CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF HEALTHCARE LEADERS (CAHL) DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (DEI) TOOLKIT

Second Edition – October 2023

ABSTRACT –

This toolkit is a guide that can be utilized by healthcare leaders to incorporate diversity and inclusion principles or enhance current DEI programs at their respective organizations. This toolkit is not intended to replace or serve as an organization's DEI plan but rather assist leaders in developing or evolving their own DEI plans. Lastly, the guidance in this toolkit was derived from best practices from local healthcare institutions and is not a comprehensive list of healthcare industry best practices.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Development of this toolkit relied on the input and insight of many people. It reflects the experiences of CAHL JEDI Committee members and other ACHE members and collaborators. Special thanks to the following individuals for assistance in the planning and development of this toolkit, direct contributions to its content, conception and design, critical revision of materials and review of the various toolkit drafts.

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"Diversity is being invited to the party. Inclusivity is being asked to dance" – Verna Myers
    "Not everything that is faced can be changed but nothing can be changed until it is faced" – James Baldwin

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INTRODUCTION

Why Diversity and Inclusion Matters

In the healthcare field, diversity and inclusion are a point of emphasis to ensure the workforce represents the patient population. Several studies conducted in the last few years have demonstrated activities to enhance diversity and inclusion provide several benefits to organizations, such as driving innovation, increasing performance, improving the social experience in the workplace, and increasing financial output.

1. Higher level of leadership diversity is correlated with better innovation revenue, EBIT margins, and organizational performance

    In a 2018 survey obtained from employees working at over 1,700 organizations, from a variety of industries varying in organizational size, and located in Austria, Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Switzerland, and the United States, illustrated there was a statistically significant correlation between the diversity of management teams and overall innovation. In this study, innovation revenue and EBIT (Earnings Before Interest and Taxes) margins in organizations which measured a higher level of leadership diversity were reported 19 percent and 9 percent higher (respectively) than their counterparts with below-average leadership diversity, in all geographies.[i] Furthermore, this study revealed that in management positions, differences of age, ethnicity, gender and other dimensions like career path and industry background foster high performance and that the effects are additive for almost all dimensions.

2. Higher diversity environments are more likely to have better financial returns

    Other studies have also shown that high-diversity environments improve team performance by up to 30 percent[ii], and that companies in the top quartile for ethnic and racial diversity and for gender diversity in management were 35% and 15% (respectively) more likely to have financial returns above their industry mean.[iii]

3. A diverse workforce is associated with better clinical outcomes

    A study conducted by the National Academy of Sciences in 2018 showed that better clinical outcomes are associated with a diverse workforce. Data obtained from this study revealed that women treated by female doctors are more likely to survive a heart attack than women treated by male doctors; and male doctors are more effective at treating heart attacks when they work in hospitals with more female doctors.[iv]

4. Inclusion associated with better financial Performance and work culture

    A third report in a McKinsey series investigating the business case for diversity presented evidence that strengthened the positive relationship between diversity on executive teams and the likelihood of financial performance. The report focused on inclusion as a potential driver of performance and analyzed inclusion- related indicators on three industries with the highest levels of executive-team diversity in their existing data set: financial services, technology, and healthcare. Their findings highlighted that inclusion is also a significant concern among

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employees, and that a systematic, business-led approach and strategic actions to strengthen inclusion in an already diverse environment are also needed to advance talent into executive, management, technical, and board roles.[v]

5. TJC/CMS moves from optional to required- new requirements to improve health care equity

> Economic, social, and other injustices continue to create barriers to accessing high-quality health care across the nation, and healthcare organizations see this every day in the patient populations. To help organizations close the gaps in access and quality among patient groups, where health disparities are frequent, The Joint Commission (TJC) and Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) are growing their efforts to address systemic problems that impact care.

> Take note that the TJC is offering a new national advanced certification for health care equity. The program examines equity issues in all aspects of care, treatment, and health care delivery. In addition, the program's accreditation standards are a new National Patient Safety Goal.

> On another front, CMS has recognized that race and ethnicity data is incomplete for a substantial proportion of individuals. Through strategic partnerships, CMS is working to enhance data quality, address health inequities, and move away from programs where implicit bias is found.

> It is not unknown that this work is essential. Now that both TJC and CMS are reinforcing this, health care organizations must move forward to ensure that every patient experiences safe, high-quality care.

In the healthcare field, diversity continues to be a focal point for healthcare organizations as they attempt to recruit employees who are representative of the population served to provide culturally congruent care. However, several studies show in 2020-2021 the United States, even when efforts have been made to build a more diverse health workforce and reduce the gap in representation among healthcare professionals and executive leadership teams, there is still significant progress to be made.[vi, vii]

Creating awareness

The California Association of Healthcare Leaders is one of 77 chapters of the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) national organization. The CAHL Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee has focused on sharing and promoting the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and disseminating best practices within the healthcare field.

This DEI Toolkit is part of a broader effort within CAHL to support and help healthcare leaders engage in initiatives and efforts toward creating a more diverse and inclusive workplace. This toolkit is a compendium and comprehensive summary of basic DEI topics and terms considered essential for current healthcare leader. It includes a list of best practices from local healthcare organizations, separated into common DEI themes that represent common challenges faced by leaders in the healthcare field. This toolkit aims to provide a common knowledge background on diversity and inclusion. It is also intended to serve as a quick reference guide of tools that can be used to develop and implement strategic initiatives to address different aspects of inclusion and diversity in the workplace. We are happy to share these tools here.

FEDERAL, STATE, AND HEALTHCARE REGULATORY DEI STANDARDS

Federal DEI Standards

Executive Order on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce

State of California DEI Standards

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion | GovOps (ca.gov)

Healthcare Regulatory DEI Standards

The Joint Commission Requirement, Reference, and Rationale Report

The Joint Commission – Advancing Healthcare Equity

TOOLKIT OBJECTIVES

- Advance current CAHL and ACHE initiatives to foster diversity and inclusion and make our organization more inclusive and attractive to diverse candidates.

- Ensure that diversity and inclusion concepts are embedded and incorporated in every aspect of CAHL.

- Provide a resource for CAHL members to utilize as a tool to obtain a broad understanding of diversity and inclusion for their own circle of influence.

- Help develop and increase general cultural competency and awareness within CAHL and enhance our organizational cultural competitive advantage.

- Foster the idea of commonality across all cultural identities and groups represented in CAHL and provide a platform for them to connect.

<u>KEY TERMS & DEFINITIONS</u>

1. Diversity and Inclusion Definitions:

    Diversity – The term diversity entails several dimensions of the human reality and individuality, to include group or social differences such as race, socio-economic status, class, gender, sexual orientation, country of origin, ability, intellectual traditions, and perspectives, as well as cultural, political, religious, and other affiliations. Diversity also describes unique differences and variations in a group of people such as life experiences, learning and working styles, and personality types, among others.[viii]

    Inclusion – The term inclusion is used to describe the concerted effort and ongoing engagement with achieving an environment where all diverse individuals feel valued and "…are treated fairly and respectfully, have equal access to opportunities and resources and can contribute fully to the organization's success".[ix]

    Belonging: the term belonging relates to the experience of feeling welcomed, accepted, and connected to a particular social or cultural context, leading to a sense of identity, attachment, and inclusion. It plays a significant role in shaping an individual's self-esteem, well-being, and overall quality of life.

Diversity is not just about gender and race[x]

2. Equality vs Equity Definitions[xi]:

Equality – Equality has been defined as "…treating everyone the same"[xii], ensuring fairness to all parties and impartiality.

Equity – Equity has been defined as "…giving everyone what they need to be successful"[xiii]. This term is often associated with the concept of justice.

One of the most comprehensive definitions of equality and equity and its associated legal principles can be found in an article written by Robert Longley, a History and Government Expert with nearly 30 years of experience in U.S. municipal government and urban planning[xiii].

EQUALITY   EQUITY
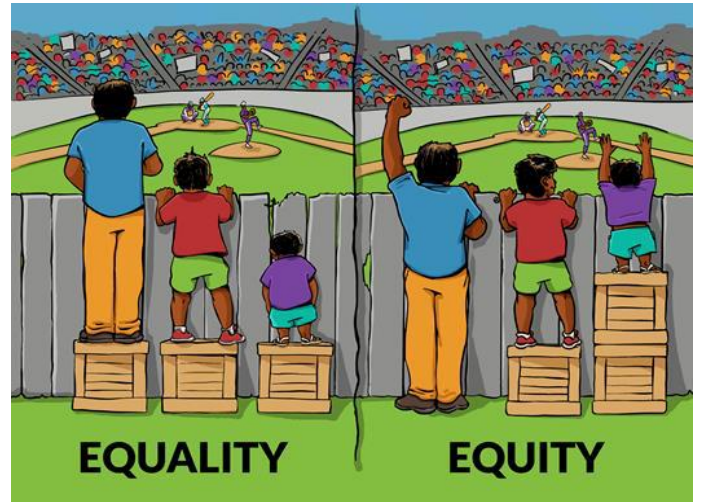
- **Equality Broader Definition**[xiv]

  In his article, Longley states: "The dictionary defines equality as the state of being equal in rights, status, and opportunity. In the context of social policy, equality is the right of different groups of people—such as men and women or Blacks and Whites—to enjoy the benefits of similar social status and receive the same treatment without the fear of discrimination.

  The legal principle of social equality in the United States was confirmed in 1868 by the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which provides that "nor shall any State [...] deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

  Writer Longley adds that "A modern application of the Equal Protection Clause can be seen in the Supreme Court's unanimous 1954 decision in the landmark case of Brown vs. Board of Education [xv, xvi], which declared that separate schools for African American and White children were inherently unequal and thus unconstitutional. The ruling led to the racial integration of America's public schools and paved the way for the enactment of more sweeping social equality laws, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964."

- **Equity Broader Definition**[xvii]

  In his article Longley states: "Equity refers to the provision of varying levels of support—based on specific needs—to achieve greater fairness of treatment and outcomes. The National Academy of Public Administration defines equity as "The fair, just and equitable management of all institutions serving the public directly or by contract; the fair, just and equitable distribution of public services and implementation of public policy; and the commitment to promote fairness, justice, and equity in the formation of public policy." In essence, equity can be defined as a means of achieving equality."

  Longley adds "For example, the Help America Vote Act requires that people with disabilities be provided with access to polling places and voting systems equal to that of able-bodied people. Similarly, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that persons with disabilities have equal

access to public facilities." "Recently, U.S. government policy has focused on social equity in the area of sexual orientation. For example, President Barack Obama appointed nearly 200 self-declared members of the LGBTQ Community to paid positions within the Executive Branch. In 2013, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development published the first-ever estimate of discrimination against same- sex couples in housing opportunities."

Longley explains that "Equity in the area of gender-based discrimination in education is provided by Title IX of the federal Education Amendments Act of 1972, which states, "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

Lastly, Longley states that "Title IX applies to virtually every aspect of the educational experience from scholarships and athletics, to employment and discipline at approximately 16,500 local school districts, 7,000 postsecondary institutions, as well as charter schools, for-profit schools, libraries, and museums. In athletics, for example, Title IX requires that women and men be provided equitable opportunities to participate in sports."

3. Bias and Prejudice Definitions:

Bias – The dictionary defines bias as "A predisposition or a preconceived opinion that prevents a person from impartially evaluating facts that have been presented for determination".[xviii] Cognitive bias has been defined as a **"…**systematic error in thinking that impacts one's choices and judgements"[xix], while organizational bias refers to what happens when work processes and decision-making in an organization are influenced by individual cognitive biases.[xx]

Image retrieved from URL: https://roxxcloud.com/ai-can-add-bias-to-hiring-practices-one-company-has-found-another-way/

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Prejudice – Merriam-Webster defines prejudice as a "preconceived judgment or opinion", "an adverse opinion or leaning formed without just grounds or before sufficient knowledge" and "an irrational attitude of hostility directed against an individual, a group, a race, or their supposed characteristics".[xxi]

The key difference between bias and prejudice is that bias refers to an inclination or propensity of the mind towards something while prejudice refers to the process of making a decision based on that inclination and premature judgment.

Image retrieved from URL: https://www.axley.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/shutterstock_383760118-copy.jpg

- Bias Broader Definitions

  Cognitive bias[xxii] – The human brain cannot process all the information to which it is exposed. Therefore, individuals are often tempted to make quick decisions based on conscious memories, which are typically based on experience and/or instincts. However, not all these decisions are desirable. Sometimes individuals find themselves making the same (bad) decisions based on unconscious bias that affects decision-making without being aware. To develop an inclusive mindset, people must actively try to become aware of their cognitive bias, and how that bias impacts decision making.

  Organizational bias[xxiii] – Even though individuals tend to make decisions based to personal bias, there is also a risk for Group Thinking where the effect of different perspectives is diminished because of high vulnerability to social conformity. This most often occurs in groups of people with similar perspectives and experiences, but it can also happen within groups of diverse people, who unconsciously and gradually adopt the opinions and beliefs of the majority in a group. Inclusive leadership openly encourages the difference of ideas and opinions on a team to continue cultivating the value of cognitive diversity.

- Prejudice Broader Definition
  Prejudice is an attitude that one has based mostly on opinions and stereotypes rather than facts and evidence. Although prejudice is a noun, and not a verb, prejudiced behavior is often influenced by bias. Once the switch is made from "thought/feeling" to "action," discrimination has occurred. Psychology definition experts hold that prejudice involves three main things: negative feelings; stereotyped beliefs; a tendency to discriminate against a stereotyped group. Scientific research has determined that prejudice can be an instinct. It can also be taught and reinforced by others in society. Thankfully, it can also be 'unlearned.' [xxiv]

DIVERSITY EQUITY & INCLUSION AND CAHL/ACHE

What Diversity and Inclusion Look Like in our Organization

The California Association of Healthcare Leaders through its Diversity and Inclusion Committee is dedicated to enabling an inclusive environment that recognizes the contributions of all our members and supports equity and the advancement of all, regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, religion, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, or disability. We believe diversity and inclusion is not limited to culture and ethnicity, but one's diversity of thought, geographic region (e.g., urban vs. rural), armed services level (e.g., active duty vs. veteran), careerist level (e.g., early vs. senior careerist), professional discipline (operations vs. quality), and area of oversight (e.g., administrative vs. clinical). We believe an inclusive environment can enhance equity, the quality of healthcare improves hospital/community relations, and positively affect the health status of society.

The California Association of Healthcare Leaders DEI Committee is dedicated to enabling an inclusive environment that recognizes the contributions of all our members and supports equity and the advancement of all, regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, religion, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, or disability.

- The DEI Committee was established in 2014 driven by engagement from CAHL members and passion from the CAHL Board. The committee's inaugural event was hosted on June 19, 2014 and celebrated the importance of diversity and inclusion in healthcare by hosting a networking event geared towards identifying new approaches for pursuing excellence in healthcare. In 2020, after hearing cries for social justice and equity from our communities, the DEI Committee incorporated Justice and Equity into the committee's name and is now recognized as the Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion committee.

The JEDI Committee is comprised of healthcare leaders from various disciplines who are passionate about promoting awareness to the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion. The JEDI Committee's mission can be interpreted through the JEDI Statement – a reflection of CAHL and JEDI's view are important to the CAHL Board and our membership. Interpreting DEI through a narrow lens of simply ethnic and/or cultural diversity would exclude many other individuals and communities who identify a kinship with the diverse and inclusive identity. CAHL covers 50 of the 58 California counties in central and northern California, including the highly diverse and global San Francisco Bay Area.

Members of the JEDI Committee have dual roles and individually serve as liaisons on other CAHL Committees to ensure our commitment and focus on JEDI remains front and center in all aspects of the chapter activities.

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CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR DEI STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Employee Engagement and Belonging

1. Conduct an employee engagement survey: This will help you understand the current level of employee engagement and identify areas that need improvement.

2. Develop a sense of belonging: Prioritize inclusion and diversity by developing an inclusive and diverse culture where employees can bring their full selves to work. Implement equitable career paths to strengthen diverse talent and let employees know their voices and opinions matter in important company decisions.

3. Promote transparency: Encourage open communication and transparency between employees and management. This will help build trust and foster a sense of belonging.

4. Recognize top performers: Recognize and reward top performers to show that their contributions are valued.

5. Provide opportunities for growth: Carve out career paths and provide opportunities for growth to keep employees engaged and motivated.

DEI Education and Training

1. Understand your audience: Before initiating a DEI program, make sure you understand the demands of your target audience. Try to openly communicate with your team leaders to ensure that the programming is relevant.

2. Define goals and measurement: Define what you want to accomplish with your DEI training and how you will measure success.

3. Adopt a cross-functional team approach: Involve people from different departments in the planning and implementation of DEI training. This will help ensure that the training is comprehensive and effective.

4. Identify resources: Identify the resources you need to implement your DEI training program, such as trainers, materials, and technology.

5. Use a variety of touchpoints: Use a variety of touchpoints to deliver your DEI training program, such as online courses, in-person workshops, and coaching sessions.

6. Engage members in your DEI outreach efforts: Engage members of your organization in your DEI outreach efforts by encouraging them to participate in training sessions and providing opportunities for feedback.

7. Measure, evaluate, and evolve: Measure the effectiveness of your DEI training program regularly and make changes as needed to ensure that it remains relevant and effective.

Workforce Recruitment and Retention

1. Define your DEI goals: Define your DEI goals and objectives for your recruitment process. This will help you identify the areas that need improvement and ensure that you are on track to achieve

your goals.

2. Attract a diverse pool of candidates: Attracting a diverse pool of candidates is key to building a more diverse workforce. You can do this by creating job postings that are inclusive and welcoming to all candidates, regardless of their background or experience.

3. Eliminate bias in the hiring process: Eliminating bias in the hiring process is essential to ensuring that all candidates are evaluated fairly. You can do this by using objective criteria to evaluate candidates, such as skills, experience, and qualifications.

4. Train recruiters and hiring managers: Train recruiters and hiring managers on DEI best practices to ensure that they are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to identify and attract diverse talent.

5. Partner with diversity organizations: Partnering with diversity organizations can help you reach a wider pool of diverse candidates. These organizations can also provide valuable resources and support for your DEI initiatives.

6. Measure your progress: Measuring your progress is essential to ensuring that you are making progress towards your DEI goals. You can do this by tracking key metrics such as the diversity of your candidate pool, the diversity of your hires, and employee retention rates 1.

Internal Talent Review and Development

1. Identify areas of bias: Identify areas of bias in your talent review process, such as gender, race, or age. This will help you ensure that all employees are evaluated fairly.

2. Train managers and leaders: Train managers and leaders on DEI best practices to ensure that they are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to identify and address issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

3. Use objective criteria: Use objective criteria to evaluate employees during the talent review process, such as skills, experience, and qualifications. This will help eliminate bias and ensure that all employees are evaluated fairly.

4. Provide feedback: Provide feedback to employees after the talent review process is complete. This will help them understand their strengths and weaknesses and provide them with opportunities for growth.

5. Create a culture of inclusion: Create a culture of inclusion by promoting transparency, encouraging open communication, recognizing top performers, and providing opportunities for growth.

Data, Analytics, and Reporting

1. Identify key metrics: Identify the key metrics that you will use to measure the effectiveness of your DEI initiatives. This may include metrics such as employee engagement, employee retention rates, and diversity of hires.

2. Collect data: Collect data on the key metrics identified in step 1. This may involve collecting data from various sources such as employee surveys, performance reviews, and HR records.

3. Analyze data: Analyze the data collected in step 2 to identify trends and patterns related to DEI in your organization. This will help you identify areas that need improvement and develop strategies

to address them.

4. Create reports: Create reports based on the data analyzed in step 3. These reports should be designed to communicate the findings of your analysis to stakeholders in a clear and concise manner.

5. Share reports: Share the reports created in step 4 with stakeholders across your organization. This will help ensure that everyone is aware of the findings of your analysis and can work together to address any issues identified.

Source: DEI Action Plan | Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion at UCSF Benioff Children's Hospitals

TOPICS FOR CONSIDERATION AND EXAMPLES OF HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY BEST DEI PRACTICES

The best practice information that follows reflects the JEDI Committee members' personal experiences and examples, _not_ a scholarly nationwide environmental scan. The examples, while not inclusive of all health systems in our CAHL region, are meant to serve as a sample of best practices from which you and your organization can draw from.

TOPIC #1 – Managing for Morale: Effective Management Techniques to Retain a Diverse Staff

Examples of Best Practices

- **Develop a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) department/committee** to advance DEI via monthly meetings with agenda topics, benchmarks, and goals to work towards. For example, John Muir Health established a Belonging and Equity office. The Belonging and Equity office has an Executive Director and two staff members who answer to the Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO). The Belonging and Equity offices has helped to begin to create a space for all staff to feel valued and their diversity better understood and celebrated.

- **Develop Employee Resource Groups**. Retention comes from a sense of safety, acceptance, and support. Begin with an employee resource group to find the highest-ranking member of that group within the organization to help give weight to the activities. For example, John Muir Health has developed the following Employee Resource Groups to support DEI in their system: Asian American and Pacific Islander

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- (AAPI) Caucus; Black Caucus; Latino Caucus; Middle Eastern Caucus; Community Engagement; Gender Equity; LGBTQ+; and Mental Health.

- **Recognize notable events via communication and inclusivity**. Host Town hall meetings after any major event impacting members of the community. For example, after the death of George Floyd, UCLA Health hosted a town hall with staff, and it was open to the community as well. At this forum, people spoke about how they were impacted by the incident, what they were experiencing as a result, and what they would like to see done to prevent something like that from happening in our community. By having these crucial conversations and inviting everyone to take part of the conversation, it really shows the organizations true intentions to genuinely help their team.

- **Ensure that DEI Meetings are consistent and have an objective outlined.** Consistency is critical. When organizations provide DEI training and fail to revisit the topics again, team members do not feel it was a genuine attempt to help. It sends a message the organization was seeking to accomplish a task, rather than making changes.

- **Offer Awards and Recognition Programs that are equally applicable to all individuals** based on superior performance and employee contribution to the organization's success. Regardless of their membership or belonging to a community of diversity. General awards and pay increases include Regular Performance-Based Increases, Accelerated Increases for Outstanding Performance, Special Contribution Awards, Quality Step Increases, Honor Awards, and Non-monetary Recognition. These Awards include recognition for Collaboration and Teamwork across Service Lines, Excellence in areas of Administration, Nursing and

Clinical Services, Outstanding Service to Veterans and their Families, Demonstration Above and Beyond Action, Initiative that Exceeds the Expectations and Contributions that have Measurable Outcomes.

- **Encourage Executive and Senior Leadership to explicitly support diversity and inclusion** and provides guidance on how to demonstrate commitment toward making our organization more inclusive. Consistent and clear messaging from the top of the organization is essential to convey the importance of the diversity, equity, and inclusion position of the organization. Special calendar dates related to a community of diversity are formally observed and celebrated with activities and events at facility, regional and national levels, where employees as well as patients can participate. Noteworthy celebrations include Black History Month, Women's History Month, Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, Gay/LGBTQ+ Pride Month, and National Hispanic Heritage Month. Also, leadership commonly sends messages of support and awareness raising to the field after life events that impact diverse groups in the community occur. These actions make employees feel that they are considered an important part of the organization, and that they are valued and respected, which has contributed to retain a diverse staff.

- **Obtain Executive Leadership buy-in and support.** Executive and physician sponsorship are critical for creating the dialogue around the DEI priorities. There needs to be high-level engagement with these efforts to create a safe space for people to work through their experiences.
  - Recommend senior management, especially diverse senior leaders to host "lunch & learns," or town hall meetings, and discuss ways to promote diversity throughout the organization. Communication is critical to combat low morale and trying to retain diverse employees. When there is a lack of diversity in the organization, team members may not feel comfortable sharing their concerns. It starts with the conversations. These can be awkward initially, but over time, as the members feel psychologically safe, they will begin to share their concerns. Healthcare leaders can respond by helping close the gaps and continue to improve.

- **Make concerted efforts to timely manage concerns and complaints on poor compliance** with organizational rules and regulations against any discrimination made based on being part of a community of diversity and maintains a "zero tolerance" rule for individual or systemic discrimination and racism in the workplace.

- **Take consistent disciplinary actions against acts that go against** DEI efforts at all levels of the organization and across all disciplines and types of employees.

- **Employ a workforce survey tool to gather information about employees' perception on DEI efforts.** For example, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) uses a tool called the *VA All Employee Survey (AES)* to measure the organization's health. The AES is a secured, confidential, and anonymous feedback tool from employees to management about employees' satisfaction and perceptions of the VA workplace. It is administered yearly and includes questions on diversity within the workplace, supervisor effectiveness, psychological safety, etc. Results, statistical data, and interpretation are relayed to all VA employees, nationally. Supervisors and managers at all levels of the organization are required to meet with their employees and jointly create and implement an action plan for the year on their areas of influence and their own agencies on issues identified as a priority and those requiring immediate attention for improvement. Actions taken in each stage of implementation and its progression need to be reported back to each supervisor and manager superiors on a quarterly basis which, in turn, need to report back to

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Senior and Executive Leadership.

- **Implement organizational recruiting strategies** for a more diverse staff and ensure they are visible to all employees in the organization.

- **Convey the importance of the diversity, equity, and inclusion position in a consistent and clear way.** Diversity, equity, and inclusion messaging from the top of the organization is essential. For example, the executive leadership team leverages email communication and video messages to all staff in the VA to share not only general information, but also to address critically important events in our communities, and noteworthy celebrations, such as Black History Month, Women's History Month, Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, Gay/LGBTQ+ Pride Month, and National Hispanic Heritage Month. Both the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and VA under Secretary for Health (USH) have explicitly condemned racism, violence, and discrimination against any members of society.

- **Become an ally in helping support DEI groups and programs at your organization.** Utilize inclusive language and have open and honest conversations with the executive leadership on ways to incorporate more DEI practices, collect feedback from team members.

TOPIC #2 – Career Positioning: Proactively Managing Career/Professional Development Opportunities for a Community of Diversity

Image retrieved from URL: https://www.csr-in-action.org/leveraging-diversity-inclusion-corporate-growth/

Examples of Best Practices:

- **Develop opportunities for career/professional development for all roles and titles**. At times, organizations concentrate their efforts to develop a certain population of their workforce, such as nursing. Some offer opportunities for all roles to have mentors, clinical and non-clinical ladders, and pathways towards career goals. Others even go beyond their boundaries to provide opportunities to students interested in healthcare. For example, the Alameda Health System (AHS) established a Health Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee (HEDI) with the purpose of advancing health equity, diversity, and inclusion at all levels of the healthcare system. The committee has been focusing on five key areas: Workplace Diversity, Equity of Care, Workforce Development, Integrated Community Partnerships, and Inclusive Leadership Development.[xxv] Also, with its HealthPATH program AHS provides a path to health

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care careers for students from Alameda County, one of the country's most ethnically diverse communities.[xxvi]

- **Ensure your Human Resources and Clinical Education Team is diverse and inclusive**. When one group of people are making strategic decisions and developing plans, they are not covering all aspects of diversity when establishing policies, procedures, and practices which benefit all groups.

- **Make the ability to leverage diversity a foundational skill required for leaders in the organization**. It is one of the main focuses of training in all Career and Professional Development Programs offered by organizations such as the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for developing future VA leaders. Currently, it is also formally listed as one of the principal competencies and behavior indicators of potential for progressive growth and development as a leader for all types of employees, at all levels of the organization. It is included in 2021 VA's Leadership Development Framework (LDF)[xxvii].

- **Consider conducting "Blind Application Reviews" to reduce the risk of biased selection to professional opportunities**. At the VA, the initial review of candidates' qualifications for many of VA Professional Development Programs is a "*Blind Candidates Application Review*", where each candidate's potential ID information is removed, and the candidate is assigned a numerical ID and reviewer key. Best qualified candidates are chosen based on specific scoring and point value that considers leadership qualities and abilities, experience, education associated to the level of professional developmental level the employee is applying to, etc. This reduces the risk of biased or discriminative selection of candidates for professional development opportunities to the minimum.

TOPIC #3 – Bending the Execution Curve: Successfully Leveraging Diversity and Inclusion When Implementing Organizational Change in Hospitals and Healthcare Organizations.
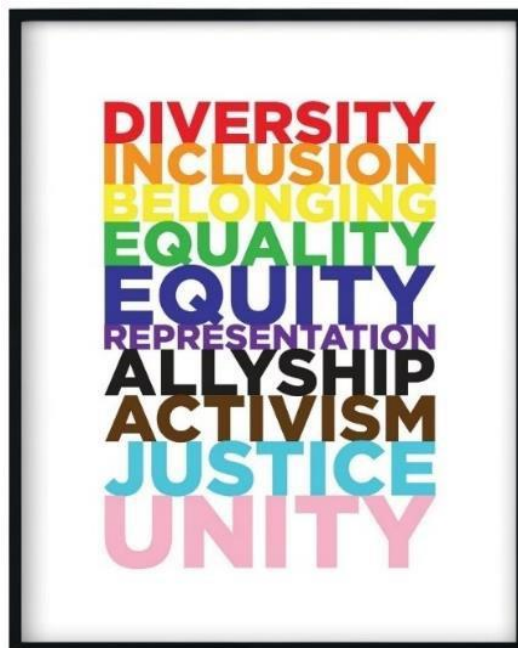

Image retrieved from URL: https://culverandcambridge.com/collections/the-activist-collection/products/diversity-and-inclusion-print

Examples of Best Practices:

- **Develop programs that seek to educate and empower employees and foster an environment of inclusion, respect, and sense of belonging**. For example, providing annual training on unconscious bias and other key DEI topics as required training versus elective training, will emphasize to staff DEI is important to the organization.

- **Utilize Employee Surveys to develop actions plans**. Data obtained from employee surveys such as Press Ganey Engagement Survey, People Pulse, All Employee Survey can be used to analyze trends and to develop actions plans for improvements on target areas to support Employee Resource Groups. For example, at John Muir Health, Employee Resource Groups sponsor awareness campaigns where members of each group/caucus can speak about their identification and be leading examples to the rest of the health system. John Muir Health sponsors diversity events in the cafes, to highlight different diversity groups and cultures through menus that celebrate food and heritage.

- **Educate your organization on the definition and significance of DEI.** There are assumptions pertaining to DEI, but it must be defined by the organization. For example, education is required to explain components of DEI such as the difference between the value of equity, not just equality. When developing and engaging committees on these efforts, it is important to share that each person is safe in sharing their feedback/opinions regardless of whether they agree or disagree. If the opposing or contrarian voice is suppressed, they are not likely to engage, and ultimately efforts to be inclusive can be counterproductive.

- **Show organization's commitment to execute their DEI efforts**. Actions speak louder than words in this segment. Actively recruiting members of the community with diverse backgrounds to fill positions is paramount. Develop relationships and provide resources to local community colleges for students who may have the drive and passion to achieve more than their resources can provide. This could be a good example of an organization's commitment to execute their DEI efforts. This entails a valiant effort to recruit and retain staff and leaders from diverse backgrounds.

- **Enhance the organization's efforts to drive organizational change**. Having a range of diverse decision makers will enhance the organization's efforts to drive organizational change. When committees are comprised of team members from different backgrounds, levels of education, and cultures, it will assist to identify when a new practice is alienating a segment of the employee population. For example, when organization's conduct a root cause analysis for an error in the ICU, multiple stakeholders are involved in the process, not just the physicians who treated the patient. When narrowing focus to a non-diverse committee, information may be missed. In the example provided, nurses, respiratory therapists, physicians, physical therapists, and other clinical and non-clinical staff are invited. Each team member plays a vital role in the care of the patient as does a diverse committee when making decisions about organizational change.

- **Prioritize DEI efforts at your organization**. At the VA, prioritizing DEI has translated this focus into the creation of VA Diversity and Inclusion (DEI) Program and the assignment of economical and human resources to it. This mission of this program is a concerted effort to "grow a diverse workforce and

cultivate an inclusive work environment, where employees are fully engaged and empowered to deliver the outstanding services to our Nation's Veterans, their families and beneficiaries".[xxviii] A few of their present actions include the creation of several Inclusion, Equity and Diversity Task Forces and Workgroups which have helped design, implement and oversee the progression of an integrated set of initiatives at different levels and across the organization. Formal mandatory trainings are required annually or biannually for all VA and Federal employees on rules, regulations and law that pertains to diversity and inclusion. Strict tracking, fiscal responsibility, and monitoring of progress of all DEI efforts is in place. Presently, there is a high level of accountability at all levels of the organization.

- **Develop Open Forums for team members to express themselves about DEI**. At the VA, VHA's Organizational Health Council has developed the VHA Diversity and Inclusion Open Forum Toolkit as a guide and framework for conducting open forums. Open forums can be virtual or face-to-face events, hosted by local leadership, for employees to share their experiences and to express their fear, grief, anger, and other emotions. The forums are an opportunity for leaders and employees to provide emotional support for each other; They are an opportunity for leaders to listen to staff without defensiveness and interruption. The forums are also an opportunity to learn from each other, to make improvements to the organization, and to be part of the change that is needed in our country. The toolkit is organized into the following modules: pre-forum preparation, holding open forums with employees, post-forum communication, resources, and a diversity calendar.[xxix]

TOPIC #4 – Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Making all Members of Your Diverse Workforce Feel Included.

Image retrieved from URL: https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/e-d-i-putting-engagement-before-diversity-inclusion-rodney-patterson/
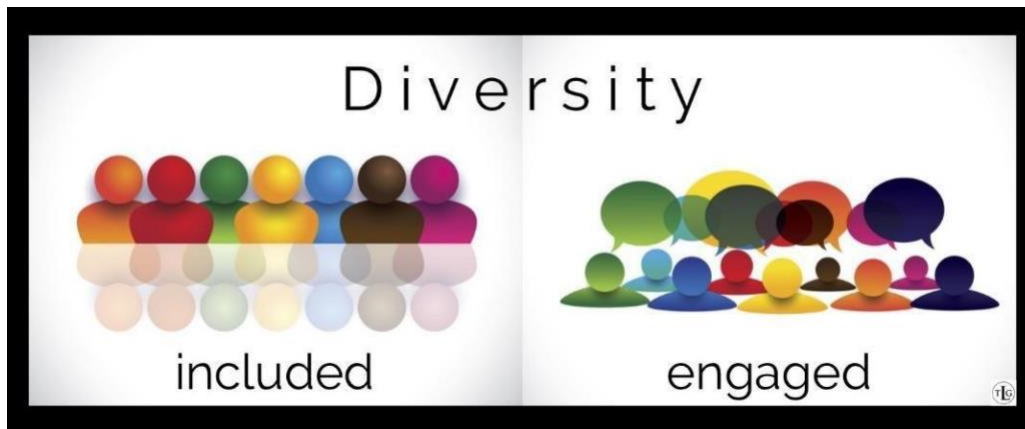
Examples of Best Practices:

- **Create opportunities for team members at all levels of the organization to have their voice heard and their opinion count on DEI matters**. Provide avenues for team members to speak with the Executive Leadership Team. At UC Davis Health, employees can submit an entry to have breakfast with the Chancellor. Each breakfast has a theme, for example, "How to make employees feel more included." The Chancellor invites the Diversity and Inclusion Officer to the breakfast to listen to employees' discussions, ideas, and feedback. Feedback is then considered for implementation.

- **Celebrate diversity**. For example**,** at UC Davis Health there is a Veterans Celebration Luncheon around Veterans Day. Speakers are invited that can be both UC Davis Health employees who are Veterans and external speakers who share resources for Veterans[xxx]. UC Davis also conducts Host Lunch & Learn sessions twice a month on a relevant and current DEI topic and includes major holidays from all cultures as part of the larger cultural awareness campaigns. In addition, UC Davis has created several inclusive spaces and climate for a variety of groups, to include individuals with disabilities, students of the African diaspora, and Chicanx and Latinx, Native American, and LGBTQIA student communities, among others.[xxxi]

- **Develop a DEI task force to track DEI activities at all levels of the organization.** Tracking DEI activities at the department and health-system level is essential. Using a task force with goals set to increase understanding of how DEI current issues impact individuals and groups in the context of healthcare is key to ensure the success of DEI efforts.

- **Provide team members opportunities to speak up and provide feedback pertaining to DEI practices**. From those conversations, discuss ideas relative to improving diversity/inclusion throughout the organization. Listen to team members preferences as it pertains to preferred pronouns in the workplace, how they want to be addressed, and help develop resources, organize committee meetings, and research best practices. Consistency and sustainability are vital to success. Develop "tool kits," for staff to help them determine what types of actions/behaviors are inclusive, and vice versa.

- **Incentivize DEI groups**. The VA incentivizes employees of diverse groups to demonstrate efforts toward making their group or others grow into a diverse, high-performing workforce that reflects all segments of our society. The Secretary's Annual Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Awards Program established in 1988 was redesigned as "The Secretary's Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Awards Program" in 2009. It still recognizes EEO, and achievements associated with legally protected classes established by EEO laws. Are established and utilized to cultivate an inclusive workplace and to provide a venue and a forum for employees to engage with affinity groups. Special Emphasis Programs[xxxii] under the Office of Equal Employment and Opportunity include American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian American and Pacific Islander, Black/African American, Federal Women's Program Hispanic, Individuals with Disabilities, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender, Student Outreach and Recruitment and Veterans (VA for Vets).

- **Get buy-in from leaders at all levels of the organization**. Executive leadership, middle management, and frontline supervisor's buy-in to the organization's diversity, equity, and inclusion philosophy, vision, mission, and goals is essential to setting the cultural tone of the enterprise; leveraging visual signs is one of many ways to convey the organization's DE&I culture. A VA example occurs during Gay/LGBTQ+ Pride month in June of each year. For 2021 the VA created a logo using rainbow and transgender flag dog tags with the following statement: "VA United for Equality – Pride Month 2021." The graphic has been used as part of various posters throughout the month of June, as well as part of email signature blocks. In 2020 VA created rainbow lanyards for staff badges with the following statement: "VA Serves All Who Served."

TOPIC #5 – Equity of Care: Health Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Journey. Steps to Make Workforce Reflect Communities and Population Served.

"Diversity is having a seat at the table, inclusion is having a voice, and belonging is having that voice be heard."

— Liz Fosslien & Mollie West Duffy, authors of 'No Hard Feelings'

Image retrieved from URL: https://naaee.org/our-work/programs/justice-equity-diversity-and-inclusion

Examples of Best Practices:

- **Have a division of labor to target specific segments of the community, to ensure inclusivity.** At Kaiser Permanente, under the Equality Inclusion and Diversity Council there are various committees targeting different aspects (e.g., Community Engagement, Patient Experience, etc.). For example, one of the goals for Community Engagement is to improve equity and access to mental health care for a target population.

- **Leverage organization-wide communication**. Utilize departments such as public affairs and corporate communications (newsletter, intranet, special events, etc.) to celebrate the diversity theme of a given month or important events (e.g., Pride Month, Juneteenth, etc.).

- **Develop affinity groups within your organization** such as Asian Pacific Islanders' Association, Veterans Employee Association, LGBTQ+, etc., and support their events. Events could be educational or celebratory in nature.

- **Utilize data to get information on your customers diversity.** For example, as an organization, the VA uses data from the Veterans Population (VetPop) Model[xxxiii] to determine how minorities and diverse populations are represented among our Veterans, to better understand needed benefits, care and

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services and to make data-driven analysis and projections on the needed services of the different groups and segments.[xxxiv][34] VetPop 2018 is the most recent deterministic projection model developed by the VA Office of Predictive Analytics to estimate and project the Veteran Population from Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 (the "base year") to FY2048.

- o Match the VetPop data with the demographic composition of the VA workforce and uses this as a guidance to expand, strengthen or re-direct strategic partnerships efforts to diversity-focused employment outreach programs and initiatives targeting under-represented groups such as disabled, female, minority, and multigenerational Veterans, spouses of Veterans, and other groups with less than expected participation rates in the workforce (VA-wide).[xxxv]

- o Tailor the customer experience training for employees so they will be more sensitive to, and understanding of, the diversity of our Veteran population.

- **Develop a DEI taskforce or team.** For example, the San Francisco VA Health Care System created a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Leadership Team. The DEI Team has leveraged ongoing dialogue, virtual townhall meetings, weekly emails, awards submissions, and multiple committees for focused DEI communication throughout their organization. More specifically, their DEI discussions have been included in weekly local Leadership meetings, monthly all service chiefs' meetings, new employee orientation, new supervisor training, and affiliate partnership meetings. The facility has also created a Health Equity Council that targets recruitment and retention, education and training, and health care disparities. The San Francisco VA Health Care System has created unique DEI Mission and Vision Statements to guide their journey, as well as determined that DEI-specific strategic planning would become part of their organization's overall planning initiatives. The San Francisco VA Health Care System has shared this work with other VA healthcare systems in the region as a best practice.

- **Create programs to support students to reach their career goals**. The Alameda Health System (AHS) HealthPATH has continued to create programs that focus on populations in the community who have significantly lower representation than other groups in health professions. For example, the Young Men of Color Internship that began in 2018 was created to target at risk youth who show enthusiasm for a career in health care and are driven by their desire to giving back to their community. With this, AHS continues to work to increase diversity in health care and ensure the workforce of the future represents and reflects the community it serves.[xxxvi]

TOPIC #6 - **Incorporate DE&I into your strategic plan.**

- Accountability and commitment are demonstrated when DE&I is ingrained into the organizations strategic planning process. It emphasizes that DEI is not just a standalone initiative, but rather a foundational element that will continuously be woven into the fabric of an organization's overall strategy. Being part of the strategic plan requires allocation of the necessary resources, including time, budget, and personnel, to support DE&I initiatives. The Brighter Strategies article titled "Connecting DEI to your strategic plan" highlights the importance of integrating Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) principles into an organization's strategic planning process.

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OTHER DEI RESOURCES

ACHE:

- ACHE [Statement on Diversity](#), updated in Dec 2020

- ACHE DEI Policy Statement, [Increasing and Sustaining Racial/Ethnic Diversity in Healthcare Leadership](#), updated in Nov 2020

- ACHE website and DEI resources: https://www.ache.org/about-ache/our-story/diversity-and-inclusion

- ACHE Diversity and Inclusion Career Resources and Networking Opportunities for healthcare management professionals from diverse backgrounds: https://www.ache.org/career-resource-center/special-groups/diversity-career-resources

- ACHE Learning Center - Publications: Diversity and Inclusion https://www.ache.org/Search?topic=Diversity+and+Inclusion,Executive+Diversity&q=diversity+and+inclusion&sortBy=relevance&sortOrder=asc&page=1&contentFilter&eventSpan

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HEALTHCARE ORGANIZATIONS:

- Department of Veterans Affairs DEI Resources (Newsletters, Policy, Training, Workforce Analysis, Programs, Surveys, and more): Diversity & Inclusion - Office of Resolution Management, Diversity & Inclusion (ORMDI) (va.gov)

- Kaiser Permanente DEI Resources (Diverse communities and Business Resource Groups (BRGs) within Kaiser, DEI Recognitions, and more): Diversity & Inclusion (kaiserpermanentejobs.org)

- University of California (UC) Davis Resources on Health Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (Programs, Advisory Committees, News, Blog, Strategic Plan, and more): Office for Health Equity, Diversity and Inclusion | UC Davis Health

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT:

- U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) DEI Resources (Documents, News, Initiatives, Leadership, Infographics, and more). Office of Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity (defense.gov)

- U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) DEI Resources (Policy, Data, Oversight, Executive Orders, Infographics, Reports, and more). Diversity & Inclusion (opm.gov)

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BOOKS AND RESEARCH-BASED GUIDES:

● Pedulla, David S. (2020, May 12). What Works? Evidence-Based Ideas to Increase Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Workplace. Full Report PDF: https://www.umass.edu/employmentequity/sites/default/files/What_Works.pdf Downloadable Sections: https://www.umass.edu/employmentequity/what-works-evidence-based-ideas-increase-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-workplace

● Williams, Joan C. (2021, November 16). Bias Interrupted: Creating Inclusion for Real and for Good. Printable Resources Listed Throughout the Book: https://biasinterrupters.org/book/

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