

Maine's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), also known as Community Health Centers (CHCs), make up the largest, independent primary care network in the state, providing high quality and accessible primary and preventive medical, behavioral, and dental health services. Across the state, FQHCs are employers, providers, and partners of choice in the communities they serve.

What is Health Equity?

Health equity means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be healthier. This requires addressing obstacles to health such as poverty, discrimination, powerlessness, lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, substandard education and housing, and unsafe environments.

Addressing health equity is at the foundation of the Community Health Center movement. The official establishment of health centers was born from the civil rights movement of the 1960s, when the Office of Economic Opportunity established "neighborhood health centers" as a War on Poverty demonstration program. The aim of these clinics was to provide access points to health and social services and to serve as a mechanism for community empowerment.

Health Equity in Action

Now more than ever, FQHCs are being called on to meet the diverse and growing needs of vulnerable populations and those seeking patient-centered care close to home. FQHCs' ability to address a wide range of primary care issues, from dental to behavioral health, while also understanding and responding to Social Drivers of Health (SDOH), makes them **a crucial part of the nation's healthcare infrastructure and a leader in efforts to address inequities in health care delivery.**

Social Drivers of Health



FQHCs throughout Maine provide innovative services that directly respond to the needs of their patient populations. **Programs at each FQHC may vary, but the intent is the same: to build stronger, healthier communities throughout the state.** This can include:

- Care Coordination & Case Management
- Educational Resources
- Emergency Funds
- Emergency Shelter
- Employment Programs
- Food Pantry & Meals
- Permanent & Transitional Housing
- Heating Assistance
- Health Education
- Outreach & Enrollment
- Nutrition Assistance
- Translation & Interpretation
- Transportation