



## CASE STUDY



NCQA's Health Equity Accreditation Plus helps Novant Health strengthen community-based partnerships to address social determinants of health (SDoH) and improve how it engages with patients.



“NCQA's Health Equity Accreditation and Health Equity Accreditation Plus programs allowed us to assess our efforts to advance health equity and reimagine ways to include and embody the unheard voices of patients and communities-at-large. Bridging the two programs was a dynamic way for us to build upon our cross-sector partnerships, grass roots initiatives, and funding opportunities through collaboration, community centered advocacy and policy influence. We are now better positioned to equitably provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services and education to all populations, and addressing barriers to social needs of the communities we serve.”

CHERE M. GREGORY, MD MHS - SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT & CHIEF HEALTH EQUITY OFFICER, NOVANT HEALTH



### CHALLENGE

- Novant Health sought ways to improve the equity and quality of care delivered throughout its health system for all individuals and communities it serves.
- Novant Health wanted to standardize its partnership selection and engagement process in ways to address identified social needs and risks in the communities it serves.



### SOLUTION

As one of the first health systems to successfully complete NCQA's Health Equity Plus Accreditation pilot program, Novant Health built on its existing health equity policies and procedures to further improve equity for patients across its health system. Today, the health system:

- > **Develops programs** with measurable goals and a continuous quality improvement framework across its health system.
- > **Has formalized data collection** to better understand social determinants of health in the demographics of the communities it serves.
- > **Leverages insights** from data to reduce disparities and address systemic barriers that prevent communities from accessing and receiving equitable, quality care.

- > **Engages communities** in roles that are substantive, not just symbolic.
- > **Creates sustainable partnerships to respond to social needs** and collaborate on capacity building and addressing traditionally unbalanced power dynamics between health care and community-based organizations.
- > **Has established accountability** for building a diverse and inclusive workforce.

### RESULTS



All of Novant Health's markets earned NCQA's Health Equity Accreditation Plus:

- Novant Health Coastal Communities.
- Novant Health Greater Charlotte Market.
- Novant Health Greater Winston-Salem Market.

The Accreditation process helped Novant:

- Utilize NCQA's framework structures and processes to prioritize resources that populations and communities need most.
- Formalize the focus of its systemwide SDoH Council on four work streams: food insecurity, transportation, data, payor and community impact.
- Build on its governing policies, procedures and structures to inform how it collaborates, supports and engages with community partners across its health system.
- Improve how it communicates and seeks input on language services. Over 1,000 internal staff and 500 patients have responded to a survey seeking recommendations to improve these services.

Accreditation helped Novant Health align health equity goals and data collection across 9 institutes and 15 facilities with 3,297 beds.

## PRODUCT OVERVIEW:

Health Equity Accreditation Plus provides an actionable framework for helping health systems continuously improve and prioritize health equity.

The program establishes a framework, creates processes and encourages cross-sector partnerships that identify and address social risk factors and social needs of the communities and people they serve.

## HEALTH EQUITY ACCREDITATION PLUS KEY FACTS/PROGRAM DETAILS

- Health Equity Accreditation and Health Equity Accreditation Plus are the first stand-alone health equity accreditation programs.
- The programs provide a framework to guide health systems, health plans and other care organizations to advance health equity.
  - > **Health Equity Accreditation** is for organizations beginning their journey to improve health equity and seeking to formalize structures, processes and goals for identifying and addressing health disparities.
  - > **Health Equity Accreditation Plus** is for organizations that have implemented core Health Equity Accreditation activities and are ready to focus on the community and cross-sector partnerships in health equity and on the role of social drivers of health.
- Organizations earn a 3-year Accreditation Seal to differentiate them from competitors.

## NCQA's Health Equity Accreditation Plus enables health systems to:

- > **Reduce inequities and better meet the needs of patients by utilizing data** on race, ethnicity, language, gender identity and sexual orientation.
- > **Win new contracts by positioning itself as a leader** that demonstrates commitment and accountability for elevating health equity to payers, regulators and business partners.
- > **Raise the bar for team members/staff** by monitoring continuous improvement in the cultural and linguistic services offered to patients, while determining gaps in care and addressing solutions accordingly
- > **Align staff and leadership** with standardized structures, processes and goals that mobilize the entire organization and work culture around diversity, equity and inclusion.

## COMPANY PROFILE:

### SIZE:

- 35,000 team members and physician partners.
- 15 medical centers.
- More than 1,800 physicians in over 800 locations.
- More than 6 million patient visits annually.
- Numerous outpatient surgery centers, medical plazas, rehabilitation programs, diagnostic imaging centers and community health outreach programs.

### REGIONS SERVED:

North Carolina, South Carolina

**TYPE:** Health systems, health plans, ACOs, MBHOs, hospital systems, hospitals, practices, FQHCs, wellness organizations, population health organizations

**PROGRAM:** Health Equity Accreditation Plus

**STAKEHOLDERS:** State and federal agencies, employers, community-based organizations, patients, members



Visit [ncqa.org/programs/health-equity-accreditation](https://www.ncqa.org/programs/health-equity-accreditation) to learn more about NCQA's Health Equity Accreditation programs and how to apply.

