**The Intersectoral Forum on Advancing Health and Equity in New York City** seeks to translate four Big Ideas into practical policies and programs that can contribute to a healthier and more equitable New York City.

1. **Take on the social determinants of health**

Two centuries of public health research show that the most basic influences on health are the living conditions of ordinary people—their housing, education and working conditions and their access to clean air, water, safe food and affordable health care. The most significant increases in lifespan and reductions in premature death have resulted when these living conditions are improved for all sectors of the population.

1. **Make “health in all policies” a reality**

In 2010, the World Health Organization recommended that all levels of government adopt a “health in all policies” approach. Recognizing that today’s complex health problems have multiple causes, WHO urged policymakers to consider the health impact of policies in economic development, transportation, education, and workforce development, for example. According to the American Public Health Association, health in all policies is a collaborative approach to improving the health of all people by incorporating health considerations into decision-making across sectors and policy areas. The goal is to ensure that decision-makers are informed about the health, equity, and sustainability consequences of various policy options at all stages of policy development.

1. **Encourage intersectoral action to improve health**

To make “health in all policies” a reality requires government agencies, nonprofit and private organizations and communities to work together across sectors to improve health and reduce inequality. For example, reducing obesity requires changes in our food system, schools, parks and transportation designed to make it easier for people to choose healthier food and engage in more physical activity.

1. **Engage communities in shaping health and health policies**

In a democratic society, people have the right to participate in the decisions that shape their lives. Public health evidence shows that policies and programs that include the wisdom and insights of the people most affected by the problem to be solved are more likely to be effective, accepted and sustained. Policy makers who want to make a different find ways to engage community residents and organizations in the planning, implementation and evaluation of public health policies and programs.

**Suggested Resources**

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**How can NYC develop an integrated affordable housing system that helps all sectors of the population find and keep safe, affordable and stable housing?**

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