PRINCIPLE 4: Ensure Health, Rights, Justice and Wellness for All Communities.

A person’s health should never depend on who they are, how much money they have, or where they live. Every person has the human right to quality health care, and no individual or community should be left behind. All individuals should have the chance to live safe, healthy lives and be free to determine their own paths, including if, when, and how to create a family. All individuals should also be able to raise and care for children with dignity and freedom from violence, discrimination, or denial of our human rights and needs.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights are inextricably linked to economic justice, voting rights, immigrants’ rights, LGBTQ+ liberation, disability justice, and the right to community safety and racial equity. True health and wellness will only be achieved by making progress throughout complex and interrelated systems and by addressing societal, environmental, and social factors that impact people’s health. For too many in these communities, a broad range of barriers interfere with their health, including inadequate wages, stigma, discrimination, lack of affordable housing, safe and affordable water and sanitation, transportation, lack of paid leave, lack of childcare, and the threat of criminalization, detention and deportation.

All policy proposals should center the experiences of people with low incomes, women, immigrants, people of color, adolescents and youth, LGBTQ+ people, Indigenous peoples, people living in the Global South, people with disabilities, and people living with HIV, among others.

Policymakers must foster economic opportunity for all families.

If young people encounter an inadequate school system, a toxic environment, or racial or gender bias, it will be much harder for them to achieve intellectual, economic, and overall societal gains. If a caretaker lives in a community with an insufficient amount of jobs, particularly jobs that pay a livable wage, the entire family unit is likely to suffer. All individuals have the right to achieve the life of their choosing and to adequately care for themselves and their families.

- Policymakers must support the right of all individuals to have fair opportunity for educational and career success. Everyone worldwide should have access to high-quality education free from barriers and school violence.
• Policymakers should ensure basic living standards through investments in programs that provide financial, housing, and nutrition supports. Ensuring access to high-quality, affordable child care allows working families the security of knowing their children are well cared for while they work to provide economic security and advancement for their loved ones.

• Policymakers must enact policies that address race and gender pay gaps, particularly for women of color, including by raising wages—and support the passage of strong, inclusive and sustainable paid family and medical leave plans that meet the needs of new parents, especially young parents, people who care for seriously ill family members, and workers with serious health issues and disabilities, as well as paid sick days policies so that people don’t have to choose between accessing reproductive health care and losing wages or even their jobs.

• Policymakers must strengthen policies around adult education and job training to help families find and keep jobs and build strong, sustainable careers necessary to fostering true economic opportunity and addressing workforce issues.

• Policymakers must fully ensure pregnant individuals are not penalized in their work and careers as a result of their pregnancy.

Economic opportunity for all families must be broad and robust. Access cannot be separated from affordability when discussing such initiatives, as the ability for all families to access high quality childcare should not be dependent on their socioeconomic status.

Policymakers must ensure all communities are free from violence.

Policymakers must protect the rights of all people in the U.S. and around the world— including but not limited to Black people, immigrants, LGBTQ+ people, Indigenous peoples, religious minorities, people with disabilities, women, and young people—to live and raise children free from violence, including gun violence in schools and community institutions, including houses of worship, gender-based violence (including sexual harassment and gender-based violence in the workplace), conflict-related violence, police and other state violence, and violence imposed through the criminal justice and immigration systems.

• For people held in jails, prisons, and detention centers, policymakers should ensure access to comprehensive health care and to continued family visits and contact, while continuing to pursue strategies that will reduce and eventually eliminate the harm caused by the mass incarceration, predominantly of Black and brown communities.

Sexual violence and harassment and other forms of gender-based violence, such as interpersonal violence, are an epidemic problem in the U.S. and around the world. Deeply rooted in harmful gender norms and inequality, this violence often directly impacts an individual’s mental and reproductive health and violates their rights and bodily autonomy, including in some cases the right to choose if, when, how, and with whom they engage in sexual activity. Specific communities face disproportionate rates of gender-based violence, including Native American women, who are much more likely to be raped or murdered by a partner than other women in the United States.86

• Policymakers must support efforts to reduce sexual and gender-based violence and ensure justice and comprehensive care for survivors of sexual and interpersonal violence, including through domestic and global federal programs and policies.

Policymakers must support and promote policies to develop a healthy and safe environment.

Every person has the right to a healthy environment that is free from toxic chemicals and includes clean drinking water, wastewater services, and safe food. Everyone has the right to know that the products they use are safe and to have information about what is in those products. Policymakers must work to build healthy and safe environments for all communities, with a focus on communities and individuals with low incomes in the U.S. and throughout the world who have been disproportionately harmed by environmental degradation and climate change. Additionally, the overall health and wellbeing of people across the globe is dependent on policymakers aggressively and quickly addressing the climate crisis, which has devastating effects on health, food, and livelihoods—disproportionately affecting women, children, adolescents and young people, Indigenous people, people in the Global South, and people of color.

• To better protect everyone from toxic substances in the environment, it is imperative that the administration more closely monitor and regulate emissions. Unfortunately, the Trump administration has rolled back a number of these critical environmental protections implemented under the Obama administration and previous administrations. Regulatory changes have severely weakened regulations for air and water quality and disposal of toxic wastes.

• All rules, regulations, and protections preceding the Trump administration related to regulating and monitoring toxins and creating a cleaner and safer environment should be reinstated effective immediately, including a recommitment to the Paris Climate Agreement.

• The federal government also has a moral imperative to ensure clean and safe drinking water void of all toxic substances is available for all communities. This includes taking executive action to fix the water system in Flint, Michigan and other communities in similar predicaments.
Policymakers must promote and ensure integration of the social determinants of health into the provision of health care.

Addressing the social determinants of health is recognized as a key strategy to improve health outcomes and reduce health disparities. Social determinants of health are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age. They include, but are not limited to an individual’s income, housing, social environment, and ability to access health care. These non-clinical factors affect everyone’s health and well-being, including their physical, behavioral, and mental health. Women, including queer and transgender women, and women of color in particular, frequently face unique health inequities due to social determinants that negatively affect their access to and experience of care. Due to historic and ongoing oppression, women, especially queer and trans women of color, are more likely to live in poverty, be uninsured, or experience food insecurity – all of which affect their ability to get and stay healthy. Indeed, racism, sexism, and discrimination based on gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, national origin, immigration status, disability, or age significantly contribute to the social determinants of health.

- The administration should better integrate social determinants of health within efforts to transform the health care system and invest more resources in the public health and social services sectors. As the Administration funds and implements new models of care delivery and payment to transform the healthcare system, they should encourage the health care sector to meaningfully engage with public health, behavioral health, and social services, including community-based organizations, to identify key issues and successfully improve health care outcomes.

Improving health outcomes by improving or alleviating social and behavioral risk factors requires ongoing investment to support and sustain community interventions. Current public health and social service funding is insufficient. Its infrastructure must be adequately supported and strengthened. Additionally, safety-net providers—particularly providers of reproductive health care—are vital partners in improving the health of individuals and communities. Significant financial investment is necessary in order to meet their demands and increase their capacity, including by supporting community-based organizations to develop the infrastructure to fully participate in new care models and programs.

- Efforts to address social determinants of health should not undermine the Medicaid program’s core purpose of providing health coverage by withholding benefits and services and penalizing beneficiaries under the pretext of addressing social determinants of health such as imposing work requirements.
Policymakers must advance health equity and improve maternal and infant health outcomes in the U.S. by making significant investments in social, health, economic, and educational support for underserved communities. This effort must focus on maintaining and increasing funding for programs that support healthy pregnancies and families for all people, including for pregnant and parenting students and LGBTQ+, as well as investments in programs led by people of color that promote healthy outcomes for people of color. As such, policymakers must make significant investments in the following programs, as well as others addressed separately, among others.

- Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Bureau and Title V MCH Services Block Grant
- Medicaid
- Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
- Title X Family Planning Program
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- National Health Service Corps Program
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Division of HIV, TB, and STD Prevention
- CDC Division of Reproductive Health
- CDC National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (NBCCEDP) funding for breast and cervical cancer screening
- School Based Health Centers
- Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Prevention and Public Health Fund
- Federally Qualified Health Centers
- Programs of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- Indian Health Service
- Programs of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Health

“There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives.”

Audre Lorde