There is ample evidence that indicates disparities in care delivery and outcomes persist even at the point of care, regardless of your community demographics. Leveraging both quantitative and qualitative data to prioritize identity and address disparities in your patient populations.

Beyond the many moral and mission-based arguments for equitable care are the financial benefits in advancing equity, no matter your payment model. Reducing disparities in your patient population simultaneously improves care quality and efficiency. It also increases the community’s perception of trust in your organization.

Diversifying your workforce to match community demographics is important. But it will take years (if not decades) to achieve workplace diversity and it alone won’t eliminate disparities. Improvement in workplace diversity has to be paired with efforts to address the root determinants of health that contribute to disparities at the point of care, and change community conditions caused by structural inequities.

A focus on race is important for advancing health equity given the deeply rooted legacies of racism worldwide. But it’s not enough.

Concentrating on race alone won’t eliminate black spots across other identity groups because people hold multiple identities. Take a systems-based approach to identify groups most at risk of experiencing disparities.

Patient comfort is key. Make sure patients know why certain information is important for their care. Patients are usually comfortable answering questions if they understand why certain information is important for their care. They are well positioned to address any discomfort they feel.

All staff, regardless of title, must take ownership of health equity initiatives at your organization because each department has a role to play.

Leaders have an outsized responsibility to set an example for their teams and contribute to a culture where all employees are both the be the change they want to see. Even the most advanced equity initiatives are everyday jobs.

While health care organizations can’t address all of their patients’ social needs overnight, they are well positioned to address some needs.

You can make an enterprise-wide commitment to provide in some cases services and establish strong partnerships with community organizations to fill gaps. Enhancing equity is a major undertaking, but even small steps are a good start.