



POLICY FORUM

From Here to There— With a Spring in Our Steps

Introduction

Over eight months in 2019, scores of scholars, practitioners, advocates, community leaders, and just plain people like you and I, excited and yearning for change, met to set a path to a healthier, safer, and more equitable North Carolina. The result, a report called “Healthy North Carolina 2030,” was published by the North Carolina Institute of Medicine and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services in January 2020. This report set targets for improving 21 health indicators related to social and economic factors, the physical environment, access to clinical care, health behaviors, and health outcomes.

This path is personal. Every one of us has been touched, or knows someone who has been touched, by one or more of these indicators. Every one of us knows of the challenges and sorrows of succumbing to, or the joys and successes of overcoming, one of more of these factors that affect our well-being for worse or better.

Over the next year, the *North Carolina Medical Journal* will share data, analysis, lessons learned, challenges faced, and aspirations for improving the 21 indicators selected as achievable in the next 10 years to improve the well-being of all North Carolinians.

Those familiar with Healthy People USA, the federal 10-year plans released each decade since 1990, may recognize some of Healthy NC 2030’s measures and recommendations. Unlike its look-a-likes, though, all of Healthy NC 2030’s indicators are state-specific, and they focus explicitly on closing the racial health equity gap.

We hope that by sharing the voices of researchers, clinicians, policy makers, and community members working toward these goals in the pages of this journal, we will encourage more North Carolinians from all sectors to work together to make a difference in our shared well-being using the roadmap laid out by Healthy NC 2030. We begin with a focus on the social and economic factors that influence health in our state. As you read, your personal connection to—and influence on—these factors may surprise you. NCMJ

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