

## CONTACT

Kinneil Coltman

kcoltman@ghs.org

# A COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY: THE GREENVILLE HEALTH SYSTEM



Eight years after Greenville Health System Board of Trustees issued a commitment to diversity, the board itself has transformed as a result of this commitment to diversity. The Chief Diversity Officer through GHS' Diversity Advisory Council has helped with the identification of community leaders in areas of influence of GHS. Today, the Board of Trustees has 12 members that reflect the gender and racial composition of the patients and communities served by GHS.

## Cultural Competence and Leadership Engagement

In 2006 the Board of Trustees of Greenville Health System (GHS) committed to develop a workforce that was reflective in both composition and culture of the racial and ethnic makeup of the communities and patients it served, and to assure cultural competence in patient care. Consequently, they strengthened their diversity department, changed leadership recruitment processes, and invested in an in-house leadership pipeline program. They are recognized as leaders in the National Call to Action for the Elimination of Health Care disparities.

### Motivators

- Availability of national cultural and linguistic competence standards and growing awareness of the role of diversity in disparity reduction.
- 2006 Board of Trustees Commitment to Diversity.
- The leadership did not reflect the composition of the workforce or the populations served by GHS.

### The Transformation

1. Strengthening the Diversity Department and its ability to support the system in the delivery of culturally competent care.
2. Implementing new process for selecting and hiring leadership positions.
3. Establishing the Emerging Leaders Program.

### Results

- The first SC hospital to establish a Chief Diversity Officer role.
- Between 2010 and 2014, 30% of the leadership team appointments using the new process were from underrepresented minority groups.
- Of the employees who have participated in the charter class of the Emerging Leaders program, 60% have been promoted in the years since.

### A DIVERSITY OFFICE THAT FACILITATES THE TRANSFORMATION

GHS Diversity Department supports employees to deliver culturally and linguistically competent care through a variety of mechanisms.

- Training for new and current employees on how to access tools and resources related to serving a diverse patient population including individuals from cultures around the world as well as the vision and hearing impaired.
- Robust language services including in-person, phone, and video interpreting as well as an in-house document translation team.
- Cross-cultural consultation between the patient (or family) and care providers to achieve culturally sensitive and patient centric decisions.

### LEADERSHIP DIVERSIFICATION: A PRIORITY OF THE CEO

When the CEO assumed a personal goal to diversify the leadership team, the Diversity Department spearheaded a new leadership search and selection process which:

- avoids undue pressure surrounding the final hiring decision.
- legitimizes successful candidates among key stakeholders connected to the position

### THE SELECTION PROCESS

1. Vacant leadership position.
2. Hiring manager meets with a diverse selection committee to communicate expectations.
  - Key success factors:
    - o Diversity assessed in terms of organizational perspective, job function, race, ethnicity, and gender.
3. Selection committee conducts an inclusive search that results in a diverse pool of highly qualified candidates.
4. Selection committee recommends the top two candidates to the hiring manager.
5. Hiring manager selects the best candidate.

### RESULTS (2010-2014)

- 45% of the slates included an underrepresented minority

- 30% of the appointments using this process were professionals who identified themselves as underrepresented minorities.
- Decreased time to fill leadership team positions.
- Larger pool of candidates to select from.

## **BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE DIVERSE WORKFORCE**

The Emerging Leaders Program was established in 2010 as a partnership between the Learning & Development Department and the Diversity Department at GHS. The program was designed to strengthen the leadership skills of high potential, high performing employees to build a diverse pipeline for leadership positions inside the organization. The program is an intensive 9 month program that prepares employees for higher level positions within the organization.

## **Conclusion**

GHS fosters an organizational culture that provides culturally competent care and addresses health and healthcare disparities supported by a diverse leadership team and an active diversity officer. The transformation that followed the 2006 Board commitment to diversity has placed GHS in a national leadership position in the implementation of the National Call to Action for the Elimination of Health Care disparities, which compiles the best judgment of experts to accelerate health improvement for vulnerable groups of the population.

The program involves a competitive application process through which applicants must have the support of their managers as well as another GHS leader.

It has two tracks:

- Staff to management: with approximately 30-40 available spots for each class.
- Management to director: with 12-15 available spots.

The pool of candidates is consistently diverse as assessed by job function, campus, educational background, age, race, and ethnicity; in a way that is reflective of the composition of the workforce.

## **RESULTS**

- 60% of the first year's participants were promoted within 3 years of completing the Emerging Leaders Program.