

New Chapter Quick Start Guide

Aequitas Health · National Medical Honor Society for Health Equity

Welcome to Aequitas Health

Starting an Aequitas Health chapter at your medical school is a meaningful step toward promoting health equity and addressing health disparities in your community. This guide walks you through the process — from initial planning to launching your chapter's first class of fellows.

Keep communication open. Stay in touch with your medical school administration, student affairs office, and the national Aequitas Health organization throughout the process. We're here to provide guidance, support, and resources at every step.

What You'll Need

A leadership team. 2–4 passionate students who share your vision for health equity.

Administrative approval. Clearance from your Dean of Student Affairs or Dean of Diversity.

A chapter charter. Outlining your chapter's purpose, goals, and election process.

A faculty advisor. A faculty member committed to supporting your chapter.

An annual chapter fee. \$100/year — covers cords, certificates, and national infrastructure.

No fees will ever be collected from fellows. Being elected as an Aequitas Health Fellow is an honor — it should never contribute to the financial burden of medical education.

Step 1: Research & Planning

Familiarize yourself with your medical school's requirements for starting a new student organization. This typically involves your Dean of Student Affairs or Dean of Diversity. Understand the necessary procedures, required documentation, and any approval timelines.

Identify passionate individuals who share your vision for health equity to form a leadership team. This team will be instrumental in establishing and managing the chapter. Once ready, reach out to the national Aequitas Health organization to begin the formal process.

Step 2: Draft Your Chapter Charter

Draft a chapter charter that outlines the purpose, goals, and activities of your local chapter. This document should align with the mission and values of Aequitas Health as a national organization.

Use the sample charter provided by the national organization as your starting point. Your charter should address: chapter leadership structure, fellow election criteria, expected health equity projects, and how the chapter will integrate with your school's existing organizations.

A blank chapter charter template is available for download at aequitashealth.org in both Word and PDF formats.

Step 3: Design the Election Process

Develop a fair, transparent, and inclusive election process to select medical students as fellows. Establish clear guidelines for applications and evaluations, and create a timeline that includes the nomination period and voting procedure.

The process should assess candidates' dedication to health equity and identify outstanding students — no more than 5–10% of the graduating class. Consider involving faculty members or community advisors to ensure a rigorous selection process.

Step 4: Connect with the National Organization

Reach out to the national Aequitas Health organization to officially notify them of your intention to establish a local chapter. Submit your chapter charter for approval and discuss any questions about the process.

Stay in communication with the national organization regarding the annual election of new fellows. Provide updates about your chapter's activities, achievements, and leadership changes. The national organization will support you with resources, templates, and guidance.

Step 5: Develop Health Equity Projects

Elected fellows are required to develop local health equity projects within your medical school and surrounding communities. Collaborate with community organizations, healthcare providers, and other stakeholders to implement initiatives that address health disparities.

Seek funding opportunities locally through your school or other means to support these projects. Fellows may also apply for grants through the national organization to help bring their health equity vision to life.

Key Requirements at a Glance

Chapter annual fee	\$100 (covers cords, certificates, infrastructure)
Fellows selected	No more than 5–10% of graduating class

Fellows pay	\$0 — fellowship is always free for students
Each fellow	Completes a health equity project
Chapter maintains	A leadership structure and charter

What Fellows Receive

Every fellow inducted through your chapter receives:

Honor Society Certificate. A formal certificate from the national organization.

Graduation Cord. A distinctive cord for commencement.

Journal Publication. Publish in the Aequitas Health Journal — an indexed health equity publication with Google Scholar metadata.

National Conference. Present work and learn from distinguished speakers at the annual conference — free, virtual, and asynchronous.

Grant Eligibility. Apply for competitive project grants (\$500 each).

Career Resources. 10 professional development guides covering CVs, personal statements, interviews, project management, grant writing, and more.

Ready to Start?

Your next step is to reach out. Email the national organization to express interest and begin the conversation. We'll walk you through everything from charter to launch.

Email: health.equity@aequitashealth.org

Web: aequitashealth.org/reach

Timeline: Most chapters launch within one semester after initial contact