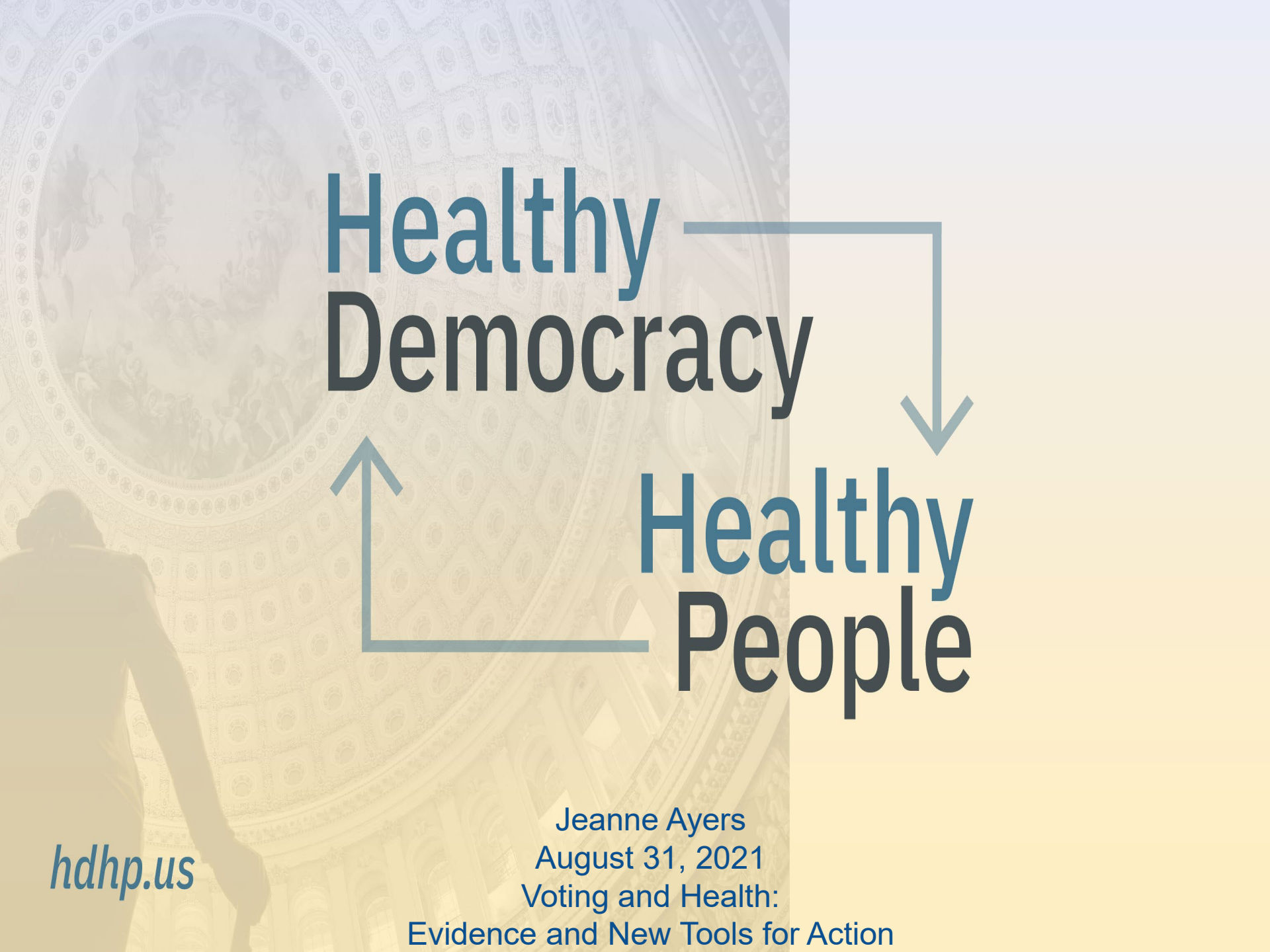




Healthy Democracy

Healthy People

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Jeanne Ayers
August 31, 2021
Voting and Health:
Evidence and New Tools for Action

Advancing health equity through civic and voter participation

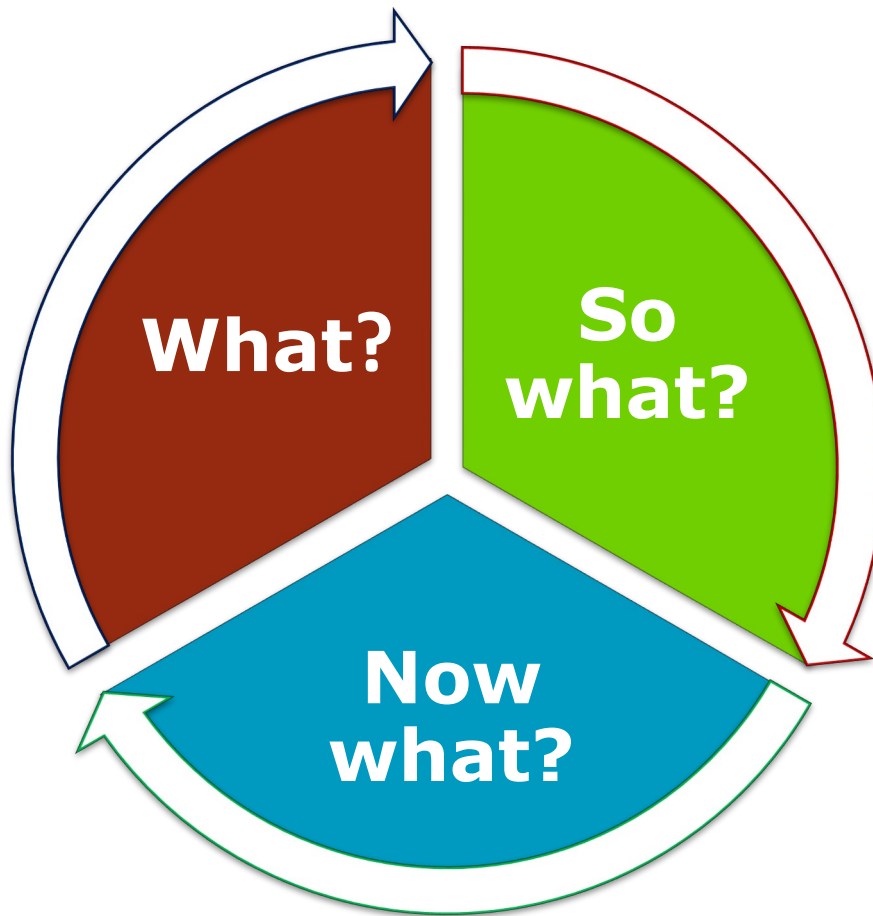
- ***Introduce 3 practices designed to build our capacity (power) to advance health equity*** by influencing the social and political conditions necessary for healthy, inclusive communities.
 - Organize narrative, data, knowledge
 - Organize policy, processes, resources, funding
 - Organize and strengthen community capacity
- Name 2-3 actions we can take to promote full civic and voter participation.

Health is a complex system

Health is a complex system or set of systems that intersect and influence one another.

To advance health equity we need to develop the power to influence the systems that create healthy communities, the social and political determinants of health.

A Systems Approach to Navigating Complexity



- **What?:** Identify existing patterns
- **So What?:** Understand the meaning of the pattern what is its impact on our aim? What sustains the pattern?
- **Now What?** What can we do to change the pattern?
Employ 3-7 simple practices

What is Our Public Health Work?

Selected Public Health Agency Mission Statements

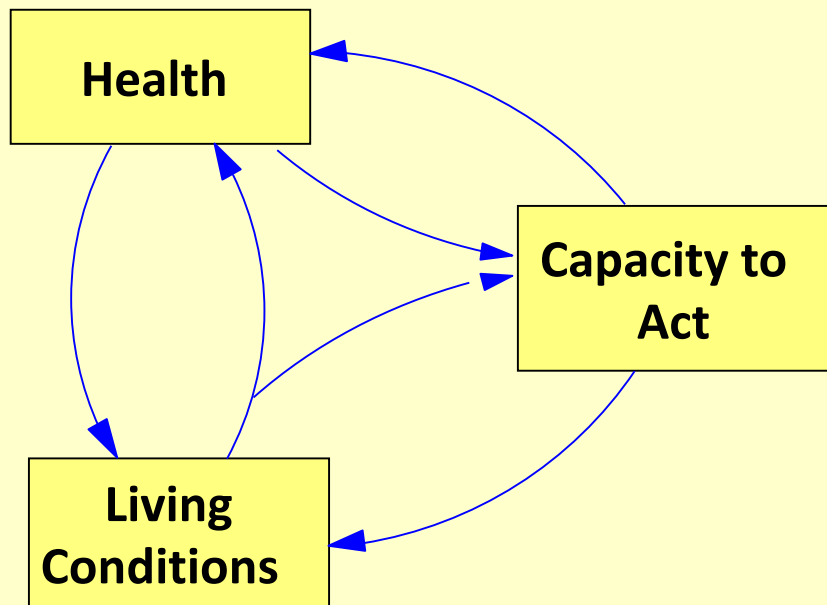
- Saving lives. Protecting people
- Protecting, maintaining and improving the health of all ____
- Protect, preserve, and promote the health and safety of the people
- Promote health and quality of life by preventing and controlling disease, injury, and disability

Institute of Medicine

Public health is what we, as a society, do collectively to assure the conditions in which (all) people can be healthy.

How we reconcile these two frames of reference will shape the possibilities for what we can accomplish

Strategic Action: Build capacity to influence living conditions

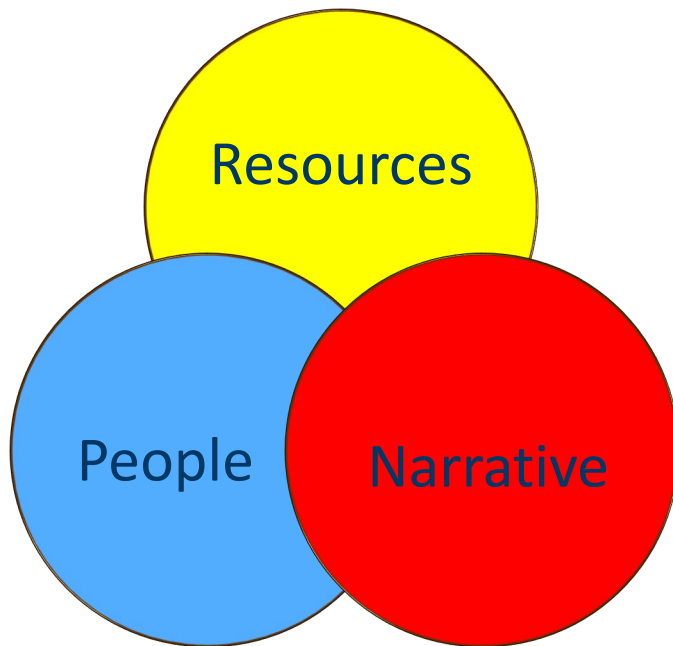


To assure health we must build our collective “capacity to act” (power)

Presented by: Jeanne F. Ayers, Minnesota Department of Health - Milstein B. Hygeia's constellation: navigating health futures in a dynamic and democratic world. Atlanta, GA: Syndemics Prevention Network, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; April 15, 2008. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/syndemics/monograph/index.htm>

Three Practices Strengthen “Capacity to Act” - Power

Organize the:



- **Organize People: Strengthen the capacity of community:** *Align efforts and strengthen relationships across organizations to promote access to the ballot for everyone.*
- **Organize narrative, knowledge, data:** *Collectively promote the understanding of the relationship of health to civic engagement, inclusion and social cohesion.*
- **Organize Resources/policies and how systems and places work:** *Assure systems and resources of support for civic and electoral system participation.*

Civic Infrastructure in our everyday lives

Employ Tools with Equity as Aim

- Research, data collection, analysis, Health Assessments, planning
- Reports/white papers/Bully Pulpit/testimony/op-eds
- Policy-all levels, Health in all Policies
- Programs, grant-making, resource allocation, budgeting
- Relationship building, Stakeholder/Power analysis
- Convening-Process- Community Engagement-partnerships
- Align our actions with what we know creates health
- Asking Questions

The Role of Narrative for Health Equity

- Narrative determines how issues are understood and framed
- “Dominant narratives” take over public conversations-
influence public will and policy-making discussions
- What is our role? What issues are we reporting on? What are
we saying? Widen the set of issues to include broader set of
determinants
- Transparency- What assumptions and values are amplified?
- *Expanding public understanding in words and action—*
narrative is informed by what we say, who we work with and
what we do

Take Action

Civic Health Champions

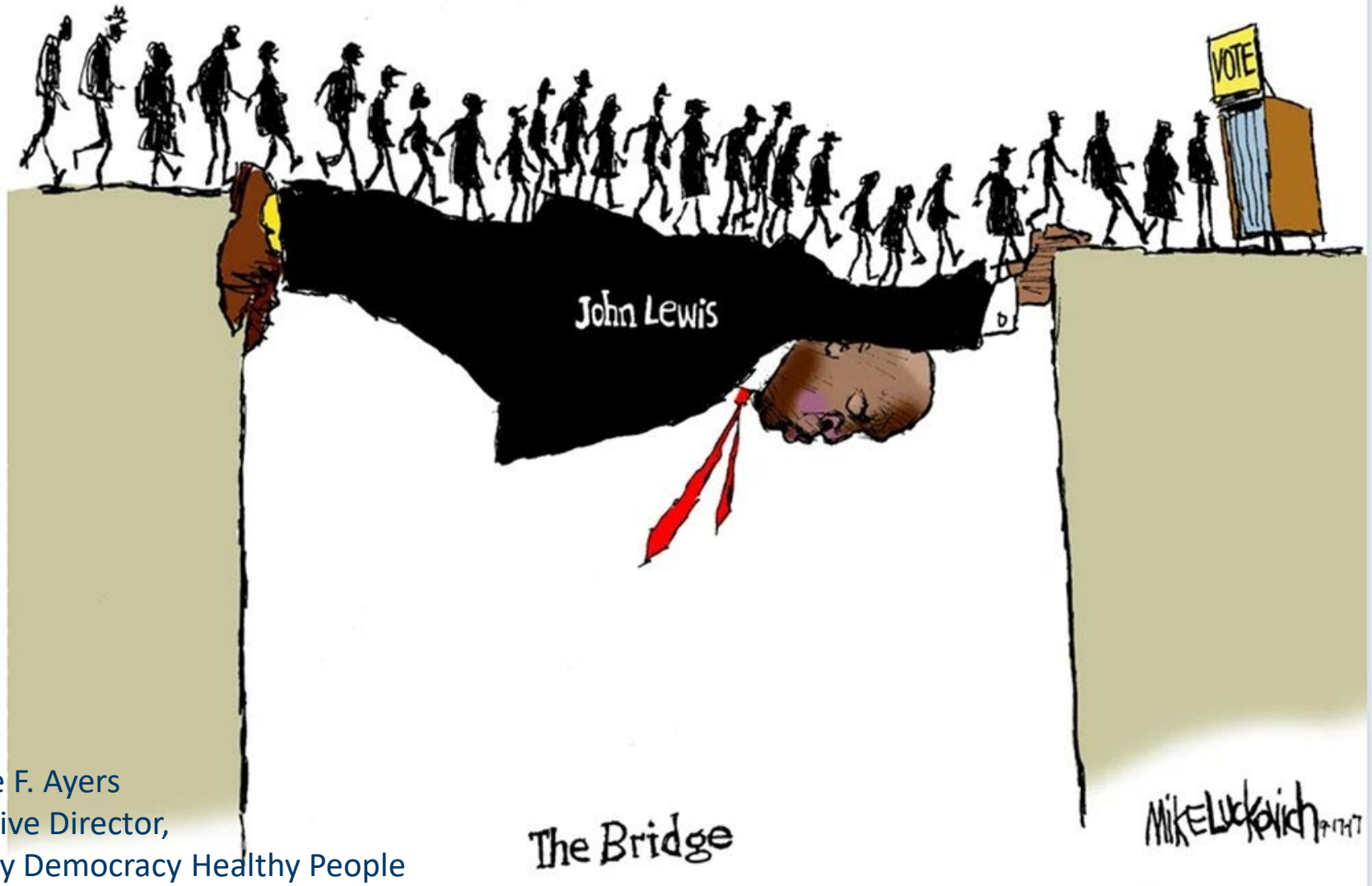
- **Civic Health Champion**—*Embrace the imperative to address structural racism and promote policies that assure and encourage civic and voter participation*
- **Promote the understanding** *of critical connections between healthy democracy and healthy people—writing, speaking and actions*
- **Build and leverage your influence to impact policies** *through your national and local organizations and your professional and personal roles*
- **Encourage voter registration in all services you provide or influence** *-clinical and social services, grants—WIC, SNAP, patient history and education, etc*
- **Conduct research and data analysis**—*include voter registration in data sets i.e. Healthy People 2030, BRFSS and strengthen analysis*

Actions to promote full civic participation

- **Promote policies that expand access to the ballot box** i.e. no-excuse mail and early voting, automatic voter registration (AVR)-Medicaid
- **Assuring easy, equitable access to voter registration is an urgent priority.**
 - At least 161 million voted in 2020-66.8% turnout rate--More than 100 million voted early, either by mail or in-person
 - And yet....**80 million eligible non-voters.** Top reason for not voting: not being registered (29%) (Medill/Ipsos survey Dec 2020)
- **September 15-VOTING & HEALTH: OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPAND INCLUSION** -- Opportunities such to strengthen and expand Automatic Voter Registration through programs such as Medicaid

Healthy Democracy Healthy People

“Every generation leaves behind a legacy.”



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