



WELL BEING LEGACY INAUGURAL GATHERING

Summary Themes

Oakland, California - July 18-20, 2018

"We have to make our world a place that is worthy of our children and generations to come."

- Vivek Murthy, MD, 19th Surgeon General of the United States

The Well Being Legacy initiative seeks to understand what it takes to create and sustain community conditions for intergenerational well-being. Four questions have guided our inquiry during this initial phase:

1. How is our well-being affected by the legacies of policy and investment choices made by prior generations and leaders?
2. What can we learn from community efforts that are creating the vital conditions for equitable health and well-being?
3. What are the collective choices—policies, practices, and investments—that will help us ensure greater health and well-being for all community members?
4. How might we harness our collective wisdom, assets, and influence to shape well-being across generations and for generations to come?

Over the past year, thousands of leaders drawn from communities and organizations across the country have shared with us their experiences and thoughts on these questions. Their insights and related learning activities laid the foundation for a deeper dive.

In July of 2018, a group of 150 local and national leaders—diverse in age, race, geography, and political persuasion—joined in Oakland, California to explore and discern together how to profoundly advance intergenerational well-being in our communities and nation.

The following is a distillation of what the collective said.

Well Being
Legacy



Conversation about our past

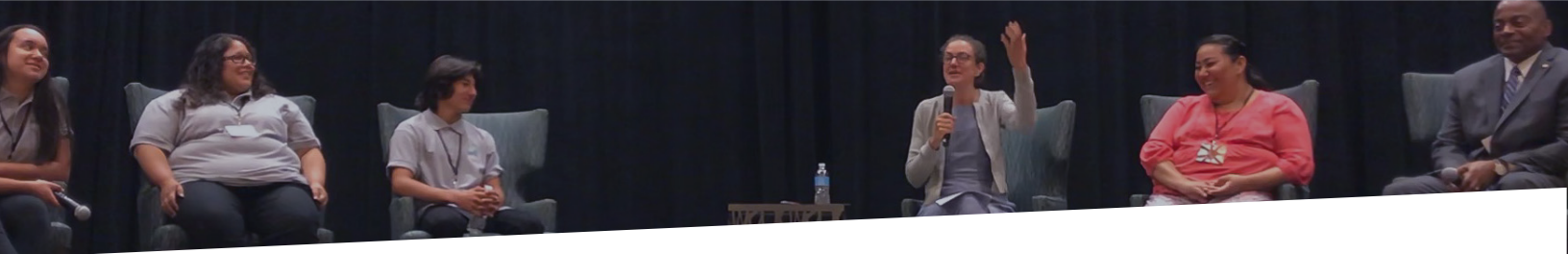
“How do we have a shared conversation about our future if we’re not first having a conversation about our past?”

To move forward we must face our past

We recognize that the legacies that we’ve inherited are the products of choices. We are all touched by these choices, for good and ill. None of us are perfect or blameless, but we can acknowledge our roles and the roles of those who came before us. We must walk through the history of our communities to see the righteous paths forward that allow us to survive and thrive.

Facing the past with honesty, the future with courage

Struggles of the past have challenged us to endure—and in some cases overcome—great adversity. While being grateful for those achievements, too many of us are systemically left behind. The conditions that most threaten our well-being today stem from structures that oppress and undercut human potential. Undoing these structures requires a reckoning with how we think about race, poverty, and other human differences. For America to fulfill its promise of prosperity and justice for all, we must combine our efforts, amplify our voices, and scale our impact to create new living legacies for equitable health and well-being.



*"Ask: 'What's possible?' not
'What's wrong?' Keep asking."*

- Margaret Wheatley

Ask what's possible

Think differently

Legacy moves us to adopt a different way of thinking—in terms of long-term vision, structural transformation, and sustained investment. To see ourselves as all part of one extended human family. The changes we seek are generational. We are learning how to take a long view and maintain commitments to stay the course.

Build on what works

Communities across the U.S. are improving in exciting ways and creating conditions for equitable well-being. There are real opportunities to scale the good work and transform the systems we are living within. How do we learn better from each other? From our peers, their journeys, their successes and solutions? One answer, a common thread among communities transforming positively, is that *people in communities have the power to drive the change they wish to see and know is needed.*

Trust communities to lead

We value people in communities and their power to co-create a democratic commonwealth. We need their leadership in order to realize equitable well-being. Yet, we are still learning into what community leadership really means and looks like when done well. How do we get beyond the jargon that impedes understanding? How do we create authentic, meaningful pathways for leadership that dignify and empower? How do we close gaps that prevent many from contributing to their communities?

Invest in our collective capacity

We need to invest in our ability to connect, engage, and work together. Our strength is as a collective, in our power to work across differences. We are called to build an infrastructure for the legacies of health and well-being we seek—in our communities and for our nation. To do so, our organizations must work differently—to partner, collaborate, work outside of our expertise, stay engaged in the long term. When we invest in foundational efforts to build a sense of belonging and civic muscle, we see that people step up to do extraordinary things. *It is time that we listen and are guided by communities, especially those too-often excluded.*

Consider the next generation

Intergenerational change requires thinking long term, considering life course and seeking long-lasting effects for people and communities. Focusing on conditions that we encounter from day one and throughout each stage of development provides opportunity for such an approach and could create change at scale. We can break the cycle of intergenerational adversity by assuring that all children have what they need for a strong start.



"Buffalo run into the storm because they know [they'll] get through it quicker if they do"

- Native American parable

Run into the storm

Shift narratives

To transform our communities, we are beginning to shift our narratives and the structures through which we work. To be comprehensive, we are expanding to a *holistic frame of well-being*. To create change for future generations, we are moving from a focus on the here-and-now and providing urgent services to investing in long-term, upstream, structural changes. To mobilize communities, we are moving from quantifying our deficits to telling our stories of overcoming adversity and creating change.

Design the next system

The systems that shape our lives undermine many things that we need to be well, and they resist change. In particular, capitalism in America has failed in its promise of delivering economic opportunity and upward mobility for all, instead driving unprecedented income inequality and limiting human potential. We inadequately consider external drivers with major implications for intergenerational well-being—including climate change, technological progress, or our aging and diversifying population. Deep, systemic change will only occur through disruption of current systems that impinge on well-being and designing the next system to produce equitable well-being by design.

Overcome flawed funding models

We are working with flawed funding models and incentives. Much of the funding received is for programs, not for building infrastructure, growing capacities, or making structural changes needed to transform communities and scale change. Leaders are asking how do we leverage our collective resources? How do we demonstrate a return on our investments? And how do we generate long term, sustained funding for communities?



Time for a community agenda



Values-based approach

We are guided by our values—to help improve lives for all people in all communities. We are taking a long view and orienting our efforts to create multi-generational change. We are focusing on those who experience the greatest inequities because when the least advantaged among us take a leap forward, we all do. We are recognizing our collective strength and how we might leverage it. And we are seeking to join and synergize with efforts that share our values and aspirations.

Pathways for change

The framework of legacy opens up tough, essential dialogues about our past and points to priorities for our work together. Well Being Legacy is bringing people together to discover their shared capacity and how to unlock it. We seek to leverage what makes us unique, while adding to ongoing efforts and seeking synergy. We are pursuing complimentary pathways for influencing change at multiple levels through transformation of: places; organizational practices; and policies, economic and social systems.

► Transforming places

Change is taking place at the local level in ways that we hope to learn from, cultivate, and grow. Communities that are leading the way have important wisdom to share, and we value and hope to invest in their leadership.

"It's time for a community agenda as a national agenda."

► **Transforming organizational practices**

There is tremendous potential to transform our organizational practices in order to promote a culture of equitable health and well-being. If we're going to change our legacies, we must first look inward, to how our own practices perpetuate the system's flaws and inequities.

► **Transforming policy, economic, and social systems**

We are bold in our pursuits to transform policy, economic, and social systems to create a culture of equitable health and well-being for the nation. We aim to create a learning agenda that spreads pragmatic and innovative practices that make a difference in communities. To articulate a robust policy agenda that advances truth, healing, and transformation.

"There's an obligation to feed the hunger that [Well Being Legacy has] stoked"

Experiment, learn, scale

Many people and organizations are prepared to invest in what's needed—what's vital—to produce equitable well-being. What are the things that can take hold and be scaled? We need to do more to capture, highlight, celebrate, and share innovation and creativity where it emerges. We are committed to inspiring hope, so that hard-working leaders—especially young leaders—believe that change is possible. Yet at present, we are limited by our understanding of what we're up against, and what it will take to make meaningful progress. We need to iterate and rigorously evaluate our efforts—always orienting them to optimize their impact. Now is the time to create a dynamic system for shared learning and action that helps us learn faster, better, discover new possibilities and bring them to life in communities across America.

