

# More Than a Job: 3Mers Using Their Expertise to Address Equity Disparities

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When corporations tackle social justice initiatives, it is important to go beyond messaging and to look at the unique ways they can put those words into action to have a greater impact on the world.

“There is a need to have purpose and meaning in what we do,” said Anila Prabhu, vice president of sustainability for 3M Health Care. “Our employees are passionate and energized about addressing health care disparities – they want to act, do their part and make a difference in our communities. Through employee engagement, leadership support and prioritization of social justice efforts, we’ve seen we can make a real impact.”

3M Health Care is one of 3M’s four business groups that recently set **new commitments** to leverage the full capabilities of their people, products, philanthropy and partnerships. Each commitment is uniquely ownable for that business group, using bold and impactful actions focused on health equity, urban safety and mobility, homeownership and training in skilled trades.

Translating messages into actions

The commitment made by 3M Health Care was created to address health care access and disparities for marginalized communities based on **social determinants of health (SDoH)** – which the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines as the “conditions in places where people live, learn, work and play that affect a wide range of health and quality of life risks and outcomes.”

“Only 20 percent of health outcomes are influenced by medical care alone,” said Anila. “The remaining 80 percent of the outcomes are influenced by social and economic factors.”

Anila says it’s important to listen first. 3M Health Care employees sat down with members of community-based organizations and leaders who have the trust of the community.

“We partner with these organizations and we ask them what their needs are,” Anila said. “And once we understand them, we look within 3M to find where we have capabilities, competencies and other ways in which 3M Health Care employees can meet that organization’s needs.”

A great example of this was work 3M Health Care teams did in partnership with the **Get to Yes coalition**. According to the **Minnesota State Oral Health Plan**, many Minnesotans suffer from dental diseases and oral conditions due to limited access to oral health services and dental insurance. A public policy to increase access to these critical services was needed.

After hearing of this issue, the health care team reached out to 3M's government affairs expert who helped guide the Get to Yes coalition through the classic playbook for public policy and advocacy. It helped the coalition translate their knowledge to statements of public value and pinpoint influential leaders whose communities would be positively impacted by the proposal and could champion their goals. Together, the team prepared a whitepaper and a series of highly customized legislative communications and requests using the playbook.

Through this partnership with the 3M team, Get to Yes secured a \$61 million increase in funding from the state legislature for Minnesotans on Medicaid. Per Medicaid policy, the federal government matches state costs with federal dollars, further increasing funding. This work will help hundreds of thousands of historically marginalized Minnesotans gain access to critically needed dental care.

3M Health Care has partnered with 3Mgives for the 3M Impact Health Care Program – the global skills-based service program that empowers 3Mers to do what they do best, make an impact – to work with Minnesota-based organizations focused on addressing health care disparities and social determinants of health. The 3M Impact Health Care program will expand globally in 2022.

3M Health Care is also partnering with academic institutions to advance their work on research and teaching in the area of health care disparities. 3M recently funded a grant to the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health in the School of Medicine at the University of Minnesota. This grant will help train primary care providers to ensure they have the skills and abilities to care for all patients and equipped to care for people from communities who have been historically marginalized.

“To work on the issue as big as health care disparities and to be able to chip away at it is energizing,” Anila said. “It is important to collaborate with community-based organizations and community, academic, business, industry and government leaders – along with health care systems – to collectively make a meaningful impact.”

For more details about the other three business group equity commitments, and what 3M is doing to create greater equity in our workplaces, communities and business practices, visit [3M.com/equity](https://www.3m.com/equity).

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