



CALL TO ACTION: INVESTING IN BIPOC LEADERSHIP

*Developing Infrastructure  
for an Anti-Racist  
Health Department*

# Session Agenda

- *“Developing Infrastructure for An Anti-Racist Health Department: Louisiana’s Approach”*
  - Anthony James, Louisiana Department of Health
- *“Considering the Mouse Frees a Lion: DHH’s Health Equity Practices in EHE”*
  - Evan Thornburg, Philadelphia Department of Public Health
- Discussion/Q&A (25-30 minutes)



# Meet Our Speakers



Anthony James  
Louisiana Dept. of Health



Evan Thornburg  
Philadelphia Dept. of Public Health



# Developing Infrastructure for An Anti-Racist Health Department: Louisiana's Approach

Presented By: Anthony James, MS, MA, MSHCM

Deputy Director of Programs

Louisiana Office of Public Health, STI/HIV/Hepatitis Program

# Objectives:

1. Explain what are Louisiana Department of Health Office of Public STD/HIV/Hepatitis Program's SHHP's Mission, Vision and Values.
2. Provide background on SHHP's process to become an Anti-Racist Health Department.
3. Discuss how SHHP uses trauma-informed approaches internally and externally.



# SHHP's Mission, Vision and Values Background:

- × In the Spring of 2023, TCG surveyed both SHHP staff and partners, in order to:
  - + Better understand staff and partner perceptions of SHHP's new mission, vision, and values (MVV) statements, and
  - + Inform SHHP's community engagement priorities going forward
- × The survey collected both quantitative and qualitative data
- × The response rate was strong, including: 97 SHHP staff and 39 community partners
- × On the whole, community partners are more positive about SHHP's mission, vision, and values (MVV) statements and practices than SHHP staff
- × Overall, there is strong staff and community partner alignment that SHHP's new MVV statements are clear, aligned with community needs, and inspiring
- × Staff and partners identified shared areas for improvement for putting SHHP's MVV statements' in practice, including: a stronger focus on community and partner engagement and increased community awareness of SHHP programming
- × SHHP staff voiced a desire for better, more equitable, and more transparent pay and benefits

## SHHP MISSION

Our mission is to end the impacts of HIV, STI, and hepatitis by eliminating related health inequities and stigma for all communities in Louisiana.

## SHHP VISION

Louisiana is a place where new HIV, STI and hepatitis diagnoses are rare, all people have high-quality health care and treatment, are free from discrimination, and can achieve their full potential for health and well-being across their lifespan.

## SHHP VALUES

- Excellence - Our diversity drives our innovation and empowers us to be leaders in the national effort to respond to HIV, STIs, and hepatitis.
- Innovation - We push the status quo and pave the way both locally and nationally to create impact and change for the people of Louisiana
- Equity - We center the whole person, actively working to dismantle and respond to racist and heterosexist systems that drive HIV, STIs, and Hepatitis in Louisiana in our internal and external work.
- Trust - We are truth-tellers, using high-quality data for the public good with a focus on collecting and telling the stories behind the numbers and providing context.
- Dedication - We are always willing to go above and beyond by being present and by working together to achieve more as a team than individually.
- Collaboration - We have meaningful and genuine collaborations that allow us to center Louisiana communities and our partners who share our mission and vision.
- Community - Our work is driven by and for the people of Louisiana, ensuring health equity, and effective partnerships.



# How did we get here?

- In 2012, SHHP was one of eight health departments awarded a Care and Prevention in the United States (CAPUS) Demonstration Project.
- Jurisdictions were awarded based on the following criteria:
  - *Burden of illness.*
  - *Disproportionately affected areas.*
  - *Social determinants of health.*
- The primary project goals included:
  - Increase the proportion of racial and ethnic minorities with HIV who have diagnosed infection by expanding and improving HIV testing capacity, and
  - Optimize linkage to, retention in, and re-engagement with care and prevention services for newly diagnosed and previously diagnosed racial and ethnic minorities with HIV.

# What did we do?

- Increased HIV testing, linkage to, retention in, and re-engagement with care, treatment, and prevention
- Enhanced navigation services
- Used surveillance data and data systems to improve care and prevention
- Addressed social and structural factors directly affecting HIV testing, linkage to, retention in, and re-engagement with care, treatment, and prevention
- Worked trusted partners to develop trainings to understand structural systems that perpetuate health disparities.

# Trainings Developed?

- Undoing Racism
  - [PISAB – The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond](#)
- Deconstructing Homophobia, Transphobia and Heterosexism
  - [Center of Excellence for Transgender Health | Division of Prevention Science \(ucsf.edu\)](#)
- Destigmatizing Drug Use
  - [Trystereo | New Orleans Harm Reduction Network](#)

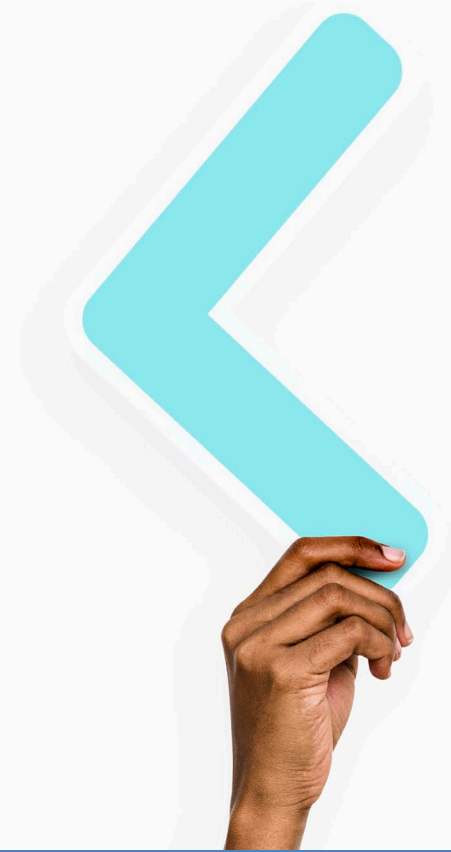
# How are these trainings used?

- Intended to provide a common analysis of these institutional forces and their impact on health.
- Intended to provide a common language.
- All staff (new and current) as well as community partners are required to attend each training.
- Concepts learned used to inform hiring of new staff both internally and externally to the Program.
  - *Why are people poor?*
  - *How do you view your role as a gatekeeper?*
- Other trainings supported by the Program:
  - NASTAD's Minority Leadership Program
  - Robert Wood Johnson Health Equity Fellowship

# Questions?

Anthony James, MS, MA, MSHCM  
Deputy Director of Programs

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# Considering the Mouse Frees a Lion: DHH's Health Equity Practices in EHE

Evan Thornburg (she/they), Health Equity Officer



# Equity Work

- **Health Equity Policy**
- **Equity mandates in RFPs**
- **Drafting and execution of health equity assessments for providers & grantees**
- **Execution of equity plans for grantees**
- **Cross collaborations and trainings on health equity with several PDPH departments and other jurisdictions (Maricopa, Harris, Fulton)**
- **Drafting and finalization of HIV Low Health Literacy Guide and training**
- **Ongoing All Staff Explored Identity Series conversations**
- **The Language Access Audit**
- **QIP reporting tracking efficacy of equity plans**
- **The Aging with HIV Interlocking Guides: Clinician Guide**
- **PLWH 50+ Focus Groups**



**RFPs,  
Assessments,  
Equity Plans,  
& QIPs**

**Compare and Contrast-  
ability**  
**Stimulating ongoing growth  
and competency**  
**Learning challenges and  
where to improve design**  
**Continual monitoring that  
builds long term  
accountability and  
sustainability**

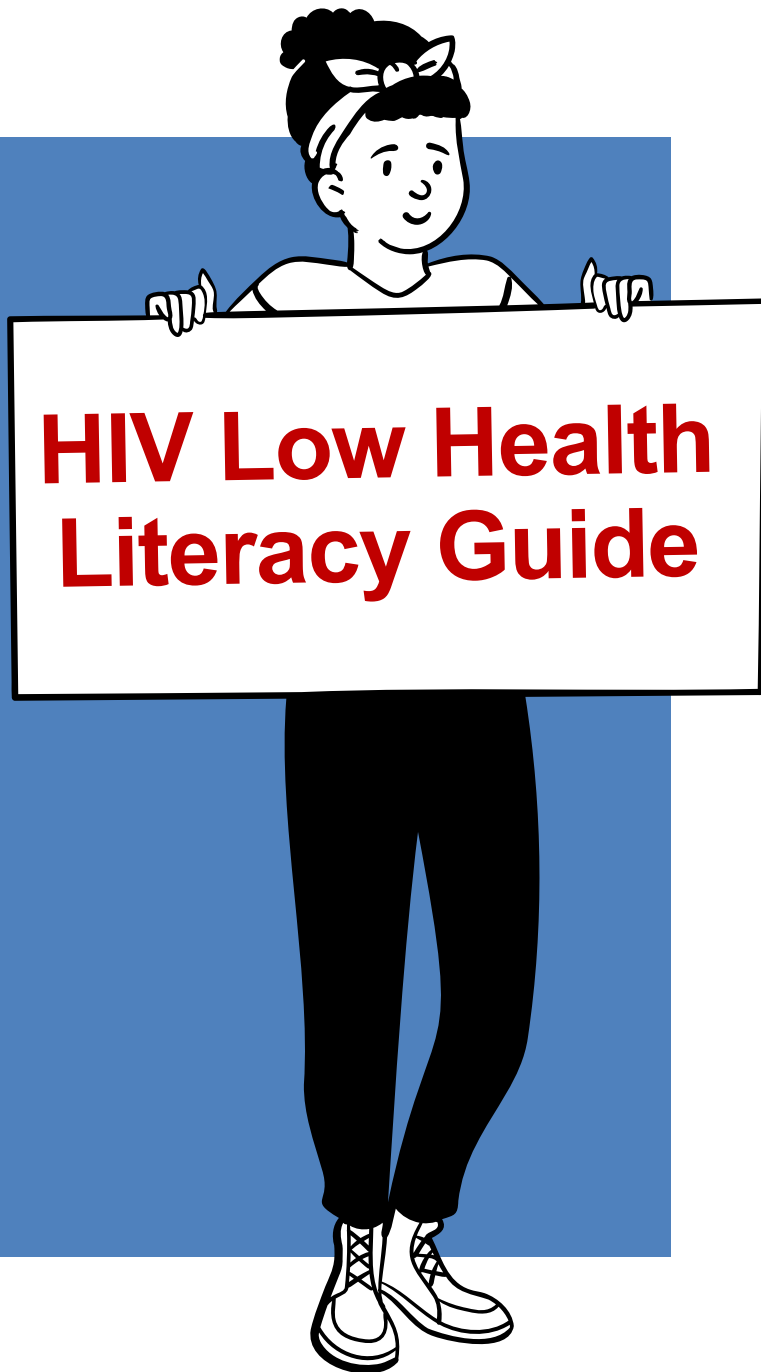
# DHH's Equity Policy

- **DHH Health Equity Values**
  - Principles we are committed to
  - Areas of advocacy
  - Collaboration and relationships
  - Provisions and resources that best reflect and support a myriad of identities and individuals
  - Addressing bias
  - Setting an example and leadership
- **Guidelines and Standards**
  - Specifics pertaining to execution of programs and initiatives
  - Competency goals
  - Equity and inclusion
  - Investment in the development and growth of diverse internal talent
  - Benchmarks, assessments, and evaluations
  - Data

# Explored Identity Series

- Raises the intersectional competency across DHH staff and leadership
- Learning about systemic and oppression-based barriers
- Creates a space to discuss and ask questions
- Workshops ways to address barriers that can then be collected and used foundationally for future projects
- Concrete to Conceptual

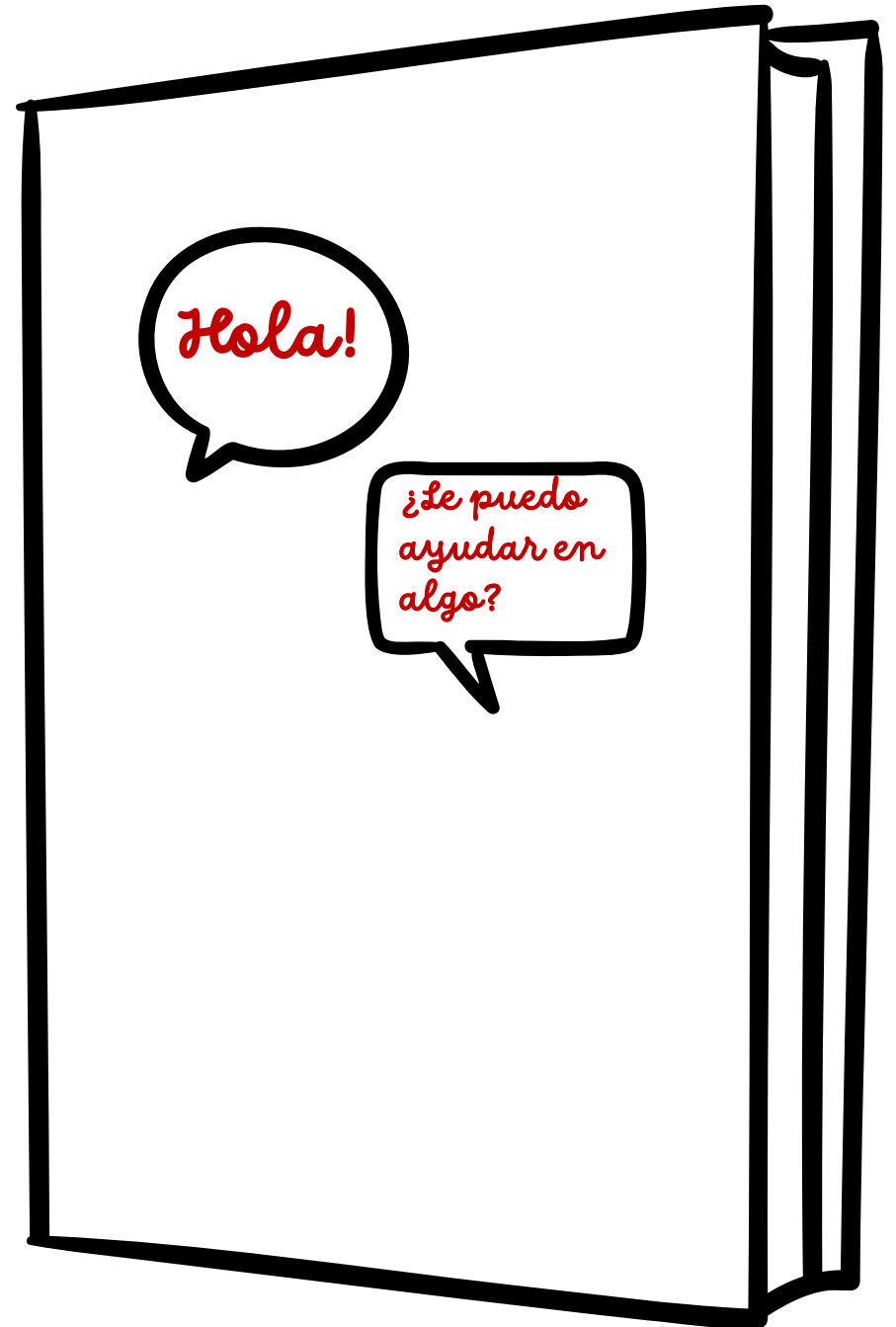




- Low health literacy greatly impacts consumers' ability to make decisions regarding their care, their consistency with care and medication adherence, and any necessary behavior adjustments.
- The Low HIV Health Literacy Guide is a collected set of standard best practices for clinical spaces to provide resources, diagnoses, case management, prescriptions, and care at a more universal literacy range for all consumers to best understand
- The guide includes:
  - **A quick HIV specific literacy, numeracy, and color perception test that can be given by any clinician**
  - **Standards for print and digital resource materials**
  - **Standards for verbal communication**
- DHH has a 1/1.5-hour training that teaches case managers and clinicians how to utilize the guide and what low literacy looks like

# Language Access Audit

- Concerns from ISU results
- Assessing experience – quality, dignity, respect
- Staff hiring – quality, authenticity, dignity, community centered
- Calls:
  - Spanish language
  - 65 providers
  - 4 calls to each provider, 4 different information requests/needs
  - Do not request or sign up for an appointment!
  - Do not stay on hold longer than 20 minutes
  - Use of a prepaid phone with nongovernmental number
  - Leave a message when offered with number for a call back
- Questions to be answered:
  - Can caller connect to a person with language needed?
  - Does reception staff know how to connect to a translator or bilingual staff person?
  - Are there Spanish options on automated lines? Where do they lead?
  - Is translation provided accurate?
  - Is translating person patient, kind, caring, helpful, knowledgeable?
  - Do messages left in Spanish get called back? When?
  - Do English speakers treat caller with respect, patience, and dignity?





# Language Access Audit: Key Findings

- **Phone Trees to Nowhere**
- **Reception Staff Lacking Patience & Knowledgeability**
- **Long Waits, Many Transfers**
- **Bad Attitudes**
- **Waiting....**
- **Bilingual Staff**



# Aging with HIV Interlocking Guides

- Frailty Index for PLWH – Weighted Cumulative Deficit Model
- Addresses Frailty, Comprehension, Health Disparities, Medication/Polypharmacy, Nutrition/Hydration, and Social Risks
- Provides best practices, assessments/evaluations tools, resources, and insights for non-geroscience trained clinicians in HIV



## What's on the Horizon?

- **Aging with HIV Interlocking Guides: Community Guide**
- **Aging with HIV support projects**
- **Language access improvement projects**



**Thoughts,  
Questions,  
Concerns?**



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## Session Evaluation



Please submit  
your feedback  
about the  
session here!



# THANK YOU!

