Health Equity Rounds

Boston Medical Center

Department of OB/GYN

**GLOSSARY**

**Explicit Bias:** The attitudes and beliefs we have about a person or group on a conscious level, usually resulting from a perceived threat.

**Health Disparities:** Differences between the health of one population and another in measures of who gets disease, who has disease, who dies from disease, and other adverse health conditions that exist among specific population groups in the US.1

**Healthcare Disparities:** Differences among populations in access to or availability of facilities or services.2

**Health Equity:** The opportunity for everyone to attain his or her full health potential. No one is disadvantaged from achieving this potential because of his or her social position (i.e. class, socioeconomic status) or socially assigned circumstance (i.e. race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, geography, etc).

**Health Inequalities:** Differences in health status and mortality rates across population groups that are systemic, avoidable, unfair, and unjust. These differences are rooted in social and economic injustice, and are attributable to social, economic, and environmental conditions in which people live, work, and play.3

**Historical trauma:** a collective complex trauma inflicted on a group of people who share a specific group identity or affiliation4

**Implicit Bias:** Learned stereotypes and prejudices that operate automatically, and unconsciously, when interacting with others. Also referred to as unconscious bias. 5

**Institutional racism:** large organizations or governments that impose practices that negatively affect the access to health services, resulting in differences in the quality of healthcare for racial/ethnic minority groups.6

**Prejudice:** An unfavorable opinion or feeling formed beforehand or without knowledge, thought, or reason.

**Racism:** institutionally and state sanctioned practices that make designated groups of people vulnerable to harm and premature death8

**Reproductive justice:** human right to become pregnant, to avoid, end or prevent pregnancy, to parent children with dignity, free from violence from individuals and the state7

**Social Determinants of Health:** The circumstances in which people are born, grow, live work, play, and age that influence access to resources and opportunities to promotes health. The social determinants of health include housing, education, employment, environmental exposure, health care, public safety, food access, income, and health and social services. 3

**Stereotype:** A standardized mental picture that is held in common about members of a group that represents an oversimplified opinion, attitude, or unexamined judgment, without regard to individual difference.

**Structural racism:** systematic laws and processes used to differentiate access to services, goods, and opportunities in society by racial groups.5

1. Adapted from National Institutes of Health (NIH)
2. Adapted from Margaret Whitehead
3. Adapted from World Health Organization (WHO)
4. Adapted from Teresa Evans-Campbell
5. Adapted from John Powell
6. Adapted from Prather, C et al (2016). “The impact of racism on the sexual and reproductive health of African American women.” *J Women’s Health.* 25(7):664-671.
7. Adapted from Scott, K et al (2019). “The ethics of perinatal care for black women.” *J Perinat Neonat Nurs*. 33(2):108-115.
8. Adapted from Ruth Wilson Gilmore