








Executive Summary

Session Leaders

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Summary

 The Downeast Digital Summit convened healthcare practice leaders, investors, and innovators to tackle one of the most pressing challenges in modern healthcare: achieving sustainable health equity. The event's core mission was to shift the paradigm from reliance on government funding and philanthropy towards developing commercially viable business models that can attract investment and drive long-term, equitable health outcomes.

Throughout the event, participants engaged in a series of thought-provoking sessions that explored the multifaceted nature of health equity initiatives. Discussions ranged from the critical role of community engagement to the transformative potential of personalized care informed by ethnographic insights. The event also shed light on the need for innovative financing strategies designed to overcome the limitations of traditional venture capital in the health equity space.




A recurring theme was the need for data-driven decision-making, with emphasis on the standardization, sharing, and analysis of healthcare data. Participants recognized that fostering robust partnerships among payers, providers, employers and government programs such as Medicare and Medicaid is essential to creating a cohesive ecosystem that supports equitable health solutions. Moreover, the event explored the potential of digital innovation, artificial intelligence, and machine learning in revolutionizing care delivery and accelerating the implementation of health equity initiatives.

The culmination of these discussions led to dynamic brainstorming sessions, from which four high-potential projects emerged:

-  **Consortium to Support Health Equity Digital Pilot Ecosystem (COVE)**, aimed at developing a collaborative framework to pilot health equity initiatives
-  **Accessibility Lab with Inclusive Design (GUMBO)**, focused on creating an environment to test and refine inclusive healthcare solutions.
-  **Aging in Place Platform with Risk Stratification**, designed to enhance senior care by identifying and managing risk factors.
-  **Birth Equity with Doulas, Care Coordination, and Early Intervention**, which seeks to improve maternal and infant health outcomes through coordinated care.

Looking ahead, the event identified two critical considerations. First, a concerted effort to understand public health policy, in order to implement systemic changes that promote transparency, accountability, and collaboration across local and federal levels of government. This policy push aims to align initiatives to leverage opportunities to democratize healthcare data, prioritize maternal health, and create a more responsive healthcare system for underserved communities.




Second, the event emphasized the importance of building and nurturing a community of practice. This network of health equity leaders will serve as the driving force behind the initially outlined initiatives, providing a platform for ongoing collaboration, knowledge sharing, and mutual support among stakeholders committed to health innovation. Specific actions to build this community were identified, including:

-  Establishing the necessary infrastructure to facilitate collaboration and coordination among participants.
-  Identifying individuals to support specific roles within the community.
-  Determining how each individual is able to contribute their expertise, resources, or time to advance the health equity agenda.

These community-building efforts aim to create a sustainable ecosystem of support for the ongoing work in health equity, ensuring that the momentum generated at the event translates into lasting impact.

The summit's goal was to chart a course towards a paradigm for health equity initiatives where commercial viability and social impact are not mutually exclusive. By exploring healthcare delivery through an equity lens and harnessing the power of digital technologies and community, the event has established the foundation for transformative change in healthcare accessibility and outcomes.

Prioritized Workstreams

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Consortium to Support Health Equity Digital Pilot Ecosystem (COVE)
 COVE is a marketplace designed to accelerate the development of digital health solutions targeting underserved populations. By engaging community members and healthcare providers as co-creators, COVE ensures that innovations address real-world problems. This collaborative ecosystem allows for rapid testing, scaling, and refinement of solutions while ensuring that communities benefit both through improved outcomes and financial equity in the innovations. COVE fosters a sustainable environment where startups can thrive, while tackling healthcare disparities head-on.
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Accessibility Lab with Inclusive Design (GUMBO)
 GUMBO focuses on creating digital health tools that are accessible and equitable for diverse populations, particularly people with disabilities and those from culturally marginalized groups. Through listening sessions and community engagement, GUMBO incorporates the voices of underrepresented individuals into the design process, ensuring that solutions are tailored to their needs. Entrepreneurs and developers are trained in inclusive design principles, promoting tools that are both functional and accessible. GUMBO's open-source model allows continuous improvement based on user feedback, making healthcare tools more effective and inclusive over time.
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Aging in Place Platform with Risk Stratification
 The Aging in Place Platform helps older adults safely remain in their homes by providing personalized risk assessments and care plans. By continuously monitoring health and environmental factors, the platform ensures that senior individuals receive the support they need to avoid unnecessary hospitalizations and institutionalization. The initiative also offers resources for caregivers, including training and financial planning, helping ease the burdens of caregiving while promoting better health outcomes for aging populations.
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Birth Equity with Doulas, Care Coordination, and Early Intervention
 The Birth Equity Project improves maternal and infant health outcomes by integrating doula services, care coordination, and early intervention. Focusing on women of color, the initiative provides culturally sensitive care throughout pregnancy and postpartum, aiming to reduce maternal and infant mortality. Doulas, combined with community-based health services, offer crucial support, empowering mothers and improving overall outcomes for both mothers and babies.

Event Themes

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Digital Innovation in Health Equity
 Leveraging digital tools and data analytics to address health disparities and improve care delivery.
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Community Engagement
 Involving communities in the design and implementation of health solutions to ensure they meet specific needs.
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Collaborative Efforts
 Partnerships among payers, employers, healthcare professionals, and government agencies to advance health equity.
- 
Innovative Financing Models
 Developing new funding mechanisms that prioritize equitable outcomes and community ownership.
- 
Data-Driven Decision Making
 Utilizing data and analytics, including AI and ML, to inform health equity initiatives and personalize care.

Insights

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 Building trust between healthcare groups and patients is crucial for meaningful engagement and improved health outcomes.
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 Ethnographic research and journey mapping are critical tools for designing healthcare models that truly cater to patient preferences and experiences.
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 Data accuracy and addressing social determinants of health are essential for achieving equitable health outcomes.
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 Data sharing and analytics are critical for informed decision-making and advancing health equity across all healthcare sectors.
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 Interoperability challenges and cybersecurity concerns are significant barriers to effective data sharing for health equity.
- 
 Community-centered design and engagement are critical in developing health solutions that are both effective and equitable.
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 Aligning traditional venture capital with health equity goals is challenging due to the long-term nature of impact and the importance of trust-building within communities.

**Top
Topics**

Health Equity

Digital
Innovation

Data Sharing

Community
Engagement

Health
Disparities

Medicare
Policies

Artificial
Intelligence
and Machine
Learning

Medicaid
Innovation

Maternal
Health

Ethnography