



Dear Southcoast Health Colleagues,

This February marks our 3rd annual Southcoast Health celebration of Black History Month.

For this year's event, we are focused on a conversation about slavery, and the escape from slavery through a maritime underground railway. To have this conversation, we have invited UMass Dartmouth Professor [Timothy Walker](#), editor of "[Sailing to Freedom, Maritime Dimensions of the Underground Railroad](#)," for a virtual live presentation in which he will discuss a new groundbreaking book that expands our understanding of what the journey looked like for slaves making their way by boat to freedom in northeastern coastal cities such as New Bedford

This special event will be held **Wednesday, February 23, 5:45 – 6:45pm**. To **register** for this event directly from this email, **click [here](#)**.

Making this important presentation available is just one of the ways in which we are working hard to raise awareness of the challenges and accomplishments of our Black colleagues, patients and members of the community.

We are proud that the Black Lives Matter Coalition in partnership with the DE&I Council has made progress by successfully working to:

- amend policies to help us eliminate discrimination within our own walls;
- make public the Southcoast diversity statement and sharing Southcoast's policy prohibiting discrimination;
- initiate Implicit Bias training for all Southcoast leaders;
- recognize Martin Luther King Jr. Day as a formal holiday; and
- celebrate Black History Month and Juneteenth.

As we look to the future, we will expand on the success of our leadership diversity recruiting strategy, initiated in 2020, that has yielded a 6.6% year-over-year increase in hiring racially diverse leaders. We know that by hiring talented diverse leaders and developing our current diverse employees into leaders, we will accomplish our goals for diversity, equity and inclusion much more quickly and effectively.

Please see the attached poster describing Southcoast Health Black History Month 2022 and consider joining us for the 'Sailing to Freedom' live event, reading the weekly articles about your fellow colleagues and enjoying the month-long celebrations!

The Black Lives Matter Coalition invites all Black colleagues and allies to join in their work toward positive change and action, networking and growth. Please reach out to Chair Erik

Jean-Pierre at [JeanPierreE@southcoast.org](mailto:JeanPierreE@southcoast.org) or to me at [schmidt@southcoast.org](mailto:schmidt@southcoast.org) to find out more about the BLM Coalition, or with any questions.

With great respect, gratitude and pride,

**Barbara Schmidt** | Director of Organizational Culture and Engagement (*she, her, hers*)

Southcoast Health | 275 Allen Street | New Bedford, MA 02740

phone: 508-973-1250 | cell: 717-487-2517

[schmidt@southcoast.org](mailto:schmidt@southcoast.org) | [www.southcoast.org](http://www.southcoast.org)

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