

Taking Health Inequity Head On



Last week, CCSI participated as a facilitator and panelist at the [NYAPRS Collective: 14th Annual Executive Seminar](#), “New Strategies and Partnerships to Support the Most Challenged New Yorkers: The Way Forward.” [New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services, Inc. \(NYAPRS\)](#) provides assistance to organizations to successfully engage in culture change in the best interest of those individuals they serve, aiding in the movement of those organizations to become “exemplary recovery-based

service providers, increasing opportunities for participants to grow and recapture valued community roles.” The seminar, brought together leadership from the health and human services system across New York State.

[Lenora Reid-Rose](#), Director of the CCSI Cultural Competence and Health Literacy (CCHL) Team

facilitated a robust and engaging panel dialogue --“Taking Health Inequity Head On,” during which she framed the conversation on how the combination of public policy, institutional practices and other social and economic structures perpetuate inequity between people of different ethnic groups. Dr. Bruce Smedley, Co-founder and Executive Director of the [National Collaborative for Health Equity](#), highlighted how racism results in inequities that negatively impact health outcomes – specifically for people of color/racial minorities and vulnerable populations, like individuals contending with poverty. He connected the dots for the audience on housing as a social determinant of health and how it impacts health outcomes for individuals of color.

This was followed by a dialogue with panelists, **Nancy Sung Shelton, CCSI Sr. Consultant for Cultural Competence and Health Literacy** and Chacku Mathai, President and CEO of the Mental Health Association of Rochester, who responded to Dr. Smedley’s presentation from their personal and professional perspectives on how racism, poverty and inequality limits access to care and the need for services that are culturally relevant and appropriate. The panelists also expressed how systemic and structural racism inhibits the well-being and recovery of racial minorities, producing lifelong challenges – and how service providers are often challenged to effectively integrate the cultural nuances of the consumers / patients into their care process. This includes addressing the social determinants of health that support or strain the achievement of wellness and improvements in quality of life.

To support organizations working to address these challenges, CCSI’s Cultural Competence and Health Literacy Team provides an array of consultation and technical assistance aimed at helping to integrate a

focus on CCHL into an organization's fabric and practices. To learn more CCSI's work in this area, [click here](#).

