



SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY CHICAGO

BREAKFAST SPEAKER SERIES

Innovating to Advance Health Equity | February 2023

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted longstanding health disparities in Chicago and the need to leverage data, innovation, and partnerships to advance health equity. According to the Chicago Department of Public Health, there is a 9.2 year life expectancy gap between Black Chicagoans and non-Black Chicagoans. The gap widens even further when comparing specific neighborhoods, including a staggering 30 year life expectancy gap between Streeterville and Englewood just 9 miles south.

Our neighbors living in the lowest-resourced communities have higher rates of chronic conditions and less access to care and services to help prevent adverse health outcomes and address health needs. This cross-sector panel examined how we can work together to advance health equity and create positive change across Chicagoland.

TAKEAWAYS

On addressing the racial life expectancy gap

In Chicago, the largest contributors to the racial life expectancy gap are chronic disease, gun-related homicide, infant mortality, HIV/infectious disease (including COVID-19), and opioid overdose.

Healthy Chicago 2025 developed by the Chicago Department of Public Health in collaboration with stakeholders from across sectors, is Chicago's five-year plan to improve community health and reduce the life expectancy gap.

On partnering to address health disparities

The solutions to Chicagoland's most pressing challenges lie in our ability to work across sectors.

On the importance of building community trust

Community trust and co-development is a critical component of advancing health equity.

On harnessing the power of data and technology

Data and technology can help us understand where to focus, measure outcomes, and scale health equity efforts. As leaders, however, we need to take a thoughtful approach.



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PANELIST QUOTES, RESOURCES & LINKS

"The COVID-19 pandemic opened up this conversation about social inequities and social determinants of health in a way that made everyone recognize our interconnectivity.

Because of course, when any part of Chicago is unhealthy, that is a problem for us all."

- Dr. Allison Arwady,
Chicago Department of Public Health

"Algorithms can be biased. We have to be able to stress test those analytics.

That is one of the most important things that we do as leaders—making sure that we look closely at how we leverage analytics and where it's coming from."

- Dr. Garth Walker, RUSH Health

"We can go farther, and go deeper, and be more sustained in the work that we do if we do it together."

- Anna Lee,
United Way of Metro Chicago

"Building trust is imperative. At the Blue Door Neighborhood Center, we utilize listening sessions and surveys to hear directly from the community what they need and what they are looking for."

- Laron Taylor,
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois

To learn more about the work of our panelists, please visit:

- [Healthy Chicago 2025](#)
- [COVID-19 Impacts on Life Expectancy in Chicago, 2019-2020](#)
- [Chicago Health Atlas](#) (a publicly available database that fosters public participation in reviewing, exploring and comparing health-related data over time and across communities):
- [Blue Door Neighborhood Center](#) | Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois (bcbsil.com)
- [United Way of Metro Chicago](#) - Building Stronger Neighborhoods (liveunitedchicago.org)
- [2-1-1 Metro Chicago](#)
- [Office of Community Health Equity and Engagement | Rush System](#)

[Watch the full program here](#)