



2021

Five-year Strategic Plan

Adoption of Five Year Strategic Plan

The Fenway Health 2021-2025 Strategic Plan was developed during 2020-2021 to cover the operating period of July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2026.

The Strategic Plan was approved for adoption by the Fenway Health Board of Directors via a vote at the June 8, 2021 Board of Directors meeting, and recorded in the meeting minutes.

As Chair of the Fenway Health Board of Directors, my signature affirms the Board of Directors' approval for adoption of the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan:

Jonathan I. Matsui, PhD
Chair, Fenway Health Board of Directors

Introduction

2021 marks the 50th anniversary of Fenway Health's founding. We opened in 1971 as a one-day-a-week drop-in center located in a church basement. We were staffed by volunteers and primarily served low-income older adults, students, and LGBTQIA+ people. Our goal then, as now, was to provide the highest quality health care to underserved communities, regardless of ability to pay.

We were successful. Just ten years later, in 1981, Fenway Health made the first diagnosis of AIDS in New England. In 1983, Fenway pioneered the first home-based Alternative Insemination (AI) program in the nation. By 1991, we were performing 40 percent of all anonymous HIV tests in the state, and our HIV caseload of 500 patients was second only to that of Boston City Hospital. In 2001 - our thirtieth year - we launched The Fenway Institute, which conducts original research that contributes globally to new knowledge about HIV treatment and prevention and LGBTQIA+ health and well-being. In 2010 we strengthened our commitment to LGBTQIA+ youth, with the Sidney Borum, Jr. Health Center joining our organization. The Borum serves underserved and disenfranchised young people, including those who are LGBTQIA+; homeless or living on the streets; struggling with substance use or abuse; sex workers; or living with HIV/AIDS.

Today we are working to leverage the extraordinary legacy of our past and the passion and capacity we have to become the Fenway Health of tomorrow. The high quality of our services has been recognized by The Joint Commission, the National Committee for Quality Assurance, and by HRSA, the US Department of Health and Human Services agency that provides oversight to community health centers. We have learned a tremendous amount throughout our history. Here are three key lessons that guide us as we set our strategic direction for the next five years:

1. There is no going back

The COVID-19 pandemic that emerged in 2020 laid bare the disparities in health that occur based on race. Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) people in America experience much higher rates of COVID-19 infection, hospitalization, and death than white people. Racism is a public health crisis, and Fenway Health must become an antiracist organization to deliver on our mission. Our 2019 Strategic Plan included two strategic goals specifically focused on racial equity: a Clinical and Quality goal to work towards greater racial and ethnic health equity within our communities, and a Board of Directors goal to further diversify our Board of Directors by race, ethnicity, income, and gender identity.

Throughout 2020, Fenway Health took several important steps as we strengthened our commitment to overcome the disparities and inequities that exist in the services we provide, the people we reach, and the outcomes we achieve:

- **We established a Racial Equity Action Team** to develop an ambitious, achievable racial equity action plan for Fenway Health.
- **We created a Health Equity Task Force** that is using a data-driven approach to identify gaps and opportunities for improving our care and service delivery models that result in health inequities for our patients and clients.
- **We actively expanded our community engagement and partnership efforts** to collaborate with organizations to guide and strengthen the intersection of BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ issues in our programs and services and increase health equity in the communities we serve.

We know that we are only at the beginning of this transformative journey, but we are committed to this path.

So much of the capacity we have developed – telehealth being the brightest example – has proven to be a potent addition to the array of services and tools we can offer to our patients and clients. The pandemic has affirmed that we are nimble, resilient, creative, and innovative. We will continue to exercise these muscles as we seek to realize our vision and goals over the next five years.

2. Our voice matters

Advocacy is a core component of our work, and our voice matters when public policies impacting the people, families, and communities who count on us are being advanced. Throughout 2020, we published policy briefs, submitted public comment and testimony, wrote opinion essays, participated in media interviews, and joined coalitions in partnership with other institutions to advance and disseminate LGBTQIA+ and HIV-related health policy research.

We will continue this work over the next five years. We are excited to once again work with the Administration, Congress, and state and local governments to undo the LGBTQIA+-hostile policies that were enacted over the past four years, and to advance policies that support our health, our civil liberties, and a host of other issues of vital importance to our mission and our communities.

3. Past is prologue, and our future is bright

We will build on the legacy that we have created. In the next five years, our priority will be to continue to provide high quality care to under-resourced and underserved communities. Just over 40 percent of our patients identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer, and about 12 percent are transgender or gender diverse. Nearly a quarter of our patients qualify for Medicaid. As we look ahead, we aim to serve an ever-broadening community of patients, clients, and research participants.

Our Strategic Planning Process

This five-year strategic plan was co-created and informed by the Board, staff, and an array of community stakeholders and partners through an eight-month, iterative planning process. A diverse range of internal and external stakeholders shared their perspectives on successes and challenges, and guidance on priorities, including internal members of the Racial Justice Equity Collaborative, Racial Equity Action Team, Health Equity Task Force, Trans/Nonbinary/Gender-Diverse Employee Resource Group, and Employee Advisory Council. We incorporated valuable feedback from members of the Boston HIV Research Community Advisory Board, Fenway's Young Leaders Council, and Fenway's Board of Visitors. We heard the perspectives of, and received guidance from, researchers with a prior affiliation with The Fenway Institute; leadership from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Lesbians of Color Symposium, Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers, Multicultural AIDS Coalition, Beth Israel Lahey Health, Simmons School of Social Work, and Community Care Cooperative; and the Chief of Health & Human Services for the City of Boston.

The planning process was informed by results from TCC Group's Core Capacity Assessment Tool (CCAT), which was completed by Board members and management staff. The CCAT is a standardized, validated comprehensive assessment which measures a nonprofit's effectiveness in relation to four core capacities—leadership, adaptability, management, and technical capacity—in addition to organizational culture. Results were compared against a benchmark average of approximately 80 other health care organizations with an annual budget of at least \$10 million; results were also compared to Fenway's 2019 CCAT results. A SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Analysis) and an Environmental Scan were also developed to inform our thinking and direction.

Fenway's Mission Statement was revised during this process, incorporating input from multiple stakeholders in a highly iterative process. Our new Mission Statement embraces our deepening commitment to serving BI-POC communities. We have also articulated a set of core values that will inform our thinking, guide us in times of uncertainty, and provide fuel for action within our organization.

This multi-faceted approach has created a strong framework for Fenway Health to discern its strategic priorities and goals as it looks ahead to the next five years.

Mission

Fenway Health advocates for and delivers innovative, equitable, accessible health care, supportive services, and transformative research and education. We center LGBTQIA+ people, BIPOC individuals, and other underserved communities to enable our local, national, and global neighbors to flourish.

Values

Boldness

We value informed risk-taking and experimentation. We are willing to step outside our comfort zone, to fail and to learn. We stand up for what we believe in.

Community

We foster connection with one another to strengthen our work. We cultivate brave spaces in which people can come together to connect, be heard, and support one another.

Compassion

We meet the suffering of others with openness, generosity, understanding, and acceptance, and do all we can to alleviate it.

Humility

We recognize and accept our strengths and limitations. We are open to new ideas and perspectives. We make space for the voices of others. We are willing to ask for help.

Innovation

We are driven to identify, develop, and execute novel approaches to tough challenges to drive progress.

Integrity

We keep the promises we make to ourselves and each other. We are honest, forthright, and transparent. We take responsibility for our actions.

Justice

We believe every person is entitled to the same rights, access to power and resources, opportunity to live the life of their choosing, and respect.

Learning

We ask questions to understand, and embrace opportunities to learn, iterate, and improve.

Strategic Priorities & Goals

Strategic Priority 1

Center racial equity and social justice in our operations, care, and services, advancing health equity among those we serve, and pushing to dismantle and redesign systems that deprive BIPOC and other underserved people of the opportunity to be healthy and thrive

Strategic Goals

- Build a diverse Board of Directors committed to antiracism
- Establish a diverse team of senior leaders that advances racial equity
- Equip our managers and supervisors to lead equitably
- Recruit, hire, retain, and advance a diverse, talented team
- Engage deeply within the communities we serve
- Cultivate a rich learning environment
- Track and leverage data to improve ourselves and our impact
- Foster a culture of belonging

Strategic Priority 2

Expand how we serve local communities effectively while exploring ways to better support LGBTQIA+ communities everywhere

Strategic Goals

- Enhance research, education, care, advocacy, and services for LGBTQIA+, BIPOC, intersectional, and other underserved communities
- Broaden community access through adopting a “No Wrong Door” approach
- Ensure patient- and client-facing staff have the linguistic and cultural competency to provide high quality care to diverse communities
- Identify and develop new national care delivery models for underserved communities that incorporate telehealth and leverage partnerships
- Expand local services beyond our current physical locations

Strategic Priority 3

Achieve greater impact by aligning and integrating our core services in the health center, our public health services, advocacy, research, and education/training programs

Strategic Goals

- Foster a culture of effective collaboration and communication throughout the organization
- Leverage our expertise and experience across core services to more effectively fulfill our mission
- Develop a broader unifying vision of the scope of Fenway Health’s public health work, and align internal systems and external messaging to advance this vision

Strategic Priority 4

Ensure financial sustainability and support innovation to enable long-term impact

Strategic Goals

- Strengthen our business model to diversify and optimize revenue streams and establish new business opportunities
- Evolve our care delivery models to optimize value-based reimbursement
- Reimagine donor engagement and embrace new resource development approaches

Fenway Health has developed a Financial Management & Capital Expenditure Plan to help guide its strategic decisions.

Implementation

Fenway Health will strive to fulfill its mission through the advancement of these strategic priorities and goals over the next five years. To achieve this, we will develop an annual Action Plan with targeted objectives that measurably and meaningfully move the priorities and goals forward. Through this work, we will change the way we serve LGBTQIA+, BIPOC, and other underserved individuals throughout the lifespan, from Alternative Insemination, to youth, families, adults, and the aging. The Board of Directors and senior leadership will assess our progress at regular intervals, and we will report our progress to the community annually.

Conclusion

This is an historic moment for Fenway Health. The organization has new leadership, the needs of the people who count on us are shifting, racial equity has assumed a central role in our collective consciousness, the current policy, political, and health care landscape remains unsettled, and the COVID-19 pandemic has posed unprecedented challenges to us all. Fenway Health is rising to the occasion, embracing this extraordinary opportunity to transform ourselves into the organization we need to become to deliver on the full promise of our mission now, and tomorrow.

The next five years will be an exciting time that will determine the future of our organization. We believe this strategic plan will provide the direction and inspiration to guide us to a brighter future.