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LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPT. OF PUBLIC HEALTH HONORED FOR ITS EXCELLENCE BY CALIFORNIA'S LARGEST HEALTH FOUNDATION

LOS ANGELES (December 5, 2019) – The California Endowment announced at a December 3rd ceremony in Oakland that the [Los Angeles County Department of Public Health](#) was the recipient of the [2019 Advancing Health Equity Awards](#) Exemplary Health Equity Practice Award for their transformational journey to build health equity and embrace racial justice which resulted in their launching of the [Center for Health Equity](#). Eight public health departments and health human service agencies from across California were honored by The Endowment at the December 3rd ceremony for their work that goes beyond the traditional scope of public health to positively impact the health of poor and marginalized communities.

“Bringing health equity to all Californians requires public health departments to think outside of traditional medical interventions and practices to reduce and eradicate health disparities experienced by California’s poor and marginalized communities,” said Anthony Iton, MD, JD, MPH, senior vice president, The California Endowment. “Los Angeles County Department of Public Health’s partnerships to integrate and amplify community voice on a range of issues impacting health are central to creating health equity.”

Launched in 2014 by The Endowment, the *Advancing Health Equity Awards* are meant to bring attention to and reward public health department practices that can inform and inspire the future work of others committed to improving health equity. This year’s awards ceremony at The California Endowment’s Oakland conference center featured a fireside chat with California’s Surgeon General Nadine Burke Harris.

“Understanding the science of toxic stress is an important addition to all the work we are doing on health equity,” said California Surgeon General Nadine Burke Harris. “Because when we deploy all the science and resources that we have, including all of the resources of health care to be part of the solution, that gets us to achieving a health equity agenda faster and more effectively.”

A complete description of the award is below:

- **Exemplary Health Equity Practice Award** was given to the [Los Angeles County Department of Public Health](#) (LACDPH) for their transformational journey to build health equity and embrace racial justice that resulted in their launching of the [Center for Health Equity](#). The Center seeks to increase LACDPH’s competency and capacity to engage in sustained equity work, amplify community voice and authentic narratives to drive action, and support community to engage in efforts to eliminate inequities, among other objectives. Starting internally, LACDPH created “Just Culture” which challenges their hierarchal power dynamics, views system issues and behavioral choices as interconnected, and encourages responses to problems to be led with fairness and kindness. These principles also drove their response to concerns about the [Exide battery recycling plant’s lead contamination](#) of surrounding communities. Through their partnership with community-based organizations, LACDPH and community members were able to engage the affected communities to call for a strong regulatory response to address the lead contamination across thousands of homes.

“We need to address issues of racism and disproportionality. We need to put additional resources into communities that have not been given their fair share and we need to be willing to fight for justice and join other movements for justice,” said Megan McClaire, Chief of Staff, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. “This is really about democracy, respect and lifting up *all* voices.”

Click [here](#) to view and download a photo of Megan McClaire and Heather Jue Northover accepting the award.

Photo caption: Megan McClaire and Heather Jue Northover of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health accept the Advancing Health Equity Award at a Dec. 3 ceremony in Oakland, CA. Photo courtesy of The California Endowment.

About The California Endowment

The California Endowment, a private, statewide health foundation, was established in 1996 to expand access to affordable, quality health care for underserved individuals and communities, and to promote fundamental improvements in the health status of all Californians. Headquartered in downtown Los Angeles, The Endowment has regional offices in Sacramento, Oakland, Fresno and San Diego, with program staff working throughout the state. The Endowment challenges the conventional wisdom that medical settings and individual choices are solely responsible for people's health. The Endowment believes that health happens in neighborhoods, schools, and with prevention. For more information, visit The Endowment's Web site at www.calendow.org.

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