

POPULATION HEALTH FORUMS

Community Health and Development: New Avenues in Partnership and Financing

Donald Hinkle-Brown

CEO and President

The Reinvestment Fund

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Dr. Nash introduced the March Forum speaker, [Donald Hinkle-Brown](#), by raising the question, “how can we use reallocation of resources to improve the real estate infrastructure to support health?” This, Nash stated, is certainly aligned with our mission in “health is all we do” and viewing housing as a key determinant of health.

Donald Hinkle-Brown is the CEO and President of the [Reinvestment Fund](#), a catalyst for change in low-income communities whose mission is to build wealth and opportunity for low wealth people and places through the promotion of socially and environmentally responsible development. Hinkle-Brown is recognized as an expert in mission investing and capacity building through his work developing new programmatic initiatives, raising capital and creating new products that improve opportunity, equity and health for underserved people and places.

Mr. Hinkle-Brown first explained that equity and social justice is really what initially drove the work of the Reinvestment Fund and the creation of the community development financial industry. From an equity perspective, the community

development problem is really a health problem. For example, Hinkle-Brown points out that nearly one-fifth of all Americans live in low-income neighborhoods that offer far fewer opportunities for healthy living than residents in adjacent, higher wealth communities.

The increased focus on social determinants of health also drives the work and mission of the Reinvestment Fund. The opportunity for improved health is connected to the quality of homes, schools, jobs, food and neighborhoods. The Reinvestment Fund works to build opportunities through capital (grants, loans, equity investments), knowledge (information, policy, analysis), and innovation (products, markets, and strategic partnerships).

Mr. Hinkle-Brown described in detail the operational function of the Fund which consists of organized people, money, capacity, and data. Their clients include government, philanthropy, and private organizations. The Fund is an intermediary both in terms of capital and data and that has helped stakeholders across the country develop a framework for community investment. “We view ourselves as a *think bank*,” states Hinkle-Brown. An example of one of the early initiatives of the Reinvestment Fund was their investment in access to healthy foods and grocery stores. Their role as a leader in healthy food

financing served as a national model for others embarking on similar efforts.

The Reinvestment Fund is part of the Collaborative for Healthy Communities, an initiative designed to provide capital for community health centers, including Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC). They have partnered with the Public Health Institutes to align health and community development; and they have built the federal [Healthy Food Financing Initiative \(HFFI\)](#) with [The Food Trust](#) and [PolicyLink](#) in an effort to support projects that increase access to affordable food in communities.

Hinkle-Brown explained the Reinvestment Fund is helping hospitals and providers realize the health benefits of community development by focusing on the components necessary to improve health in low-income communities. Hinkle-Brown concluded by discussing Invest Health, a collaborative program with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation created to help mid-size cities attract capital, build partnerships through different sectors, improve health outcomes and use data as a driver for change.

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