



# NJ SOPHE - New Jersey Society for Public Health Education

NJ SOPHE is committed to promoting healthy behaviors, healthy communities, and healthy environments through our focus on prevention and public health education.

## Improving Health Equity to Improve the Health of New Jersey

### What is health equity?

The term **health equity** is both a value and a goal. It suggests everyone has an **equal opportunity** to live the healthiest life possible. Many elements influence the potential for health in a community such as access to healthy food choices, stable housing, clean air and water, etc. (see graphic below).

**Health disparities** occur when some people do not have access to the same opportunities and resources as others. Achieving health equity requires eliminating barriers, promoting the elements of a healthy community, and creating an environment that promotes health for all.

Social and economic factors such as **education, employment, income, social support, and community safety** have a significant impact on health status.

Certain groups experience **greater obstacles to achieving health**, and therefore, efforts to eliminate disparities must be targeted to benefit these marginalized groups.



**37% of NJ households are either living in poverty or considered ALICE** (asset limited, income constrained, employed), which means they struggle to afford basic living costs. (ALICE Report 2016)



**23% of NJ households report severe housing problems**, including overcrowding, high housing costs, or lack of kitchen or plumbing supplies. (CHRR 2018)



**10.3% of NJ residents are considered food insecure**, which means they lack access to enough food to live healthy lives. This rate is as high as **17.1% in certain areas**. (FeedingAmerica.org)



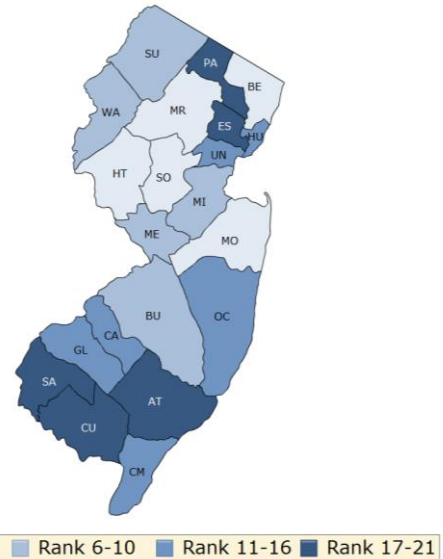
**10% of NJ residents are uninsured**, but this rate is as high as 15% in some counties. (CHRR 2018)

**Resources in this brief can help you better understand the drivers which impact your communities' ability to lead healthier lives and to inform efforts to improve health equity.**

\*The Elements of a Healthy Community wheel was designed and produced by Vitalyst Health Foundation in collaboration with community partners. The elements are inspired by the work of the World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. To learn more, please visit [LiveWellAZ.org](http://LiveWellAZ.org)

## How does your county compare?

- Each year, the County Health Rankings Report ranks the overall health of NJ communities. Less color indicates better performance.
- The health of communities in NJ varies considerably from one end of the state to the other and between counties.
- Even within counties with higher rankings, some areas have poor health outcomes, and therefore also need to implement policies and practices to improve health equity.



Ranking based on health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors, and the physical environment. For more information, go to [countyhealthrankings.org](http://countyhealthrankings.org)

## What can Legislators do?

- ✓ Examine legislation with a wider lens and use a social determinants of health perspective.
- ✓ Engage with a broad network of stakeholders representing diverse communities.
- ✓ Champion health equity in our state and local laws including legislation on transportation, housing, health, education, economic development, access to healthcare, food access, planning, and zoning.
- ✓ Learn more about reducing health inequity in New Jersey.
  - ALICE REPORT on NJ/United Way: [www.unitedwaynj.org/ourwork/alice\\_nj.php](http://www.unitedwaynj.org/ourwork/alice_nj.php)
  - NJ County Health Rankings: [www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings)
  - Robert Wood Johnson Foundation: [www.rwjf.org/en/library/features/achieving-health-equity.html](http://www.rwjf.org/en/library/features/achieving-health-equity.html)

## How can NJ SOPHE help?

Policy	Data Collection	Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and support evidence-based policies and programs that fit the needs of each community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect data, evidence, guidance, and stories to guide communities from awareness to action</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop educational materials for legislators, organizations, and community members</li> </ul>

## About NJ SOPHE

### ~150 members who work across the state in:

- Local and State government
- Community and non-profit agencies
- Health care facilities
- Businesses
- Universities
- Schools

**Est. 1984**

Providing support to health education professionals for over three decades.

### Contact Us

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