

Southcoast Health's Diversity and Inclusion Council adds Equity to Its Name, Forming the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council

In August, the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council upgraded its name to reflect Southcoast's commitment to addressing health disparities and to promoting equitable care. Southcoast is committed to delivering high quality care efficiently and compassionately to every one of our patients. With the devastation caused by COVID-19 in marginalized populations, it is important to ensure that equitable care is available to all of our patients, regardless of age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, income and lifestyle.

Southcoast has committed to provide cultural competency training to help promote understanding and acceptance among our employees and to ensure that we deliver care in a way that recognizes existing healthcare disparities among disadvantaged communities. As the area's largest employer, it is our mission to ensure our more than 7,500 employees understand and embrace differences and maintain an inclusive environment.

Begun in 2019, the Council is committed to fostering a diverse and welcoming environment for all employees, patients and visitors. The group meets monthly and is comprised of four workgroups, each dedicated to specific interests within the council.

- The **Internet Presence workgroup** spearheads content development on the Council's internet and intranet pages and for social media. Additionally, the workgroup looks for earned media opportunities such as press releases and events. The workgroup meets every other week on Wednesdays from 1pm to 2pm. Kelly Trummer, Director of Talent Acquisition, serves as Chair.
- The **Mission and Education workgroup** focuses on the Healthcare Disparities initiative, creating education plans for employees that foster a respectful and inclusive environment, revitalizing the Equity#123 pledge, and reviewing the status of the Council's goals. The workgroup meets the second Monday of each month from 4pm to 5pm. Karen Dockery, Senior Operations Analyst, serves as Chair.
- The **3Ps workgroup** (Pronouns, Personal Names & Pronouns - LGBTQ) focuses on reviewing policies that impact the LGBT community (both employees and patients). Members serve on the Epic sexual orientation and gender identity work team. The workgroup meets Tuesdays or Thursdays from 7:30am to 8:30am. Barb Schmidt serves as Cochair. The workgroup is seeking a second Cochair.

The **Diversity Recognition workgroup** provides awareness through multicultural education and experiences. Currently, they are working on Global Diversity Awareness month and will

be hosting events for National Hispanic Heritage month starting in mid-September. The workgroup meets two Thursdays a month from 3pm to 4pm. Sharon Jones, President VNA, serves as Chair.

One of the Council's biggest accomplishments this year is forming Southcoast Health's first Employee Resource Group, the Black Lives Matter Coalition. Employee resource groups are an effective way to foster an inclusive environment. They are made up of employees who share a specific identity and their "allies" who may not.

The Black Lives Matter Coalition was established after the death of George Floyd and in light of other recent events. The workgroup's main goal is to achieve a supportive, equal and more inclusive environment at Southcoast Health, bringing the principle of equity to life. This group will focus on education, documentation of racial incidents, and a review of patient and employee policies and career advancement opportunities.

To learn more about the Coalition and how to get involved, please visit [this page](#), or contact Barbara Schmidt, Director of Organizational Culture and Engagement and Chair of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council, at SchmidtB@southcoast.org.

Overall, the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council strives to be a resource for both Southcoast Health employees and the community by working to establish a more welcoming, inclusive and educated community for all. More information can be found [here](#) with additional information available on the [DE&I Intranet page](#).

The Council is open to everyone. Interested employees can reach out to Council members or workgroup chairs for additional information on how to become involved.