

Statement from
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Health disparities in San Francisco's communities are unacceptable and we must work to eliminate them. The mortality statistics revealed in the BARHII report reflect the cumulative burden of a lifetime of adverse social, economic, and environmental conditions for residents in the City's poorest neighborhoods. As health disparities are rooted in longstanding unequal social and environmental conditions, it will take a generation to meaningfully change these trends. Eliminating health disparities requires a response from almost every public institution. Every neighborhood needs and deserves the basic conditions for health: environments free of air pollution; safe and affordable housing; supermarkets with fresh produce; affordable, quality early childhood education; quality parks for exercise and recreation; public transportation that can take them conveniently to jobs and schools; safe street for walking and bicycling.

San Francisco has taken steps to address disparities. The City has taken national leadership on economic disparities through increasing its minimum wage, guaranteeing paid sick days, and securing health access for all its residents. Our Health Department's Prevention Plan explicitly targets root causes of health disparities as the focus for Department action and its Program on Health Equity and Sustainability has successfully brought a public health lens to the issues ranging from land use planning, transportation, food resources, and working conditions. The Healthy Development Measurement Tool now allows the City to track progress on over 80 community-level factors important to health.

San Francisco will do more to reduce the variation in life expectancy by neighborhood. The issues facing us range from housing and jobs to childcare and education. Central to all strategies are increasing the public's understanding of the environmental and social factors important to health, creating more ownership among all public agencies for the health of city residents, and supporting the cooperation needed among government, non-profits, and the private sector to design and implement change.