SAN FRANCISCO 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 San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) was the recipient of the *2019 Advancing Health Equity Awards* Exemplary Health Equity Practice Award for its Black African American Health Initiative and its efforts to improve outcomes for specific health conditions for the County's underserved black communities. 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. "San Francisco Department of Public Health's efforts to improve African American health and address racism and cultural bias within SFDPH really stood out as practice worth replicating to help bring health equity to marginalized communities."

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 San Francisco Department of Public Health for its Black African American Health Initiative, which is a series of workgroups with specific goals on improving outcomes for specific health conditions for San Francisco's underserved, black communities, most notably hypertension and chlamydia. The hypertension workgroup efforts resulted in closing the gap between Black/African American blood pressure control from 8 percent to 3 percent in four years. Through its cultural humility workgroup, intensive training to normalize discussion on racism among SFDPH leadership resulted in the implementation of racial equity teams, councils and committees across SFDPH. Last year, their efforts to address racism and cultural bias rebranded itself as the Equity Governing Council to formally institutionalize equity practices and embed them across SFDPH.

"The Black African American Health Initiative was instituted because the department recognized that we had really large, significant gaps in health indicators for the Black African American population," said Ayanna Bennett, Director,

Office of Equity, San Francisco Department of Public Health. "It was clear that what was really missing was a lack of infrastructure within the department to deal with the underlying issues of racism and health equity."

Click here to view and download a photo of Ayanna Bennett of the San Francisco Department of Public Health's Office of Equity accepting the award.

Photo caption: Ayanna Bennett, Director, Office of Equity, San Francisco Department of Public Health, accepts 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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