SUMMARY

This panel explored how the Vital Conditions, such as humane housing, reliable transportation, access to nature, meaningful work, and a sense of belonging , significantly shape cardiovascular health and blood pressure control. By highlighting the **systemic, community-level factors** that influence hypertension and leveraging the **Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being Framework**, the discussion called for multi-sector collaboration and strategic investments that offer **multiple co-benefits** across health, equity, and civic engagement.

KEY THEMES & TAKEAWAYS

1. Vital Conditions as a Foundation for Health

- **Becky Payne** introduced the **Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being** framework as a response to the limitations of traditional Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) efforts.
- Only **52% of Americans currently report thriving**, which is a societal failure.
- The framework focuses on **seven interdependent conditions**:
    - Basic needs for health and safety
    - Humane housing
    - Meaningful work and wealth
    - Lifelong learning
    - Reliable transportation
    - A thriving natural world
    - Belonging and civic muscle (the “heart space” of the model)

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2. Multi-Solving: Designing for Co-Benefits

- Solutions should be **designed to achieve multiple outcomes** at once, e.g., an initiative that promotes physical activity, social cohesion, and civic engagement.
- Multi-solving helps shift from a **scarcity mindset** (more programs, more funding) to **an abundance mindset** (leveraging existing assets more strategically).

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3. Mayor Angie Nelson Deuitch: The Power of Local Leadership

- Shared her **personal hypertension diagnosis at age 39**, discovered by chance at a grocery store blood pressure screening.
- Advocates for **wraparound community strategies** to address health — beyond medication, including stress reduction, walkability, food access, and mental health.

- Michigan City's "**Move with the Mayor**" program exemplifies multi-solving:
    - Combines physical activity, cultural engagement (e.g., line dancing), health screenings, and access to city services.
- Created **neighborhood beautification funds**, **youth programs**, and **leadership academies** to foster community ownership, prevent violence, and improve civic pride.
- Emphasized the importance of **engaging residents who feel unheard**, encouraging them to join boards or advisory roles.

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4. Dr. Dan Lackland: The Science and Systems of Hypertension Control

- Hypertension affects **nearly 50% of U.S. adults**, but **fewer than half are controlled** despite known treatments.
- Solutions must go beyond individual behavior to **address environments** that influence awareness, measurement, and treatment adherence.
- Stressed the need for:
    - **Validated BP devices** available in and out of clinics
    - Widespread **blood pressure literacy**
    - Lifestyle interventions (reduced sodium, increased activity)
- In the **Stroke Belt**, place of birth and lifestyle during formative years (ages 0–20) are strong predictors of lifetime stroke risk.
- Advocated for **youth engagement strategies** to instill lifelong healthy habits.

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5. Salt Consumption and Processed Foods

- U.S. salt consumption is **far above necessary levels**, largely due to **processed foods and restaurant meals**, not table salt.
- Labeling is often confusing or misleading (e.g., small serving sizes).
- Need for improved **consumer education**, better **labeling practices**, and **industry partnerships** to reduce sodium in the food supply.

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6. Civic Muscle and Belonging

- **Civic engagement** is not just voting, including volunteering, joining local boards, and participating in community life.
- **Belonging** is a powerful antidote to social isolation, and critical for mental and physical well-being.
- Investing in these areas helps strengthen **resilience**, reduce chronic stress, and build collective capacity to improve community health.

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7. Policy and Economic Development

- Mayor Deuitch addressed economic inequities tied to zoning and access to capital:
    - Low-income neighborhoods often attract "low threshold" businesses (liquor stores, pawn shops).
    - Created **grant programs** and **neighborhood coalitions** to **reclaim economic development** and resist harmful businesses.
    - Investing in people—through leadership academies and listening campaigns—has led to **increased civic participation** and **greater community control.**

MEMORABLE QUOTES

- **Becky Payne:** "We've made the case for SDOH, but we've failed to make progress. Vital conditions are about moving people to action."
- **Mayor Angie Deuitch:** "Your passion is enough. We can help you learn the rest."
- **Dr. Dan Lackland:** "We've proven we can control blood pressure. The question is: why aren't we implementing what we know works?"
- **Becky Payne:** "We're great at pounding the problem into people. But we need to call people in with hope."

ACTIONABLE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Invest in Vital Conditions**
    - Think beyond healthcare access to conditions that shape daily life (e.g., housing, education, mobility, civic inclusion).
2. **Expand Blood Pressure Awareness**
    - Promote validated home monitoring and public screening access, especially in high-risk communities.
3. **Leverage Local Assets**
    - Use parks, gyms, and cultural resources to host events that blend health promotion with fun and civic engagement.
4. **Engage Youth Early**
    - Fill gaps in physical activity left by school closures and fund youth leadership, recreation, and mentorship programs.
5. **Empower Community Voices**
    - Invite residents to co-create solutions and provide the tools (e.g., leadership academies, stipends) to elevate their contributions.
6. **Collaborate Across Sectors**
    - Break silos by working with economic development, education, public safety, and transportation sectors to co-design initiatives.
7. **Rethink Salt Reduction Strategies**

    - Partner with food industry and tech developers to improve product labeling and reduce sodium in the food supply.

FINAL CALLS TO ACTION

- **Becky Payne:** Know your number—and your neighbor's.
- **Dr. Lackland:** Push for blood pressure literacy and validated home monitoring.
- **Mayor Deuitch:** Get checked and get moving—start with five minutes of joyful activity today.