

# Transformational Community Engagement: Working With Community to Advance Health Equity

February 28, 2023

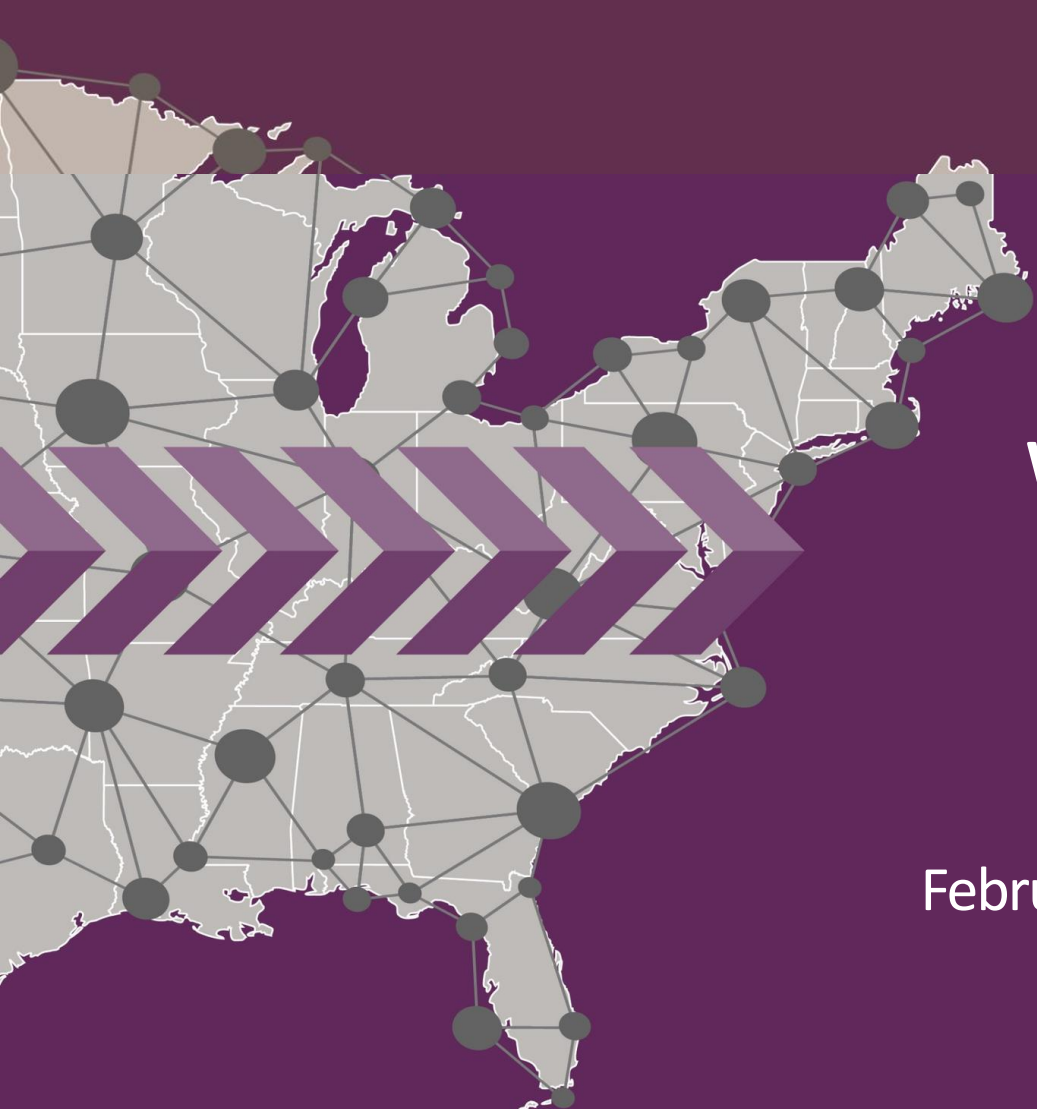
2:00 to 3:00 p.m. ET

*Please stand by, this webinar will begin shortly*

**STATE**  
Health & Value  
**STRATEGIES**

*Driving Innovation  
Across States*

*A grantee of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation*



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Health Equity Solutions

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# About State Health and Value Strategies

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State Health and Value Strategies (SHVS) assists states in their efforts to transform health and healthcare by providing targeted technical assistance to state officials and agencies. The program is a grantee of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, led by staff at Princeton University's School of Public and International Affairs. The program connects states with experts and peers to undertake healthcare transformation initiatives. By engaging state officials, the program provides lessons learned, highlights successful strategies, and brings together states with experts in the field. Learn more at [www.shvs.org](http://www.shvs.org).

**Questions?** Email Heather Howard at [heatherh@Princeton.edu](mailto:heatherh@Princeton.edu).

*Support for this webinar was provided by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.  
The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views of the Foundation.*

# About Health Equity Solutions

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Health Equity Solutions (HES) promotes policies, programs and practices that result in equitable health care access, delivery and outcomes for all people. HES works with State Health and Value Strategies (SHVS) to guide the program's health equity work generally while also providing targeted technical assistance to states. In partnership with state health officials and consumers, HES initiates and catalyzes policy programs and practices that advance and sustain health equity. HES is based in Hartford, Connecticut and focuses its work outside of the support it provides to SHVS on achieving health equity in Connecticut.

# Housekeeping Details

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All participant lines are muted. If at any time you would like to submit a question, please use the Q&A box.

After the webinar, the slides and a recording will be available at **[www.shvs.org](http://www.shvs.org)**.

# Agenda

- **Level-Setting: Key Terms**
- **The Spectrum of Community Engagement**
- **Strategies and Tactics**
- **State Spotlights**
  - Virginia
  - Colorado
- **Discussion**

# Level Setting: Defining Key Terms



“Community engagement” can describe a wide range of activities. Below is how SHVS defines key terms.

## Community Engagement

Collaborative processes between organizations/institutions and communities impacted by their policies, programs, or practices to influence decisions and actions through the mutually beneficial and bidirectional exchange of resources, expertise, and information.

## Outreach

Activities and processes related to raising awareness, disseminating information, or training external partners to connect their constituents or members with a service, program, or information (e.g., Medicaid enrollment services). Outreach is more one-sided, with a goal of conveying clear messages across diverse populations. Effective outreach is a part of strategic communication.

# Community Engagement and Health Equity



Community engagement is key to equity, but not equivalent to equity.

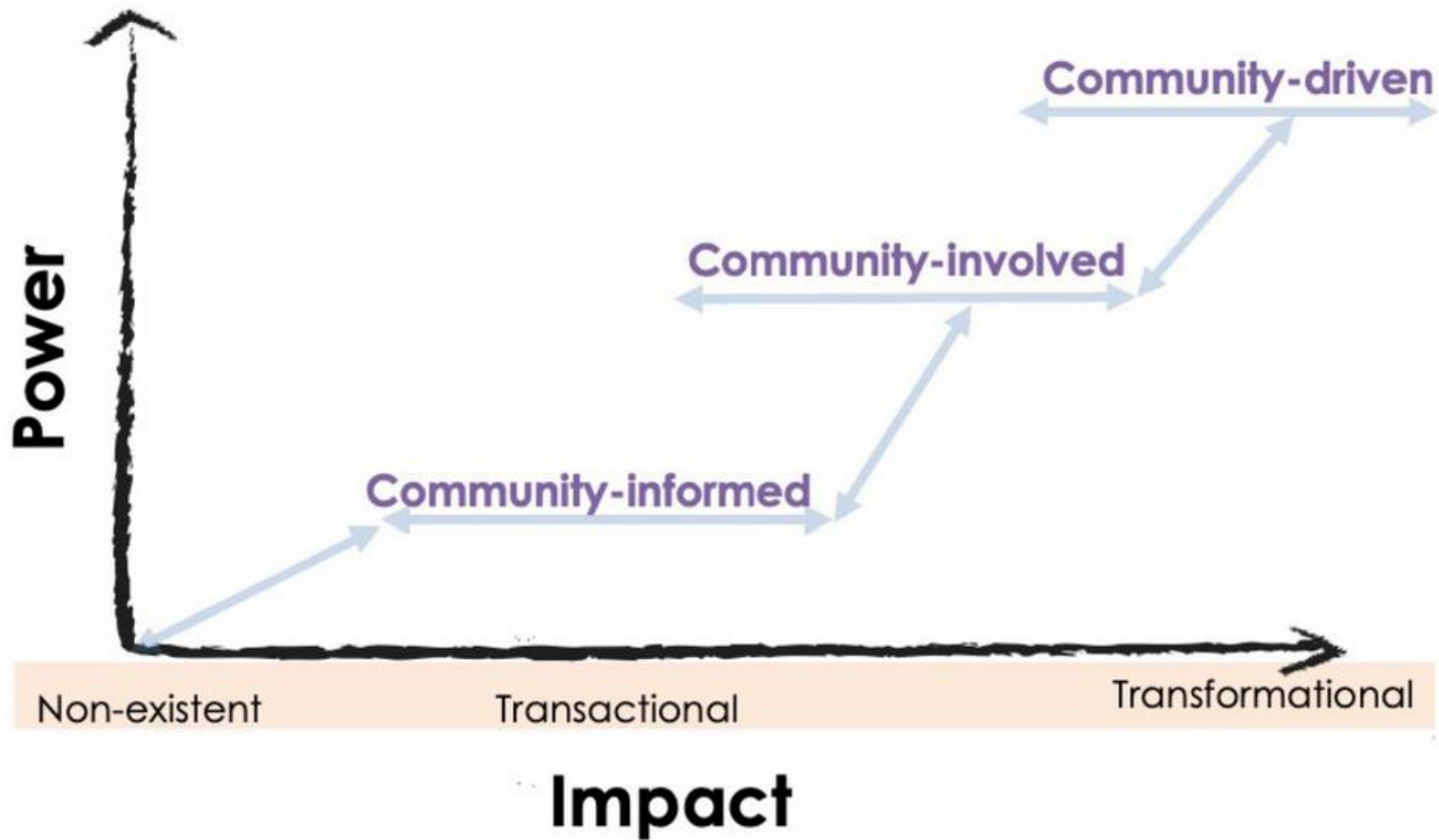
## Why?

- Fosters trust and mutual respect
- Helps break unforeseen or unintended barriers to health
- Improves efficacy by ensuring programs respond to the experiences of the people they impact

## How?

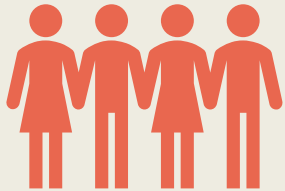
- Intentionally centers equity
- Diverse participants
- Addresses power dynamics

# The Spectrum of Engagement



# From Transactional to Transformational

## *Transactional Community Engagement*



- Engages communities through commentary on near-final products or narrow questions that are often characterized by single interactions
- Results in superficial changes to a policy or program that fails to meet community needs
- Few resources are required
- Results in minimal learning for the state
- Can cause fatigue among community partners and advocates, and devalues the feedback obtained

## *Transformational Community Engagement*



- Forms sustainable relationships
- Operates with transparency
- Results in changes to policies and/or practices
- Engagement includes, but is not limited to, participants learning how their input was or was not incorporated and why
- Requires time, organizational commitment, resources, and readiness

# Understanding Impact

## *Transactional Community Engagement*



- Checking a box
- Narrow engagement
- Seeking input on near-final product
- Results in superficial or technical change

*Challenges: may lead to community fatigue, lack of trust*

## *Transformational Community Engagement*



- Sustainable relationships
- Transparency and "feedback loop"
- Results in cultural and structural change

*Challenges: resource intensive, requires institutional commitment and readiness*

# Understanding Power

## ***Minimal Power Sharing:***



- Ignores differences in power
- Addressing power is beyond the engagement's scope of purpose
- Otherwise known as community outreach

*Examples: presentations, brochures, educational materials, media, public events*

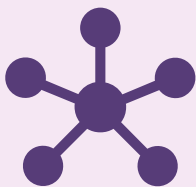
## ***Some Power Sharing:***



- Recognizes power dynamics without fully addressing them
- The agency works with communities and trusted messengers to align the needs of the community
- Community knowledge and expertise is recognized

*Examples: Community focus groups, surveys, advisory councils, or workgroups*

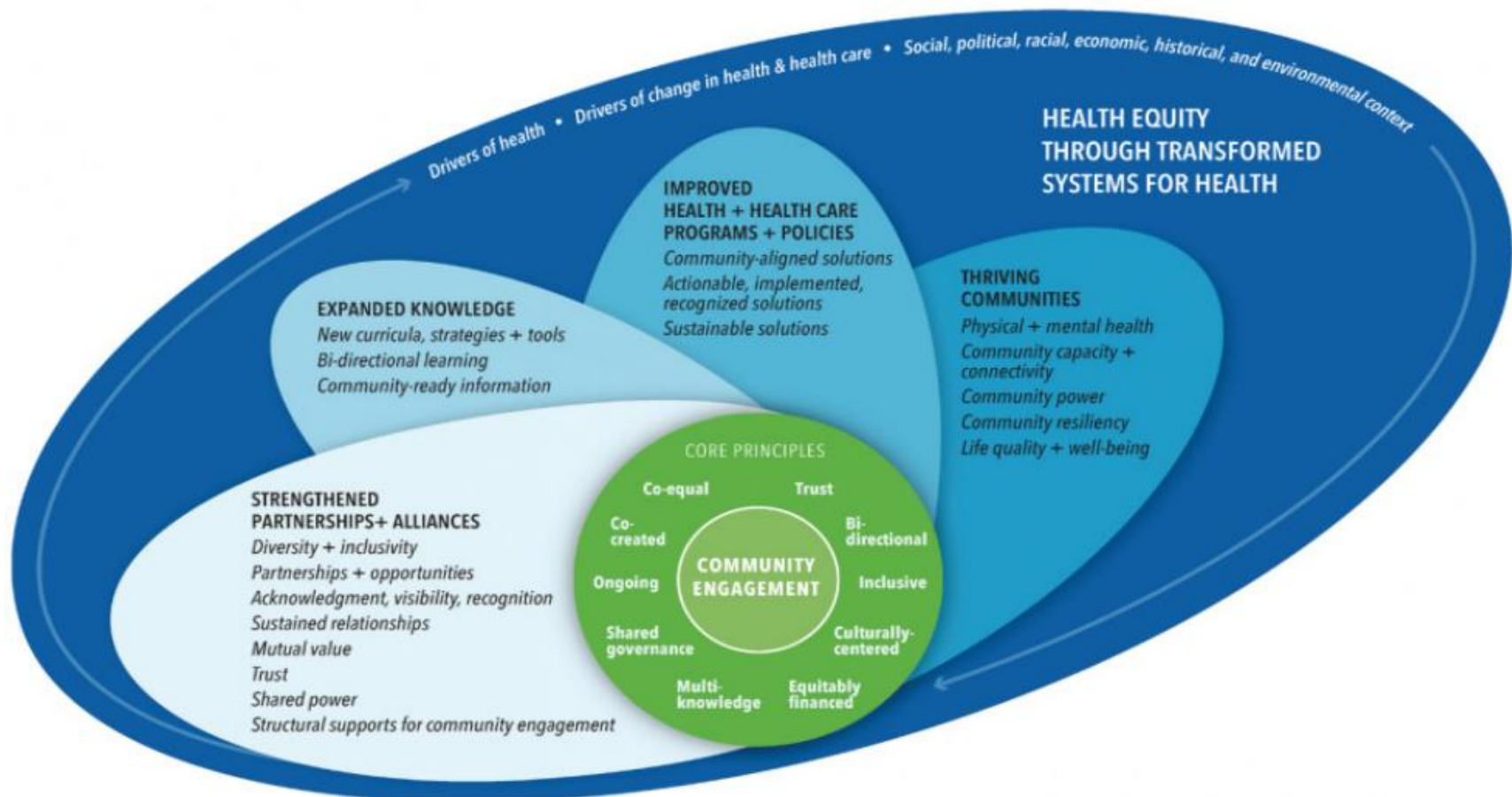
## ***Maximal Power Sharing:***



- Acknowledges traditional power dynamics by enacting processes to diminish power imbalances
- Community voices are recognized, treated as experts and lead the agenda
- Community members collaborate to form ideas and prioritize issues

*Examples: Community-based participatory research and budgeting, democratic processes, robust consumer advisory boards, and building consensus*

# Planning and Evaluation



Assessing Meaningful Community Engagement: A Conceptual Model to Advance Health Equity through Transformed Systems for Health. NAM Perspectives. Commentary, National Academy of Medicine. 2022. <https://doi.org/10.31478/202202c>

# Strategies and Tactics

## Strengthened Partnerships & Alliance



### Strategies:

- Offer financial/non-financial support and benefits to participants and community-based organizations (CBOs) that reflect and meet their needs
- Consider making external stakeholder councils; councils or subcommittees comprised exclusively of individuals with lived experience vs. spaces that include providers, advocates, and stakeholders

### Tactics:

- Conduct a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis to evaluate the relationship with the community/consumer and elevate which communities are missing engagements
- Clearly communicate financial support and agency investment in community engagement infrastructure

## Expanded Knowledge



### Strategies:

- Develop culturally centered and linguistically responsive approaches to the creation, dissemination, and delivery of information
- Recognize communities as experts on their own needs and acknowledge learning is bidirectional; leverage learnings to shift practices

### Tactics:

- Establish an agency community engagement plan that is reviewed annually and community informed at a minimum, ideally community-driven
- Include knowledge building as a function of all engagement initiatives and adequately prepare members for participation in councils or other engagement conversations

# Strategies and Tactics

## Improve Health & Healthcare Programs & Policies



### Strategies:

- Elevate community-defined problems and develop cooperatively defined metrics of success to evaluate engagement initiatives
- Advance alignment between health and social services

### Tactics:

- Require all agency staff to participate in cultural humility training
- Publicly create, update, and disseminate a community feedback tracker

## Thriving Communities



### Strategies:

- Collect accessible, high-quality demographic data
- Share power and resources with communities vs. simply acknowledging community power and expertise

### Tactics:

- Assess community engagement efforts by determining what success looks like from both organizational and community perspectives
- Ensure community engagement results in change and communicate measurables and timebound goals to participants



## State Spotlights

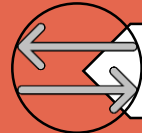
# Virginia's Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS)



## Highlights:



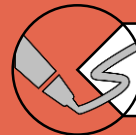
Staff resources



Cross-agency workgroup



Executive leadership dedicates time to the  
Member Advisory Committee (MAC)



MAC issues logged



Recruit diverse members



Recognize participation

# Colorado's Department of Health Care Policy & Finance (HCPF)



## Highlights:

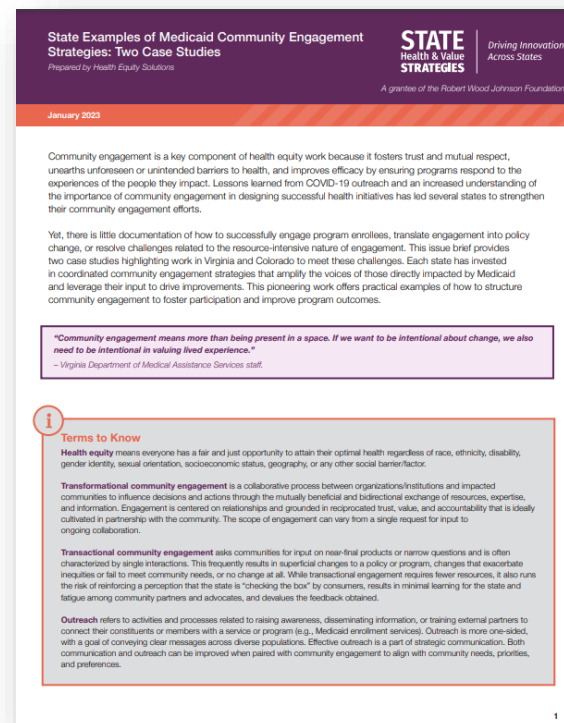
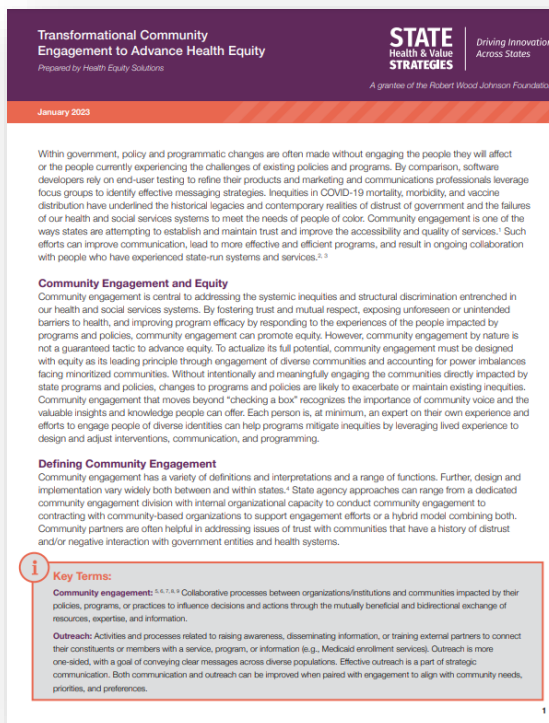
-  Collaboration to teach people with limited ELP
-  Compensate CBOs
-  MAC ongoing evaluations
-  Map member experience
-  Specialized maternity MAC
-  Recognize participation
-  Emotional support for members

# SHVS Resources



For more information on transformational community engagement, see two recently published issue briefs:

- [Transformational Community Engagement to Advance Health Equity](#)
- [State Examples of Medicaid Community Engagement Strategies: Two Case Studies](#)



# Discussion

The slides and a recording of the webinar will be available at [www.shvs.org](http://www.shvs.org) after the webinar

# Thank You

**Karen Siegel**  
Director of Policy  
Health Equity Solutions  
ksiegel@hesct.org

**Tekisha Everette**  
Principal and Founder  
TDE Consulting Group  
tekisha@tdeverette.com

**Daniel Meuse**  
Deputy Director  
State Health and Value Strategies  
dmeuse@princeton.edu

**Heather Howard**  
Director  
State Health and Value Strategies  
heatherh@princeton.edu