

# Improving Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Healthcare Workforce

The following summaries of recent peer-reviewed articles describe barriers to workplace diversity, equity, and inclusion and strategies for improvement. Citations are linked to full-text articles [\*] when available.

Study	Objective	Conclusion
<p>[*] Alexis, D. A., Kearney, M. D., Williams, J. C., Xu, C., Higginbotham, E. J., &amp; Aysola, J. (2020). <a href="#">Assessment of perceptions of professionalism among faculty, trainees, staff, and students in a large university-based health system</a>. <i>JAMA Network Open</i>, 3(11).</p>	<p>To understand how professionalism is operationalized and recognized in diverse environments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Individuals of underrepresented groups experience:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– More infringements on professional boundaries</li> <li>– Increased scrutiny over their professional actions</li> <li>– A tension between inclusion vs assimilation</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ As opposed to the workplace adopting an inclusive environment, underrepresented groups feel like they need to assimilate into a professional culture that center around a White male heterosexual identity, instead of being their authentic selves.</li> <li>▪ Marginalized populations were significantly more likely to consider changing jobs because of unprofessional behavior at work.</li> <li>▪ To improve retention, allocate resources for training and professional development of facilitators to develop and deliver programs to address microaggressions, bias, and discrimination.</li> </ul>
<p>Minehart, R. D., &amp; Foldy, E. G. (2020). <a href="#">Effects of gender and race/ethnicity on perioperative team performance</a>. <i>Anesthesiology Clinics</i>, 38(2), 433-447.</p>	<p>To present evidence-based recommendations that maximize the benefits of diversity in healthcare teams while minimizing negative consequences related to communication and conflict.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Seven leadership strategies to reduce the negative effects of diversity on communication and conflict include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Minimizing the power distance between leaders and staff to make it safe to speak up.</li> <li>– Improving the safety climate and building a learning culture instead of a culture of blame. Deliberately elicit viewpoints from all team members. Allow and encourage the expression of opposing views.</li> <li>– Enhancing team—even outside of work—to enhance trust. Conduct and gamify full-team simulation learning experiences to develop shared goals, shared knowledge, mutual respect, and better communication.</li> <li>– Developing transformational leaders that promote open dialogue and “collective competence” to engage the team in supportive behaviors that foster interdependence.</li> <li>– Promoting positive diversity with an open-minded approach to diversity. Highlight how diversity is essential to achieve team goals and openly foster a sense of curiosity about how others see things.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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<p>[*] El Arnaout, N., Chehab, R. F., Rafii, B., &amp; Alameddine, M. (2019). <a href="#">Gender equity in planning, development and management of human resources for health: A scoping review</a>. <i>Human Resources for Health</i>, 17(1), 52.</p>	<p>To identify barriers and facilitators for integrating gender equity into healthcare systems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Fostering a respectful, inclusive climate to enhance identity safety. In racially diverse teams, psychological safety can be low.</li> <li>■ Top themes related to securing gender equity for the healthcare workforce include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Enabling a family/work balance and reasonable work hours. These emerged as the two most prominent themes enabling or hindering gender equity.</li> <li>– Providing a supportive and inclusive work environment. This is directly correlated with job satisfaction and retention.</li> <li>– Safeguarding equity in pay and benefits.</li> <li>– Offering equitable access to education and professional development opportunities.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Gomez, L. E., &amp; Bernet, P. (2019). <a href="#">Diversity improves performance and outcomes</a>. <i>Journal of the National Medical Association</i>, 111(4), 383–392.</p>	<p>To summarize findings from diversity research specific to healthcare.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Patients generally fare better when care is provided by more diverse teams.</li> <li>■ There are positive associations between diversity, quality, and financial performance.</li> <li>■ A diverse workforce can mitigate employee resistance to change.</li> </ul>
<p>Marcelin, J. R., Manne-Goehler, J., &amp; Silver, J. K. (2019). <a href="#">Supporting inclusion, diversity, access, and equity in the infectious disease workforce</a>. <i>The Journal of Infectious Diseases</i>, 220(220 Suppl 2), S50–S61.</p>	<p>To identify challenges and solutions from the Be Ethical Campaign to broadly achieving equity in medicine.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Success requires an emphasis on using metrics and data analyses to identify workforce equity gaps and pursue opportunities to close them. This includes:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Comparing findings from data analyses to the organization’s mission and values.</li> <li>– Being transparent with diversity data.</li> <li>– Conducting root cause analysis of disparities.</li> <li>– Implementing strategies to address disparities.</li> <li>– Tracking outcomes.</li> <li>– Publishing results.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>[*] McCave, E. L., Aptaker, D., Hartmann, K. D., &amp; Zucconi, R. (2019). <a href="#">Promoting affirmative transgender healthcare Practice within hospitals: An IPE standardized patient simulation for graduate healthcare learners</a>. <i>MedEdPORTAL: The Journal of Teaching and Learning Resources</i>, 15, 10861.</p>	<p>To share lessons learned for effective learning methods for transgender care delivery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Discriminatory behaviors are often rooted in existing attitudes and the healthcare team’s lack of knowledge and skills in providing affirming care to transgender patients.</li> <li>■ One way to intervene at structural and interpersonal levels is to expose caregivers to transgender health information and provide opportunities, through simulation, to observe and engage in healthcare practice situations with transgender patients.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Conduct post-simulation debriefing sessions. Ask those observing to critique the interactions.</li> <li>– Invite members of the transgender community to share their experiences as</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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<p>Spector, N. D., Asante, P. A., Marcelin, J. R., Poorman, J. A., Larson, A. R., Salles, A., Oxentenko, A. S., &amp; Silver, J. K. (2019). <a href="#">Women in pediatrics: Progress, barriers, and opportunities for equity, diversity, and inclusion</a>. <i>Pediatrics</i> 144 (5), e20192149.</p>	<p>To highlight persistent disparities and opportunities for leaders to close gaps for women physicians.</p>	<p>healthcare patients with those acting as simulated patients, or to take part in the simulations themselves.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To achieve equity in the medical workforce, organizations need:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Leadership accountability</li> <li>– Committed resources</li> <li>– Evidence-based, data-driven solutions</li> <li>– Transparency</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Enforce a climate of transparency and accountability with leaders prioritizing financial and human resource support for workforce equity.</li> </ul>
<p>Bristol, S., Kostelec, T., &amp; MacDonald, R. (2018). <a href="#">Improving emergency healthcare workers' knowledge, competency, and attitudes toward lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender patients through interdisciplinary cultural competency training</a>. <i>Journal of Emergency Nursing</i>, 44(6), 632–639.</p>	<p>To evaluate the effectiveness of competency training to improve care delivered to LGBTQ patients.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Competency training—including facilitator-led presentations, interactive exercises, small-group discussions, and short films—increased:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Awareness of LGBTQ healthcare challenges</li> <li>– More open dialogue.</li> <li>– Staff members' understanding of how implicit biases manifest in their interactions with LGBTQ patients</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>[*] Glazer, G., Tobias, B., &amp; Mentzel, T. (2018). <a href="#">Increasing healthcare workforce diversity: Urban universities as catalysts for change</a>. <i>Journal of Professional Nursing</i>, 34(4), 239–244.</p>	<p>To describe an initiative aimed at increasing diversity in the healthcare workforce through partnership with colleges and community groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ An increase in minority attendance at schools of nursing is attributed to:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Voicing a commitment to improving health disparities and workforce diversity defined as central to the organization's mission.</li> <li>– Fostering pipelines between minority populations, educational opportunities, and employment.</li> <li>– Creating a diversity dashboard to monitor diversity efforts.</li> <li>– The adoption of holistic admissions practices for medical, nursing, and allied health college programs.</li> <li>– Using social media to strengthen outreach to potential students.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Accurate capture of race/ethnicity data is essential to monitor the effectiveness of diversity initiatives.</li> </ul>

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<p>Dreachslin, J. L., Weech-Maldonado, R., Gail, J., Epané, J. P., &amp; Wainio, J. A. (2017). <a href="#">Blueprint for sustainable change in diversity management and cultural competence: Lessons from the National Center for Healthcare Leadership Diversity Demonstration Project</a>. <i>Journal of Healthcare Management</i>, 62(3), 171-183.</p>	<p>To describe successful interventions for improving workforce diversity from the National Center for Healthcare Leadership's diversity leadership demonstration project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Interventions focused on five competencies of strategic diversity management and culturally and linguistically appropriate care:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Cultural competence</li> <li>– Diversity climate</li> <li>– Diversity leadership</li> <li>– Organizational climate</li> <li>– Strategic human resource management</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>[*] McCalman, J., Jongen, C. &amp; Bainbridge, R. (2017). <a href="#">Organisational systems' approaches to improving cultural competence in healthcare: A systematic scoping review of the literature</a>. <i>International Journal for Equity in Health</i>, 16, 78.</p>	<p>To systematically map key concepts for systems approaches to cultural competence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Key principles for implementing systems approaches were user engagement, organizational readiness, and delivery across multiple sites.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Ensure visible executive leadership support for cultural competence initiatives.</li> <li>– Engage and collaborate with affected population groups in the development and implementation of systems-level cultural competence. Aim to improve knowledge of cultural needs.</li> <li>– Understand the variation in systemic policies across facilities within a system.</li> <li>– Assess organizational readiness for change and address obstacles to readiness with action plans.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Data audits, quality improvement approaches, and service-level policies are essential to embedding cultural competence across a healthcare system.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Audits help establish benchmarks for health service utilization and quality disparities, and drive systemwide action for improvement.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ High cultural competence is associated with better clinical outcomes, patient activation, and patient experiences.</li> </ul>
<p>[*] Williams, J. S., Walker, R. J., &amp; Egede, L. E. (2016). <a href="#">Achieving equity in an evolving healthcare system: Opportunities and challenges</a>. <i>The American Journal of the Medical Sciences</i>, 351(1), 33–43.</p>	<p>To identify effective diversity strategies to improve equity in healthcare administration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Racial and ethnic minorities continue to have poorer health status and health outcomes for most chronic conditions including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, and end-stage renal disease</li> <li>■ Affordability, access, and diversity in the healthcare system influence care and outcomes. Mitigation practices include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Comprehensive standardized race measurement</b> (including definitions of race). Requiring the collection of racial/ethnic data improves detection of disparities and</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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[\*] Galinsky, A. D., Todd, A. R., Homan, A. C., Phillips, K. W., Apfelbaum, E. P., Sasaki, S., Richeson, J. A., Olayon, J. B., & Maddux, W. W. (2015). [Maximizing the gains and minimizing the pains of diversity: A policy perspective](#). *Perspectives on Psychological Science: A Journal of the Association for Psychological Science*, 10(6), 742–748.

To identify methods to remove barriers that limit the amount of diversity and opportunity in organizations.

- highlights differences in race/ ethnicity at patient, provider, and system levels.
- **Improved workforce diversity** to reflect the diversity in the population served. This requires, in part, improved access to medical, nursing, and allied health educational programs. Leaders and mentors must reflect the diversity of the population served to attract and retain diverse talent. There must be a visible diversity in all levels of the workforce.
  - **Cultural competence training** throughout the system that exposes participants to a variety of races, cultures, beliefs, and practices, and assists in the recognition of personal opinions and biases.
  - **Personalized medicine** to shift care from treatment to prevention with deliberate attention to socio-economic determinants of health.
- Create recruitment policies and job listings that describe required qualifications without language that dissuades under-represented groups from applying.
  - Increase the transparency of hiring and promotion rates by a diverse set of employee cohorts.
  - Ensure the groups responsible for hiring are diverse.
  - Design diverse mentoring teams to better support minority and majority groups.