



**DENVER  
HEALTH™**  
— est. 1860 —  
FOR LIFE'S JOURNEY



# Equity Blueprint Progress Report

Denver Health is committed to addressing health disparities and racial inequities in health care. As a health care system, clinical provider, academic institution, employer and corporate citizen, we are dedicated to making our community a fair and equitable place to live and work.

Our health system has developed key initiatives to advance the work and hold ourselves accountable to create and maintain an engaged and inclusive workforce, improve health equity and outcomes, and build a sense of belonging and trust with our community - all while providing the highest quality of care.

For more than 160 years of offering primary, specialty and acute/trauma care, our health system has grown alongside the needs of our community. We recognize that health disparities impact the health of our entire community, and we are committed to reducing these disparities in our patients and advancing health equity to promote diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB) for all.

Denver Health's Equity Blueprint was created to highlight the ways in which we seek to overcome disparities and biases in care. Guiding objectives include:

- Building an understanding of the current state of DEIB work in our organization.
- Understanding what type of infrastructure is needed to support this work.
- Conducting self-assessments to determine the gaps in our policies, procedures, practices and services that can negatively impact DEIB work.
- Developing a shared commitment and structure of support in our organization.
- Developing analytics to understand how we perform in workplace diversity and in key quality health outcomes.
- Changing structure and policies to advance DEIB and health equity work.

Denver Health strives to model best practices, share learnings with staff and community, and encourage open communication. Through this new work and our commitment to advancing an engaged and inclusive workforce, and improving health equity and outcomes, we aspire to be a health care system that our employees are proud to recommend to their family and friends. To do that, we must respect each other, foster belonging, be transparent in our work, and be accountable in our actions. This Equity Blueprint highlights progress of the last three years and provides ongoing dedication to advancing DEIB as an employer, health care provider and community partner. In the meantime, Denver Health will continue to implement key initiatives and emphasize metrics in this journey.

This work requires coordination and sharing across program areas, work areas, leadership and all of our team. In order to be successful, it's going to take all of us.

# COMMON VOCABULARY

## Diversity

All the visible and invisible ways in which people differ, including the characteristics that make one individual or group different from another

## Equity

Fair treatment, access, and opportunity for all people

## Inclusion

The intentional act of creating environments in which all individuals and groups feel a sense of belonging, respect, support, and value, allowing them to fully participate

## Belonging

Denver Health provides a welcoming, compassionate and inclusive care and work environment for all - focused on fairness, dignity and connection

# Key Pillars of the Equity Blueprint



*Create an inclusive and engaging workplace*



*Improve health equity and outcomes*



*Build trust with the community*

We will continue to engage and learn from the implementation of these initiatives across Denver Health. We will move towards more metrics and accountability on this important work. The most important aspect of the Equity Blueprint is that leadership continues to be even more committed to the efforts around DEIB, Health Equity and Community Partnership and will move towards greater alignment with our broader strategic plan.



## Pillar 1:

Create an inclusive and engaging workplace.

### Desired outcome

An equitable and inclusive culture, including shared vision and common language.

### Success Stories and Highlights

- Denver Health's Talent Acquisition team has a DEIB Sourcing Specialist who focuses on making community recruitment connections and sourcing diverse candidates locally and nationally to fill critical positions.
- Denver Health's HR Policy Committee has appointed a co-chair, Tai Few, from the DEIB council to continuously improve policies through a DEIB lens and fill any equity gaps.
- Denver Health's Dental Assistant Program celebrated its first four graduates on August 4th, 2023.
- Denver Health's staff who identify as BIPOC have a safe space to go to discuss their experiences with racism and receive emotional support and psychological first aid through RESTORE peer support.
- Diversify our leadership to reflect and leverage the diversity of our community.

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*Increasing the diversity of healthcare providers and workers would enhance culturally competent care which leads to improved health outcomes especially for underrepresented minority populations. The dental department has taken a bold approach to intentionally increasing recruitment and retention of underrepresented minority oral health care providers and workers.*

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**DUANE MATA, DDS, DIRECTOR OF DENTISTRY  
COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES**

# Recruitment

Develop a strategy that improves recruitment of diverse candidates

- All strategies are incorporated into an annual recruitment plan and woven into talent acquisition activities such as marketing, digital events, and career fairs.
- Talent Acquisition (TA) is focused on a broad definition of diversity including gender, race, LGBTQ+, veteran, disability, and intersectionality.
- Hired a DEIB Sourcing Specialist who created and maintains a sourcing dashboard to increase diversity in leadership and priority clinical/non-clinical roles.
- An internal DEIB Directory was created to manage relationships and effective recruitment methods with local and national affinity groups.
- Developed a catalogue of national colleges and local programs that focus on racial and ethnic populations for use in talent outreach and recruitment.

Create standardized approaches to support recruiting diverse candidates with Leader Toolkit

- An Inclusive Hiring Toolkit has been created as a one-stop-shop in hiring best practices, which includes essential bias education, interactive guides such as interview preparation checklists, interview templates, competency and value-based questions, and rubrics.
- The Inclusive Hiring Toolkit will be formally rolled out in Q3 2023 as a standard organizational practice. A live fundamental recruitment training course will follow to complement the guide. It will include essential recruitment skills and how biases can appear in the recruitment process. A talent acquisition video will accompany an overview of how to best collaborate with your Talent Acquisition Partner on internal processes.
- This year, the Equity Blueprint Team measured milestones related to training and tool creation. Post roll out, we will measure hiring leader and panelist participants in the live training, and feedback survey results from the toolkit.



# Recruitment, cont.

Diversify our leadership to reflect and leverage the diversity of our community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hiring a DEIB Officer to focus on leadership accountability and moving forward DEIB goals.</li></ul>
Invest in appropriate apprenticeship, internship, and pipeline programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Denver Health offers programs like the Healthcare Interest Program (HIP) for college students and Medical Career Collaborative Program (MC2) to jump start high school students into careers like medical assistant, dental assistant, phlebotomy, and EMT. Changed policy regarding funding for tuition and testing/certification costs.</li></ul>

# Talent Advancement

Develop a strategy that improves advancement of our diverse staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Implemented LEAD (Learn, Engage, Achieve, Develop) sessions which are available to all employees. Employees can also utilize Workday and the Workforce Development Center to set annual performance goals, continuously improve skills and competencies, and gain insight on how to advance in their career.</li></ul>
Develop career pathways that enable employees to grow personally, professionally, and financially	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Denver Health is increasing its available career pathways from 12 to 24. For example, the organization also has entry level career pathways for CNA/LPN, DA, MA, EMT, Pharmacy Technician, and Phlebotomy.</li></ul>
Provide manager education/training on how to advance and develop employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Denver Health offers programs like LEAD to help the team understand their goals and how we can help you achieve them. The Workforce Development Center utilizes your goals to identify career opportunities, engage in conversation and mentoring on how to advance, and provides individual specific pathways on how to obtain these goals.</li></ul>



# Talent Advancement, cont.

<p>Develop a mentoring program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Denver Health is piloting a tool in Workday and a program within the Workforce Development Center.</li></ul>
<p>Develop an educational strategy to align and increase DEIB learning and development opportunities across the organization</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Denver Health has mandatory annual continuing education training with mandatory training on implicit bias and health equity.</li><li>• The organization also offers optional trainings: Harvard Implicit Association test, Unconscious Bias Training, Racial Equity Readiness Assessment for Workforce Development, The Roots of Health Inequity, Health Equity Guide, Health Equity and Social Justice, Organizing Against Racism.</li></ul>
<p>Deploy DEIB learning and development activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Denver Health currently has 32 materials shared on our organizational development page centered around DEIB work; including resources for increased language diversity and offering workshops for relevant skillsoft trainings for managers and leaders.</li><li>• RESTORE provides a Trauma and Resilience - Informed Workshop that focuses on reducing systemic racism and bias and understanding stress and trauma.</li></ul>
<p>Implement an ongoing Equity Learning Series</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Denver Health is partnering with speakers to offer frequent seminars focusing on DEIB as it applies to research and to the organization as a whole. Some topics that have already been discussed are American Black History, LGBTQ+, Latino, and others.</li></ul>





## Pillar 2:

Improve health equity and outcomes.

### Desired outcome

All members of our community will have access to high-quality health care and services.

### Success Stories

- Denver Health was awarded a large grant to improve perinatal services and decrease disparities in maternal health, particularly for the Black/African American and Latino population.
- Workflows were developed to more accurately collect patient self-reported race, ethnicity and language (REAL) data, and decreased the percentage of patients with unknown/missing REAL data from 7.9% to 0.5%.
- Our Quality Improvement team conducted a successful pilot to improve blood pressure control in Black/African American patients with hypertension in the Webb Adult primary care clinic, closing the equity gap in a 5-month period. This workflow is now being piloted in other Denver Health clinics.

*“ I am honored to serve as the inaugural Director of the Denver Health Office of Health Equity, leading, supporting, and coordinating Denver Health’s strategies and programs to advance health equity for our patients, staff, and community members. ”*

**DR. ROCIO PEREIRA, MD, DIRECTOR OF OFFICE OF HEALTH EQUITY**



# Office of Health Equity

<p>Develop clinical dashboards to identify health disparities in our patient populations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Created clinical dashboards that allow us to evaluate and compare 12 inpatient-focused quality measures and more than 100 outpatient quality measures across race/ethnicity and language groups.</li></ul>
<p>Implement standard system for capturing health-related social needs (HRSN) information and referring patients to services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Over 50,000 patients have been screened for health-related social needs in outpatient settings.</li><li>• Started screening in inpatient settings in January 2023.</li><li>• Patients with health-related social needs are referred to an online partner tool - <a href="https://denverhealth.findhelp.com">DenverHealth.findhelp.com</a>.</li></ul>
<p>Enhance communication and language support services to achieve equitable care</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Language Services team created an action plan to enhance communication and language support services for our patients.</li></ul>
<p>Identify disparities in health outcomes and prioritize interventions to reduce them</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Selected five clinical areas for prioritization: prenatal care in the first trimester, childhood vaccinations, hypertension, postpartum hemorrhage, and 30-day hospital readmission rate.</li><li>• Quality Improvement work groups in these five areas added health equity as a priority focus.</li></ul>
<p>Promote diversity and health equity research (and sponsored projects), including an enhanced focus on health disparities and increased collaboration among researchers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A total of 69 equity-focused projects totaling \$29M were submitted in 2022.</li></ul>
<p>Eliminate biased processes that can perpetuate or increase health inequities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Transitioned from using a race-adjustment which previously overestimated kidney function in Black/African American patients to use of a non-biased formula for all patients.</li></ul>





## Pillar 3:

Build trust with the community.

### Desired outcome

We are known at the local, state, and national level for our work with organizations to support our patients and our community on issues related to health equity and the social determinants of health.

### Key Initiatives

- For the third straight year, Denver Health was ranked among the top 10 most socially responsible hospitals in the nation by the Lown Institute.
- Due to the rising numbers of firearm injuries in our city, Denver Health has established a Firearm Safety Collaborative that is comprised of diverse individuals who are focused on reducing firearm injury and hospital readmissions, increasing firearm education, and closing existing gaps in our city.
- Denver Health's Office of Health Equity is leading efforts in continuously addressing trust between patients, community members and our clinical teams and working with the Healthcare Trustworthiness Prototyping Network directed by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement.

“Community partnerships are important for providing the right resources to our patients, our team and our community. There is great work happening across the organization, including the Public Health Institute, our community clinics and throughout the hospital.”

LORENA ZIMMER, CHIEF IMPACT OFFICER

# Community Collaboration

Develop strong community partnerships with organizations that have connections to Denver Health patient populations

- Denver Health has established partnerships with community leaders across the City and State to help address social determinants of health for our patients, connect people to resources, breakdown barriers to accessing health care, and to provide educational and career opportunities. Key areas have been food, housing and homelessness, and workforce development partners.

Increase the involvement of patient and family advisors as partners for DEIB activities

- Denver Health has a Patient & Family Advisory Council (PFAC) that is composed of patients, family members, community members, and hospital staff who are focused on soliciting feedback around many DEIB initiatives, helping community members overcome barriers to reach their goals, and prioritizing committee work.
- The Center for Addiction Medicine's Community Advisory Meeting receives input from diverse community members and patients on substance use programming.
- The Public Health Institute (PHI) has youth substance misuse prevention efforts that facilitate community driven strategic planning processes in SW Denver and Denver's LGBTQ+ community.
- The Public Health Institute has a paid group of youth with lived experience in substance misuse that gather data from peers to inform efforts.
- The Office of Research has a Community Advisory Panel (CAP) which consists of standing community members that reflect and represent DHHA's diverse patient population. CAP provides culturally responsive community perspectives to help guide the development, implementation, interpretation, and dissemination of research at Denver Health.

Implement a supplier diversity program to improve economic opportunities for women and BIPOC-owned local businesses

- Denver Health has shifted purchasing from large businesses such as Amazon and Walmart to more mission driven organizations like Goodwill for our PACE program that gives clothing and hygiene kits for patients in need.
- Denver Health is working with Supplier.IO and Vizient to help us determine our current diverse partnerships, establish a baseline, and highlight other opportunities within our organization for women and BIPOC-owned local businesses.
- We encourage our staff to use [ShopBIPOC.com](https://shopbioc.com) to find local BIPOC businesses when purchasing with p-cards.

# Community Collaboration, con't.

Denver Health will actively engage and be seen as leaders in local, regional, and national Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging and Health Equity Efforts

- Denver Health hosted at least 4 community leader receptions, 2 community benefit input sessions and 1 community engagement event for the mobile units.
- Denver Health has held regional and national presentations on our REAL (Race, Ethnicity, and Language) work and work around our Social Determinants of Health work and health equity work.

