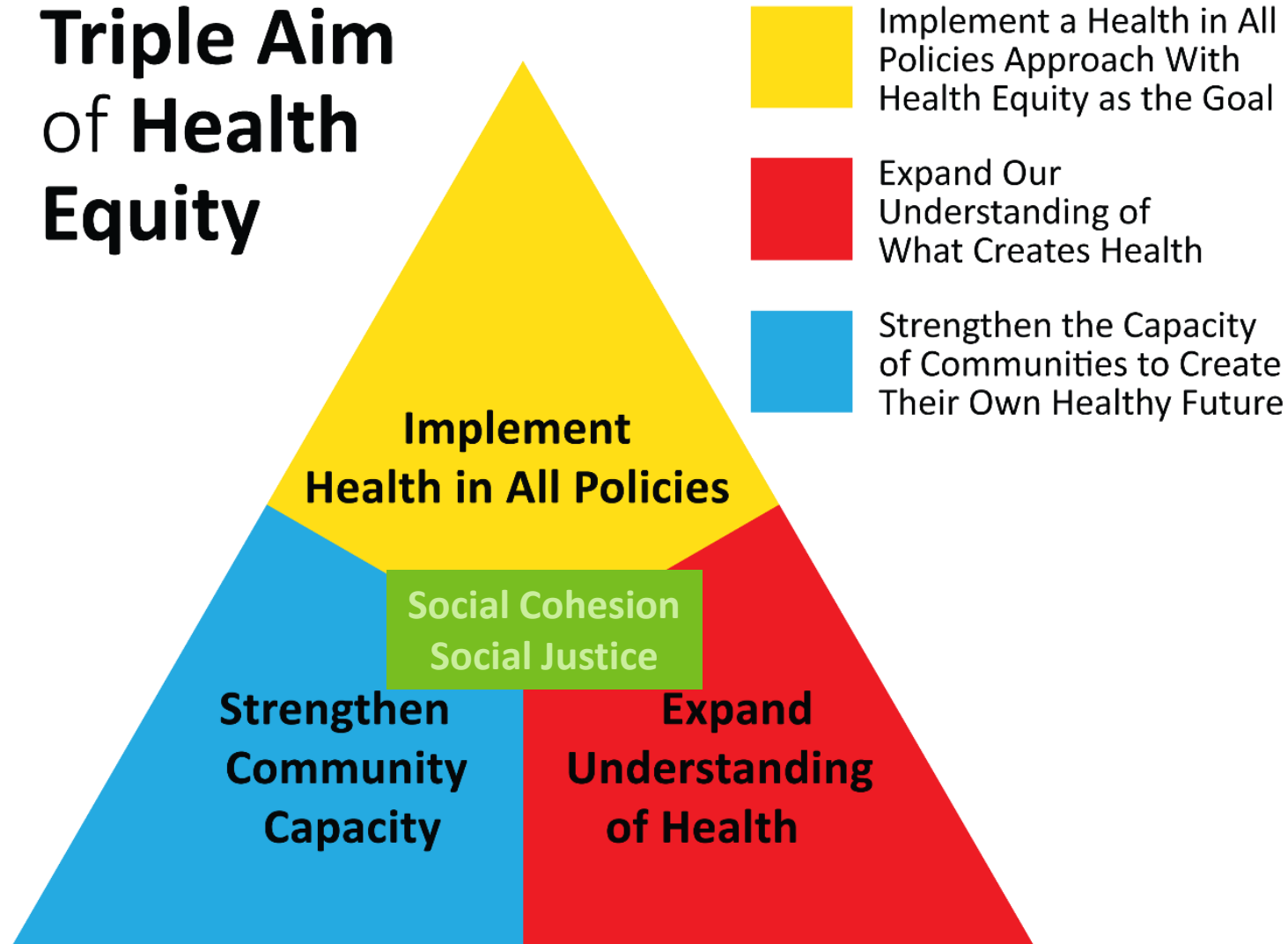
By reaching out beyond yourself,
the Chi grows, the Chi grows

Together you can help create
a world which all can celebrate.

In a thriving community,
the Chi glows, the Chi glows.

Central to our work are Social Cohesion and Social Justice

Triple Aim of Health Equity



- Expand the understanding about what creates health and happiness.
- Foster partnerships.
- Build community resilience through those relationships.
- **All with a focus on social justice and social cohesion**

Social Cohesion

Social Justice

- A community ethic that works toward the well-being of all and embraces a responsibility for all community members, fights exclusion and marginalization, promotes trust, and **creates a sense of belonging**.
- Elements of **social cohesion** are:
 - **social capital** – the resources that result from people working together toward a common goal,
 - **social mobility** – the ability to move up in social or economic status,
 - **social inclusion** – having connection to, ownership of, and responsibility for community goals; having a **sense of belonging** – being wanted & needed.



Social Cohesion/Belonging

“The greatest epidemic today is not TB, HIV or leprosy, it is being unwanted. Being unwanted, unloved, uncared for, forgotten by everybody is a much greater hunger, a much greater poverty, than the person who has nothing to eat.”



**Mother Teresa
Saint Teresa of Calcutta**

Social Cohesion/Belonging

Solastalgia (neologism embracing 'solace' and 'nostalgia')
(synonym "root shock")

"...the pain or sickness caused by the loss or lack of solace and the sense of isolation. It is the pain and ill health experienced when there is recognition that the place where one resides is under assault (physical desolation) and/or where there is an erosion of the sense of belonging (identity) to that place. It is an intense desire for the place where one is a resident to be maintained in a state that continues to give comfort or solace. In short, solastalgia is a form of homesickness one gets when one is still at 'home'."

Glenn Albrecht, in 'Solastalgia' A New Concept in Health and Identity

Social Cohesion/Belonging

“Belonging means being able to participate in the design of political, social, and cultural structures. Belonging is how do we actually organize our economy, our structures, our schools. Belonging means the right to contribute and make demands upon society and institutions.”



*john a. powell,
Director of the Haas Institute
for a Fair and Inclusive Society*

Health is in relationships – Health is in community

“A proper community is a commonwealth: It answers the needs, practical as well as social and spiritual, of its members - among them the need to need one another.” *The Art of the Commonplace*



Wendell Berry

Martin Luther King, Jr.



“An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity.”

Asking the Right Questions Can Advance Health Equity

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/chs/healthequity/>

Build Social Cohesion/Belonging/Social Justice

- *Are relationships being created and strengthened?*
- *Is it inclusive? Do people feel like they belong?*
- *Are you building social capital?*
- *Does everyone have the opportunity to thrive?*



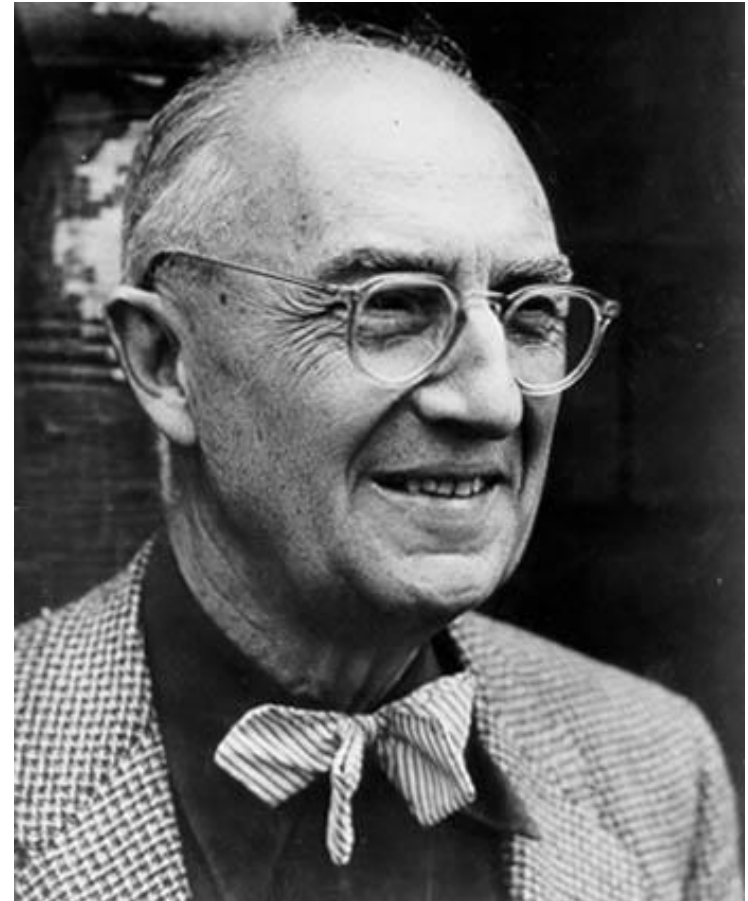
Give Light and People Will Find a Way To Build Community and Spread Joy



- Give light and people will find a way
Give light and people will find a way
Give light and people will find a way
People will find a way I do believe.
- Reach out and people will find a way
- Seek community and people will find a way

Poetry, Art, Dance, Music, and T'ai Chi Chih
are among the tools necessary to create a healthy and inclusive community.

*It is difficult
to get the news from poems
yet men die every day
for lack
of what is found there.*



William Carlos Williams, MD
"Asphodel, That Greeny Flower"

The Red Wheelbarrow
William Carlos Williams, 1883 - 1963

so much depends
upon

a red wheel
barrow

glazed with rain
water

beside the white
chickens.

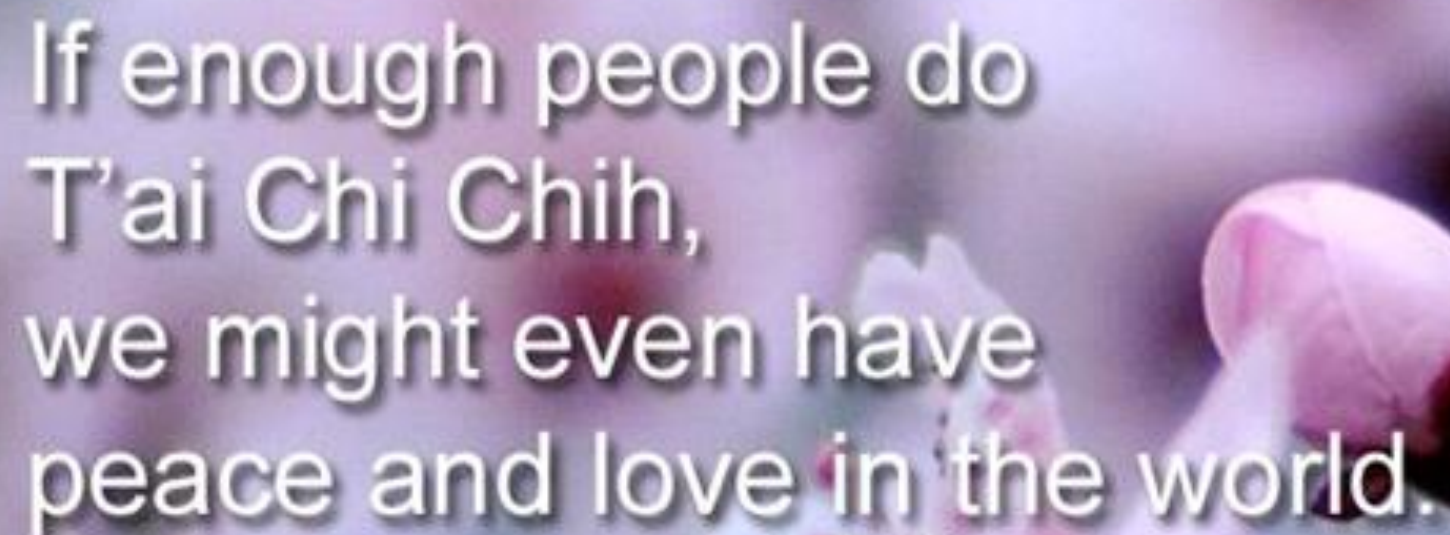


so much depends
upon

a cosmic consciousness
pose and a brass drum

glazed with joyous
breath

beside the bird flapping
its wings



If enough people do
T'ai Chi Chih,
we might even have
peace and love in the world.

Justin Stone, Originator

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Share Chi and People Will Find a Way