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Subject: TICN Special Edition *COVID-19 & Equity*



Special Edition

Like in the rest of the country and throughout the world, here in Fairfax we are seeing disparate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on communities where there is already heightened risk for health and social challenges. This special issue is dedicated to highlighting some of the work being done locally and regionally in response to the inequities that are being further exacerbated by the pandemic.

We have also shared some of our favorite links so that you can read more about ideas and solutions at the national level. As we consider the impact of this collective trauma on everyone in our community, and apply a trauma-lens to the response and recovery efforts underway and to come, we challenge all network members to bring equity into the conversation.



In a recent presentation to the Fairfax Community Provider Coordination Team- the team responsible for coordinating basic needs resource provision across community

based organizations in Fairfax- Chief Equity Officer Karla Bruce shared a summary of the preliminary work going on in the Fairfax community as it relates to applying an equity lens to COVID-19 response and recovery. Some of the key points she shared are outlined below:

"To effectively respond and recover, we must understand that we are only as healthy as those most vulnerable members of our community.

A targeted mitigation strategy focused on the populations and neighborhoods experiencing the most adverse health, economic and social effects/outcomes is necessary and must involve:

- Supporting the expanded availability of testing and treatment;***
- Engaging sector and community leaders to understand the unique situations facing residents most at risk;***
- Communicating with residents in various formats and in ways that are relevant to their life situations to ensure they have the information and resources necessary to protect themselves and their families;***
- Connecting residents to services and supports to mitigate the social and economic impacts; and***
- Fostering cross-sector partnerships, recognizing no single agency or sector can handle this complex situation alone."***

While COVID-19 is a health crisis, we know that health is tied to the conditions people live in, and the opportunities they have for housing, jobs, health insurance, education and more. The ONE Fairfax Policy was passed with the recognition that opportunity and vulnerability vary across Fairfax County. Before COVID-19, some communities in Fairfax were already in a state where poverty, unemployment, lack of access to healthcare and transportation, and other factors made people vulnerable. The pandemic exacerbates those vulnerabilities.



A Few Equity Implications of COVID-19

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There is a lot of work going on to support vulnerable community members in Fairfax. Some recent examples compiled by our Health Department regarding strategies to address the impact on the Hispanic and Latino Community include:

Aggressive outreach to immigrant communities using various county agencies and our network of community-based and faith-based organizations.

Continued work with the Virginia Department of Health and local healthcare organizations to expand COVID-19 testing at current sites and to encourage testing at additional sites to meet need. This includes working with the federally qualified health centers (HealthWorks of Northern Virginia and Neighborhood Health) and non-profit clinics to strategize on how testing capacity can be increased for vulnerable populations who may lack health insurance or a medical home. **This [DOCUMENT](#) includes a list of providers accepting new clients, and that accept uninsured clients.**

Last weekend, there were two testing events in the Bailey's and Annandale areas with the goal of performing up to 3,000 tests in these high-risk communities where we are seeing significant COVID-19 transmission. This coming weekend, testing events are planned along Richmond Highway and in Herndon. We will be working with our safety net healthcare providers to provide clinical follow-up for those who test positive and to link them to available county services as needed.

Fairfax County is partnering with the nonprofit homeless service providers and the community health centers to identify, shelter and support people who test positive for COVID-19. In addition, Fairfax County has secured contracts with three hotels and is working to expand to additional hotels to provide a safe location for residents who require self-isolation because of testing positive.

In addition to sheltering homeless individuals who have tested positive or who are at great risk due to age and underlying medical conditions, the hotel rooms are also now being used for sheltering vulnerable clients of the Community Services Board and the Department of Family Services affected by the pandemic, as well as families and individuals referred by the Federally Qualified Health Centers. Many patients referred are from immigrant communities, including Hispanic communities.

Fairfax County has created a COVID-19 language portal that features information and resources in several languages, including Spanish. We have made the translation functionality more prominent on our website. Our team is also exploring different options to support Spanish speakers including sending text alerts in Spanish and creating print pieces promoting these alerts. Recently, we launched a Spanish-only text service. Users can text FFXCOVIDESP to 888777 to get updates.

We are hosting ongoing town hall meetings with leaders with the League of United Latin American Citizens and other community leaders such as NovaSalud and Edu-Futuro to explore partnerships and new ways of reaching the Latino community.

Learn More: Equity and Social Justice During Coronavirus

From the Northern Virginia Health Foundation, a [COVID-19 Plan for Marginalized Communities](#)

Our partners at [George Washington University's Center for Community Resilience](#) continue to add to this growing list of [COVID-19 Community Response](#) resources highlighting programmatic and policy solutions for a variety of sectors along with communications resources for supporting vulnerable communities, providing a trauma-informed response, and much more.

From the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, a statement on [Thinking About Racial Disparities in COVID-19 Impacts Through a Science-Informed Early Childhood Lens](#)

Also from Harvard, a recent edition of the Brain Architects Podcast: [Creating Communities of Opportunity](#) covers how the pandemic is particularly affecting people of color in the United States.

[Talking About COVID-19: A Call for Racial, Economic, and Health Equity](#) from The Opportunity Agenda includes a [messaging tool for talking about race, racism and racial justice](#).

The Center for Urban and Racial Equity launched the [COVID-19 Equitable Response Community Commons](#), a hub featuring over 20 categories addressing anti-racism and stigma, policy demands and calls to action, mutual aid networks, testing and health care services, emergency financial assistance and more.

[Countering COVID-19 Stigma and Racism: Tips for Parents and Caregivers](#) from the National Association of School Psychologists includes PDFs in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

[10 Ways to Fight for Social Justice During the Coronavirus Pandemic](#) from Teen Vogue has lots of tangible resources to raise awareness and support communities in an accessible format for youth.

Irresistible (aka Healing Justice) podcast episode [Coronavirus: Wisdom from a Social Justice Lens](#) includes medical information, invocations, grounding practices and dialogue centering the wisdom and life experiences of people who live with chronic illnesses and disability.

During this unprecedented time, it is easy to feel overwhelmed by the challenges before us. The impact of the collective trauma of the pandemic on many in our community coupled with exacerbated inequities provides us with an opportunity though. An opportunity for each of us to contribute to building protective factors and resilience.

We have heard for years that being trauma-informed is changing the question from "what is wrong with you?" to "what happened to you?" This question still focuses on the individual though, and the latest resilience research is leading us in a different direction. While we can certainly all contribute to offering opportunities for individuals to build resilience, we know that folks do best when they are part of thriving families who live in thriving communities. We know that **risk factors** are not **predictive factors** because of **protective factors**. And we know that community well-being is improved by contextual resilience. Factors like community cohesion and collective efficacy- WE can do something together for the good of the community- are factors that can have a dramatic impact on health and social outcomes for everyone.

We very much look forward to *seeing* many of you at our June 2nd TICN meeting, and

hearing more about what you are doing to apply a trauma and equity lens to your work during this time.

Trauma-Informed Community Network
Tue, Jun 2, 2020 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (EDT)

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