

# Unnatural Causes

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**UNNATURAL CAUSES**

...is inequality making us sick?

A seven-part documentary series exploring racial & socioeconomic inequalities in health.

*Produced by the California Newsreel and Presented by the National Minority Consortia in Partnership with the National Association of County and City Health Officials*

# Unnatural Causes

**UNNATURAL CAUSES** is the acclaimed documentary series broadcast by PBS and now used by thousands of organizations around the country to tackle the root causes of our alarming socio-economic and racial inequities in health.

- **In Sickness and In Wealth** How does the distribution of power, wealth and resources shape opportunities for health?
- **When the Bough Breaks** *Can racism become embedded in the body and affect birth outcomes?*
- **Becoming American** Latino immigrants arrive healthy, so why don't they stay that way?
- **Bad Sugar** What are the connections between diabetes, oppression, and empowerment in two Native American communities?
- **Place Matters** Why is your street address such a strong predictor of your health?
- **Collateral Damage** How do Marshall Islanders pay for globalization and U.S. military policy with their health?
- **Not Just a Paycheck** Why do layoffs take such a huge toll in Michigan but cause hardly a ripple in Sweden?

# Unnatural Causes: A Public Health Framework

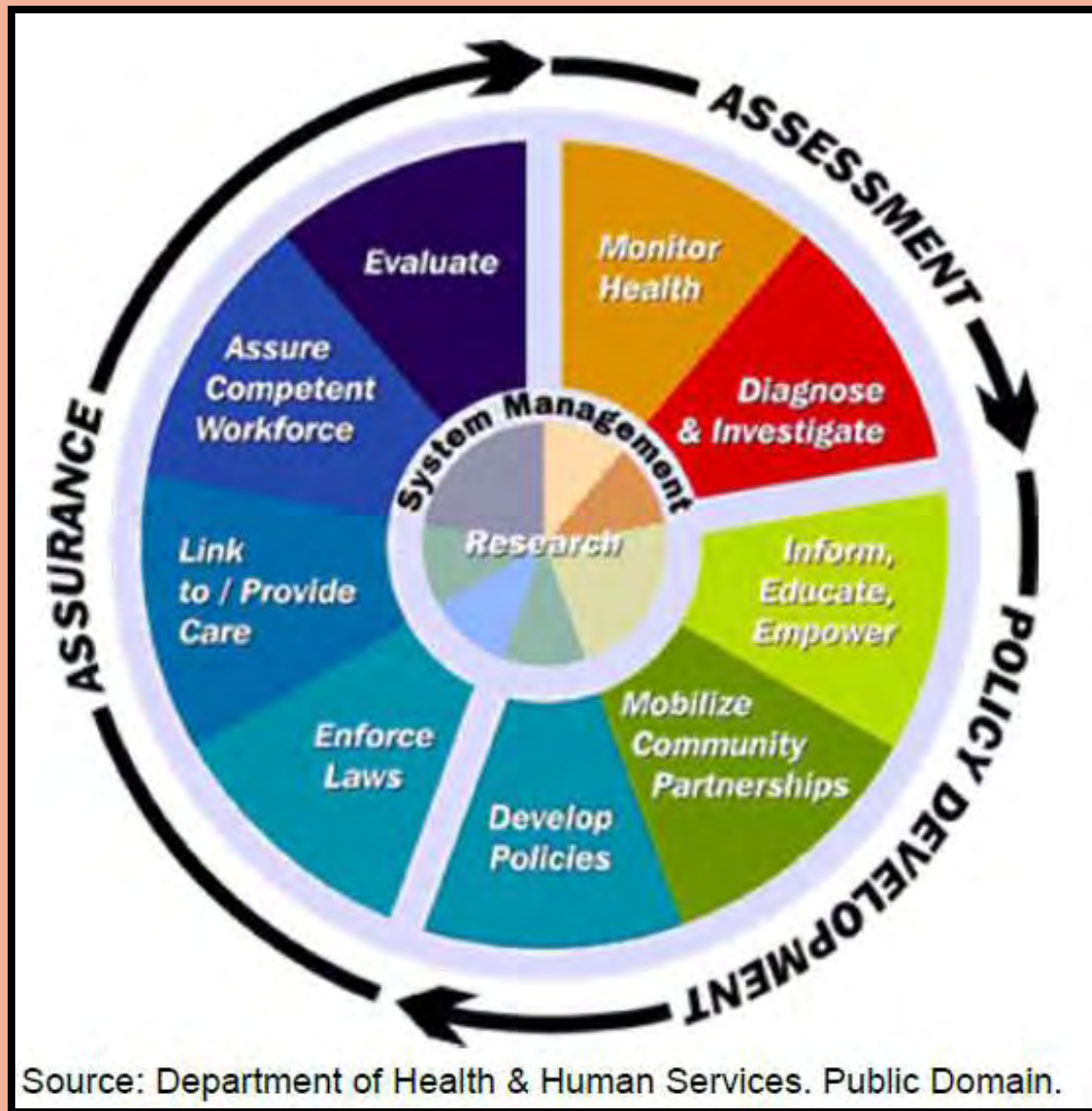
- **What is health?**
- **What is public health?**



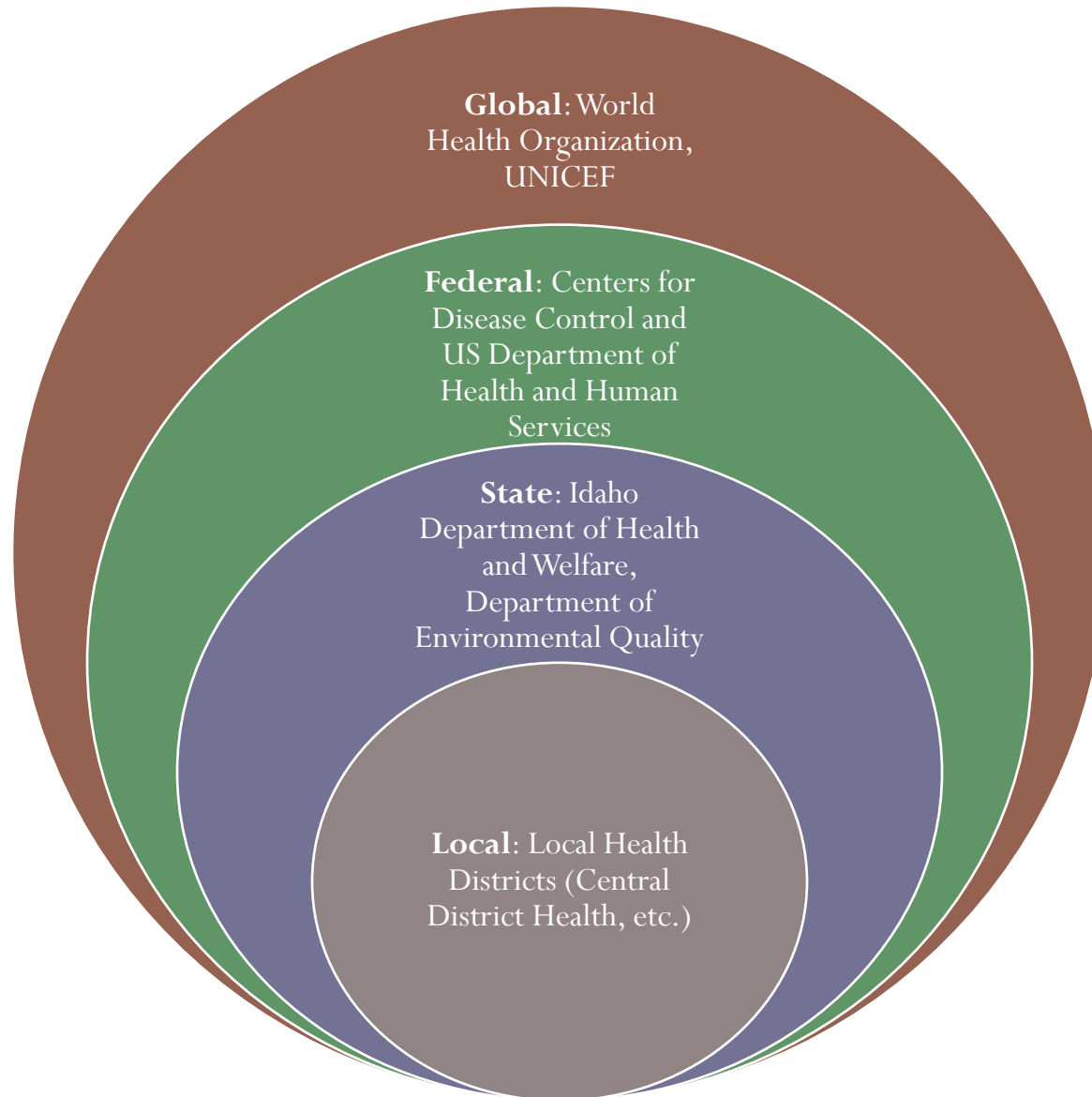
# Prevent, Protect, Promote

- Public Health Core Functions
  - Assessment: Surveillance of disease/injury; monitoring trends; analyzing causes; and identifying needs (Research)
  - Policy Development: Broad community involvement; promote scientific basis of decision-making; strategic approach; development of comprehensive public health policies (Policy)
  - Assurance: Seeing to the implementation of legislative mandates as well as fulfilling statutory responsibilities and provision of safety net services for the most vulnerable populations (Practice)

# Essential Public Health Services



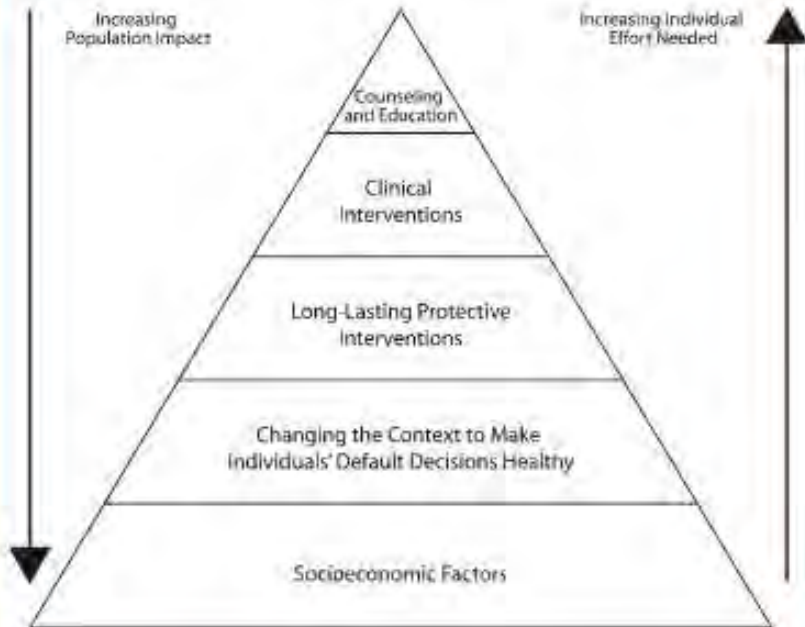
# Public Health Agencies



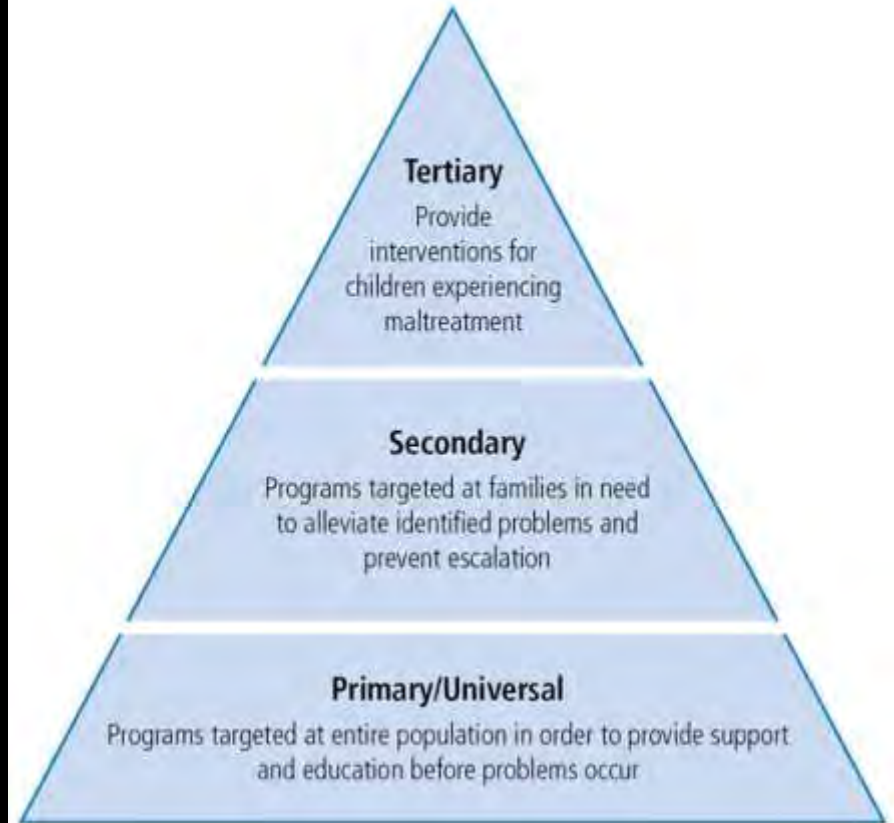
# Public Health Components

- Epidemiology
- Biostatistics
- Environmental Health
- Health Services Administration
- Social & Behavioral Science
- Informatics
- Genomics
- Communication
- Cultural Competence
- Community-based Participatory Research
- Policy & Law
- Global Health
- Ethics

# Public Health Pyramids



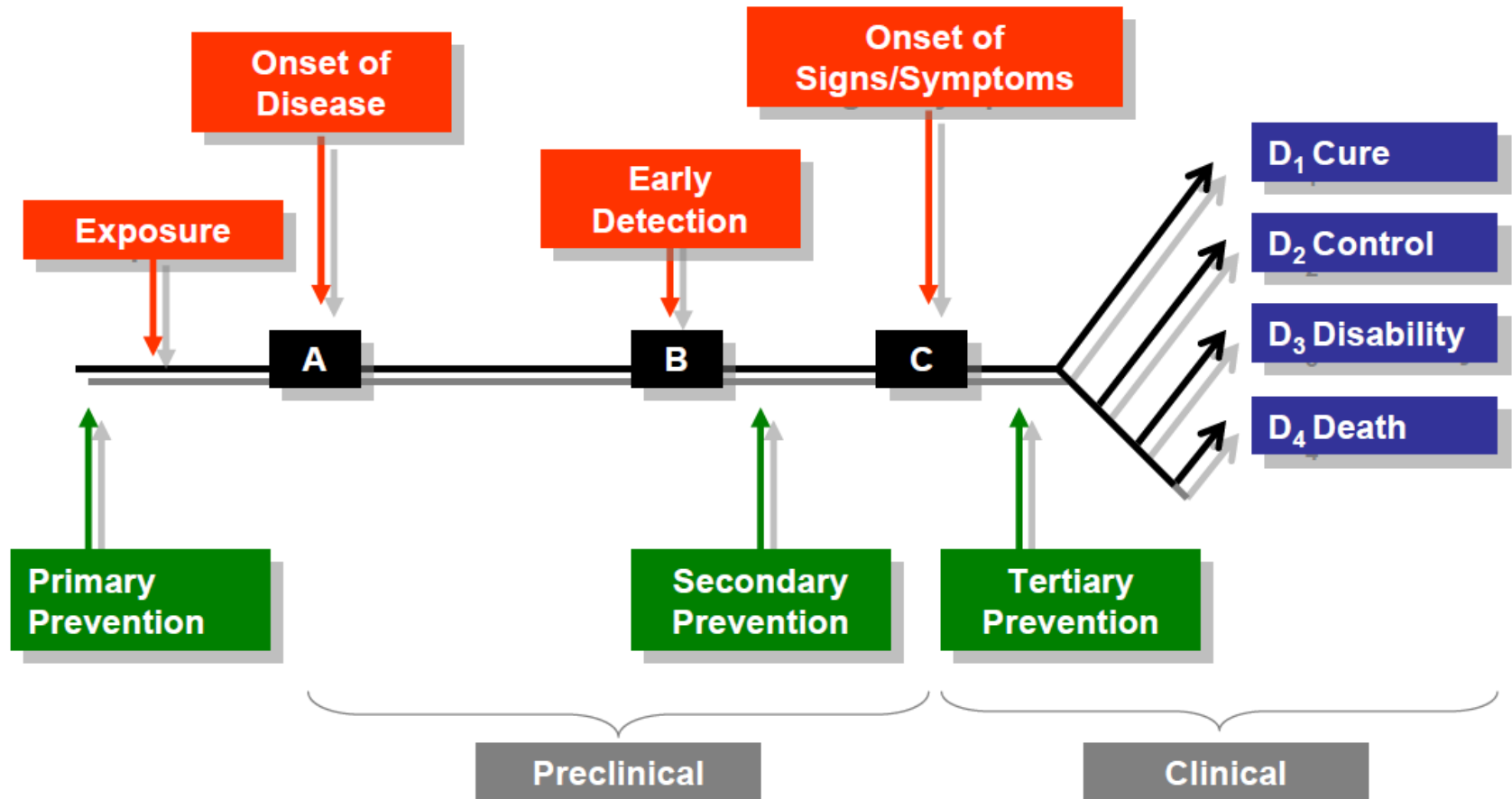
**FIGURE 1—The health impact pyramid.**



*Source: Center for Disease Control Health Impact Pyramid, Dr. Thomas Frieden director of Centers for Disease Control*

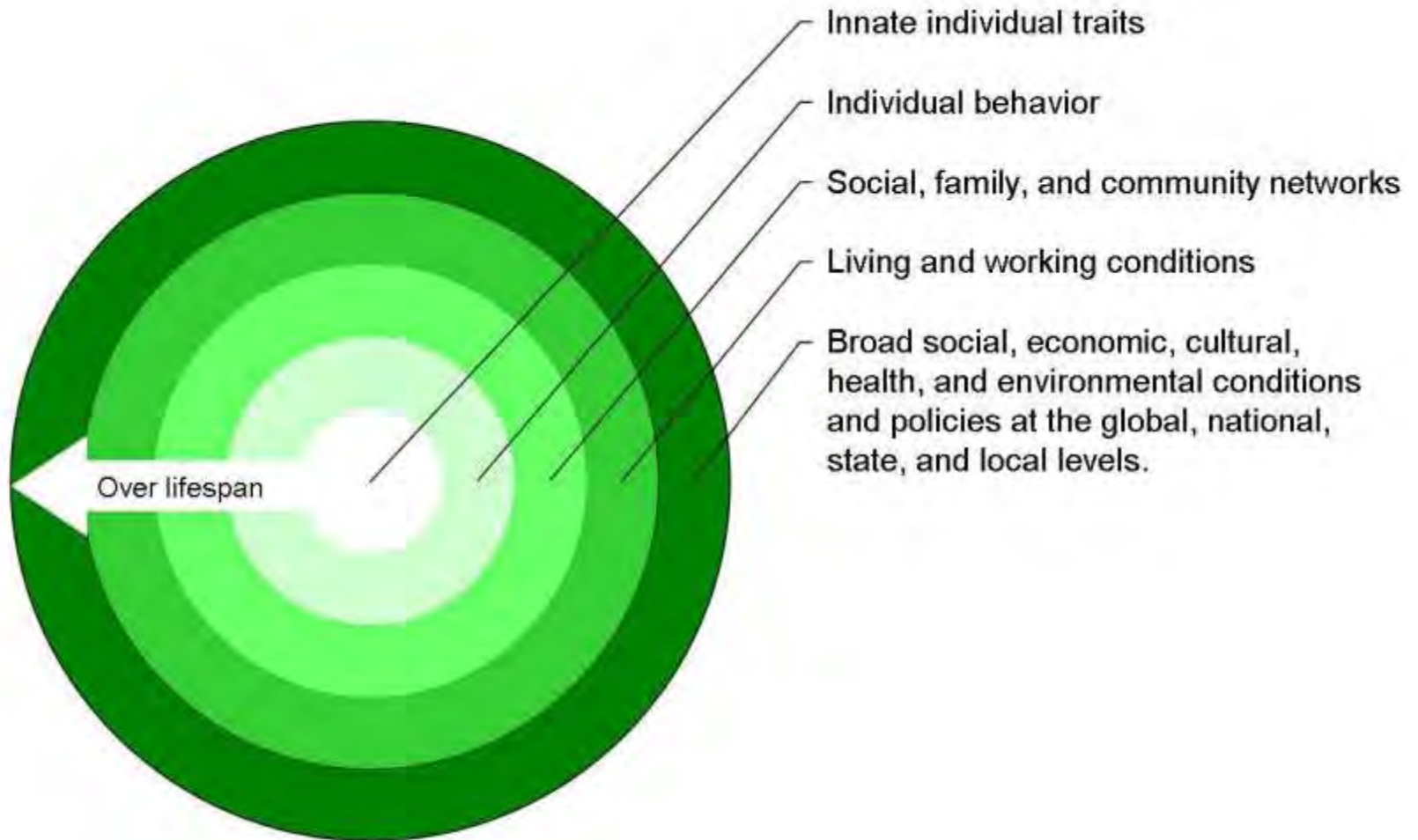


# Natural History Of Cancer & Levels Of Prevention



Notes Available

# Determinants of Population Health



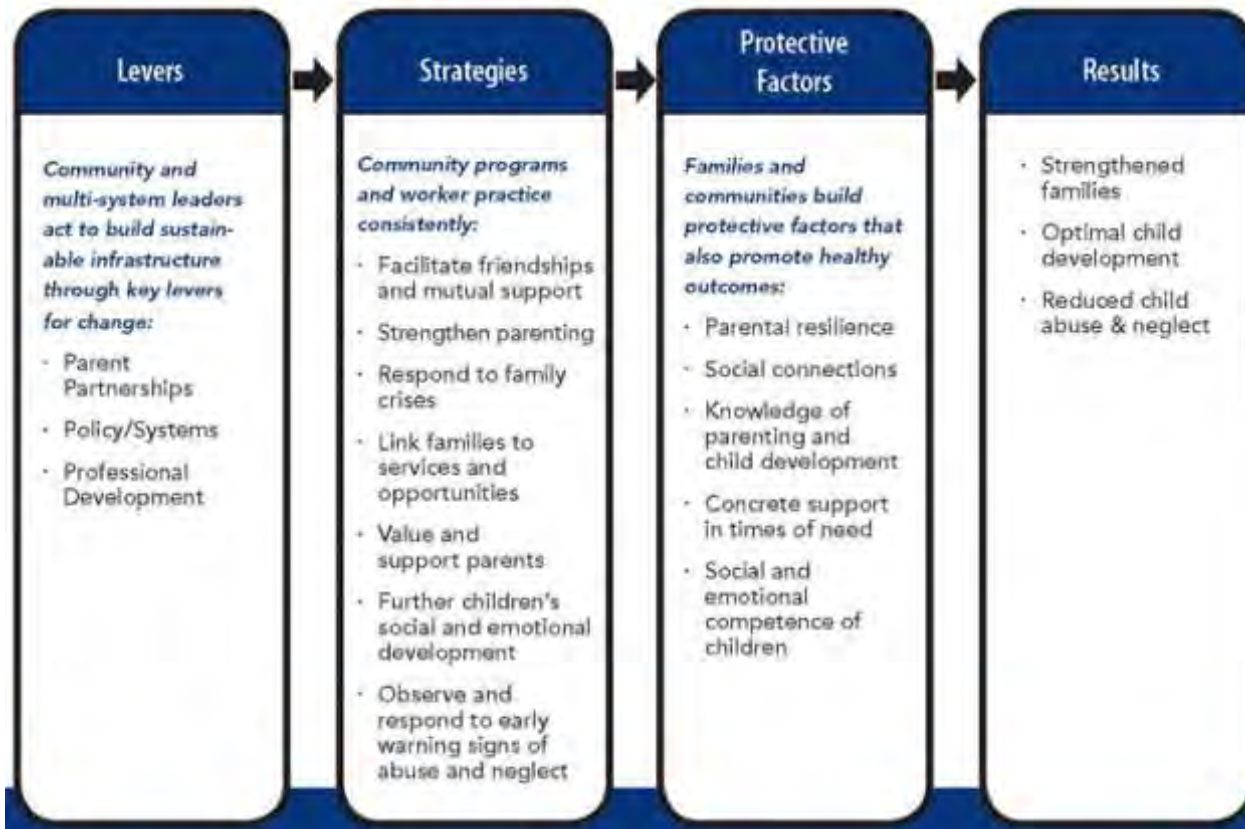
Source: John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health: Public Health Practice 101, Dr. Henry Taylor Adapted from Dahlgren and Whitehead, 1991

# Strengthening Families Framework

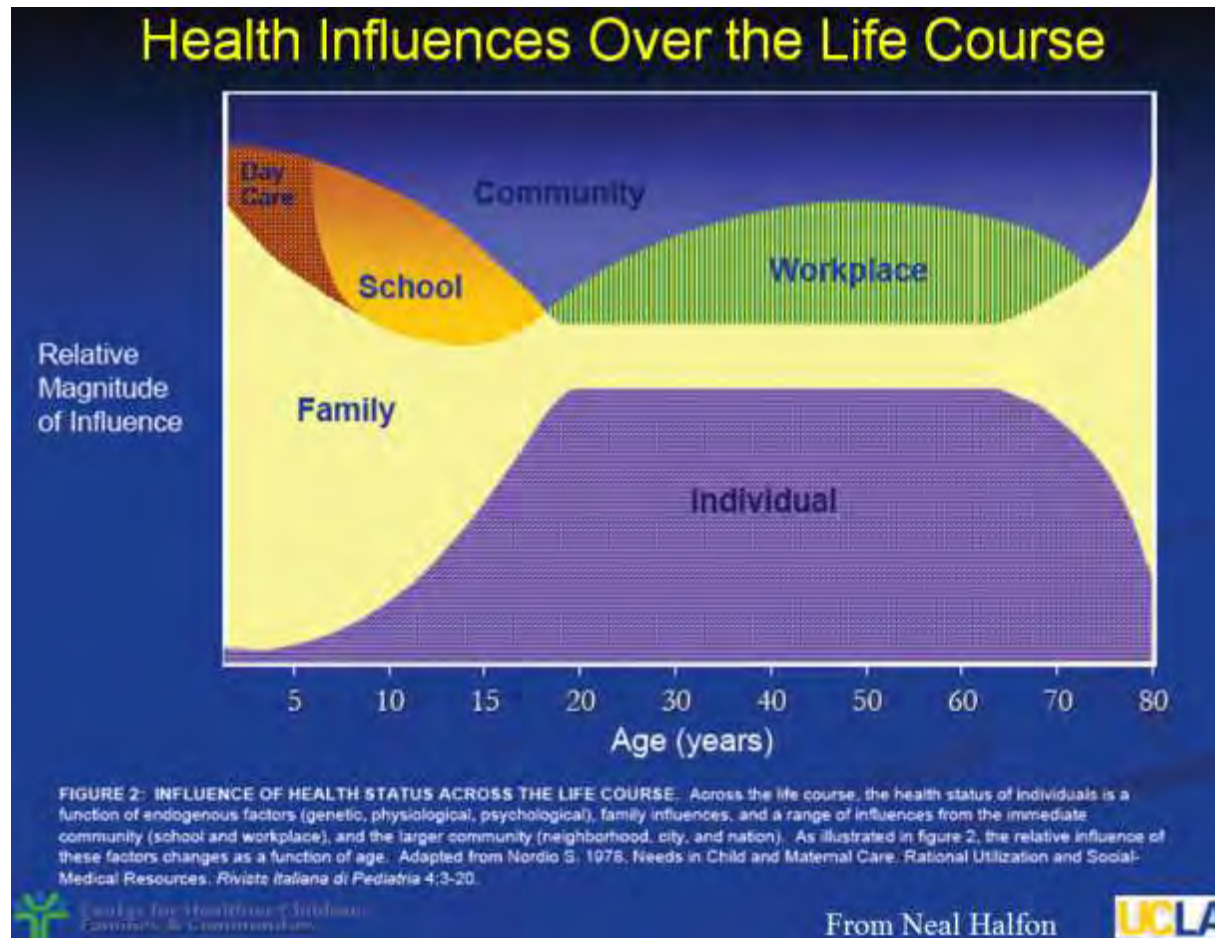
## Strengthening Families: Creating a New Normal

### The Strengthening Families Approach:

- Benefits ALL families
- Builds on family strengths, buffers risk, and promotes better outcomes
- Can be implemented through small but significant changes in everyday actions
- Builds on and can become a part of existing programs, strategies, systems and community opportunities
- Is grounded in research, practice and implementation knowledge



# The Lifecourse Perspective: Early Childhood Impacts Adult Health Status



Citation: *Reforming Disease Prevention and Health Promotion: Population Health*. Slide Presentation from the AHRQ 2009 Annual Conference (Text Version). December 2009. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Rockville, MD.

<http://www.ahrq.gov/about/annualconf09/teutsch.htm>

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# Public Health and Unnatural Causes

## Public Health & Social Justice

- Access is more than an geographic issue
- Equity is different from equality
- Equity focuses on outcomes
- Equality addresses inputs (access)



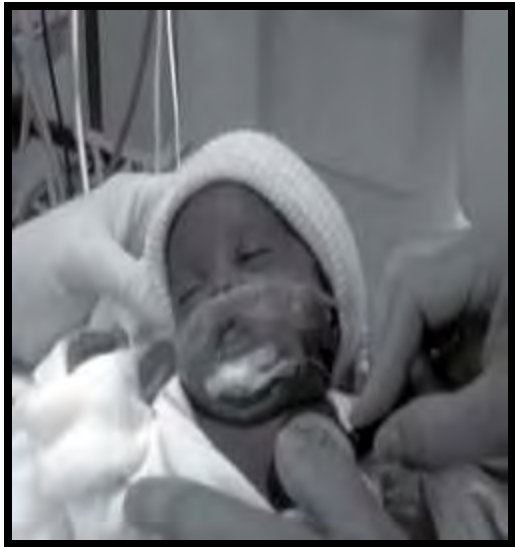
# Health Equity Quiz

- Please take 8 minutes to complete the Health Equity Quiz, we will return to the answers at the conclusion of the presentation.

# When the Bough Breaks

## Themes:

1. Birth outcomes are affected by the negative impact of racism over one's lifetime, not just during pregnancy.
2. Racism in America is an added source of chronic stress for people of color.
3. Racial justice and civic engagement are instruments for improving health and birth outcomes.





Film Screening (35 min)

# Discussion

- How are pregnancy outcomes affected by racism and chronic stress? How are racial differences in birth outcomes not reducible to class alone?
- Dr. Jones says that the chronic stress of racism is like “gunning the engine of a car, never letting up.” What does she mean? How does this affect the body over time?

# Discussion

Describe Dr. Lu's "life-course perspective." How does it broaden conventional approaches, which focus primarily on risk factors during pregnancy?

- What are the mechanisms by which experiences outside the body and before conception can affect birth outcomes?
- Describe how the life-course perspective supports a link between racism and premature birth or low birth-weight babies.

# Discussion

Although research indicates that racism is still common in the U.S., the film notes that most whites believe that racial discrimination is a problem of the past.

- How might differences in experience and perception influence debates about racism's impact on the body? What are the consequences?
- How often do you have the opportunity to talk about racism? With people of your racial/ethnic background? With people from other racial/ethnic backgrounds?
- Can we address racism without first achieving a common understanding?

# Activity and Dialogue

## **Suggested Activity: Health Impacts of Racism**

This activity helps participants identify sources of racism and possible health impacts. Additionally, participants can identify policies and actions that may mitigate long term health impacts of racism.

<b>Structural</b>	<b>Interpersonal</b>	<b>Internalized</b>
<i>Health Impacts</i>	<i>Health Impacts</i>	<i>Health Impacts</i>

# Activity and Dialogue

## Suggested Activity: Mapping Community Assets

This activity helps participants identify sources of stress and support in their lives and think about ways they might increase their level of power and control.

Resources		Stressors
	Food Access and Availability	
	Quality Education	
	Good Transportation/Planning	
	Affordable Housing	
	Good Jobs and Work Opportunities	
	Business Investment and Development	
	Income and Wealth	
	Social Supports	
	Public Safety	
	Green Spaces	
	Recreational Opportunities	

# Health Equity Quiz Overview

- 1. E
- 2. B
- 3. D
- 4. E
- 5. C
- 6. E
- 7. D
- 8. E
- 9. E
- 10. E
- 11. C
- 12. D
- 13. A
- 14. C
- 15. A
- 16. A
- 17. B.
- 18. D
- 19. A
- 20. E
- 21. A
- 22. A

# Raising of America

- To be released on the Fall, 2013:  
[www.raisingofamerica.org/project](http://www.raisingofamerica.org/project)
- Preview: <http://vimeo.com/59185115>