In 2021, the Connecticut Dental Health Partnership (CTDHP) underwent a year-long effort to develop a Health Equity Plan to assess, design and develop interventions to improve the oral health equity of the HUSKY Health member population. It is at that time that Awilda Maldonado, CTDHP'S Health Equity Officer, joined the Connecting to Care CLAS Cohort for support on Health Equity Planning and Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) standard implementation. The knowledge and support acquired during the cohort and the use of the Connecting to Care CLAS toolkit were an integrated part to the development of CTDHP's first Oral Heath Equity Plan and organizational CLAS assessment. At this time, CTDHP also conducted its first member survey to HUSKY Health members to learn about their experiences receiving dental services. The results from the survey were integrated in the 2021 Oral Health Equity Plan to address ways to improve member experiences and reduce oral health disparities. Since then, a third and newly released 2023 Oral Health Equity Plan and Member Survey have been published. The report outlines the disparities and intervention strategies for five population groups. You can view the Oral Health Equity Plan and Member Survey Report here: ctdhp.org/newreports.

CTDHP continued with its commitment of meeting the Enhanced National CLAS Standards by integrating CLAS into their program design and delivery. A CLAS and Americans with Disability Act (ADA) quality assurance processes is applied to all HUSKY Health member facing content and online communications. This process allows their content to be sensitive to the visual disability barriers their members face, in plain language and imagery that represents the diverse HUSKY Health population they serve. Understanding the needs of other health organizations in this area, a CLAS/ADA compliance accessibility guide was also developed to assist organizations with helpful tips on how to design direct to member collateral in PowerPoint presentations, Excel, Word, online and printed materials that meet CLAS/ADA Standards. The CLAS/ADA guide can be found at: About Us - HUSKY Dental (ctdhp.org)

CTDHP has received further support from SEET Consultants, LLC and consultation from Connecting to Care CLAS to provide CTDHP's staff Cultural Competency training to increase their knowledge and awareness of an inclusive culture to better serve their diverse members. To further assist in the delivery of high-quality care and achievement of good health outcomes for the HUSKY Health population, Awilda is currently leading the implementation of a CLAS/ADA Training for Dental Health Professionals at CTDHP. Awilda became a CLAS Ambassador and co-chair in 2021 for the Connecting to Care CLAS/Health Equity Learning Community in Region 4 to assist organizations on CLAS and Health Equity Planning.

If you would like to contact Awilda Maldonado, Connecticut Dental Health Partnership's Health Equity Officer, you can do so at; awilda.maldonado@ctdhp.com and 860.507.2338.