

# Hugh Chatham Health

## Health Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Strategic Plan

### Introduction

**Hugh Chatham Health is committed to advancing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) across our system through focused development of a welcoming, respectful, equitable and inclusive environment.**

By focusing on DEI, we are developing a culture that respects and values uniqueness — allowing care team members to bring their whole selves to work. When people can be themselves, they can be at their best. In a health care environment, that means providing the best possible patient care.

DEI helps us to see our patients differently and better understand the complexity of human interactions. From different cultural influences, communication styles, and language differences, to health disparities related to diversity — whether based on sex, gender identity, race, ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic or other backgrounds — the more we learn together and understand differences, the better we can serve our patients. This work helps improve communication, increases patient satisfaction and ultimately helps us to deliver higher-quality care.

### Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Historical work

Hugh Chatham has a long standing history of seeking to be aware of the cultural diversity of our team and the populations we serve. A Cultural Diversity Task Force was formed in 2009 to complete a self-assessment regarding the organizations ability to plan care based on a patient's language, culture and race. The task force initiated an intensive cultural diversity education offering for all clinical team members. The electronic health record was reviewed to ensure that language, nationality and race were being collected at the point of registration. Additional fields were added to the nursing assessment regarding any unique care needs based on the patient's cultural background.

In 2022, Hugh Chatham joined with other North Carolina health care systems in a unified pledge to work in partnership to systematically examine and address disparities in care and outcomes through the following:

- Aligning existing programs and initiatives with the NCHA sponsored equity framework [see addendum] into the quality and patient safety platform and system of care,
- Setting aims to reduce inequitable care and outcomes. Adding one or more metrics into your quality, patient safety, and patient experience dashboard,
- Collecting data to measure performance and monitor improvement,
- Listening to and sharing stories from patients, families, and community,
- Establishing and monitoring system-level measures,
- Changing the environment, policies, and culture, and
- Establishing executive accountability.

In 2023, Hugh Chatham recognized that their mission and vision required an additional focus to address the challenges of historical health inequity in order to meet the on-going needs of a diverse workforce and a diverse community. Hugh Chatham Health is committed to advancing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) across our system through focused development of a welcoming, respectful, equitable and inclusive environment.

By focusing on DEI, we are developing a culture that respects and values uniqueness — allowing team members to bring their whole selves to work. When people can be themselves, they can be at their best. In a health care environment, that means providing the best possible patient care.

DEI helps us to see our patients differently and better understand the complexity of human interactions. From different cultural influences, communication styles, and language differences, to health disparities related to diversity — whether based on sex, gender identity, race, ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic or other backgrounds — the more we learn together and understand differences, the better we can serve our patients. This work helps improve communication, increases patient satisfaction and ultimately helps us to deliver higher-quality care.

## **2023: A Year in Review**

### Patients and Populations

- The organization collected patient self-reported information regarding race, national origin, primary language and ethnicity data.
- Process developed to screen in-patients for social determinants of health such as: housing or food insecurity, transportation or utility needs, and personal safety.
- System-wide Language Access: All entities across the organization have immediate access to language line services for translation of over 94 languages. Additionally, a TDD telephone is available for hearing impaired patients. Key documents are available in both English and Spanish.
- LGBTQ+ Health: A physician champion has been identified to assist with promoting opportunities to improve LGBTQ+ health throughout the system, to better support and meet the needs of this patient population.

### People

- DEI Education: All team members complete an annual course entitled: Care delivery, culturally competent. Additional courses and trainings are offered for all care team members on topics ranging from disability inclusion to understanding implicit bias.
- Cross-Cultural Humility: Providers across the system have access to modules on cultural humility and implicit bias to identify areas of opportunity for best practice in treatment of different communities.
- Talent Acquisition: Human Resources personnel work with all hiring leaders to ensure that the recruiting, interviewing, and onboarding process are inclusive and support DEI initiatives.
- Policies to Support our Care Team: the policy on Meeting the Healthcare Needs of Diverse Populations was reviewed and updated to assist all team members. Attachments to the policy provide additional guidance, sample scripts, and additional resources on age inclusivity, gender inclusivity, and language and culture inclusivity.

## **2024 – 2029 DEI Strategic Plan**

In May 2024, Hugh Chatham Health approved a five-year DEI strategic plan with goals in three key areas:

### **1. People**

A diverse and engaged care team leads to better outcomes overall. With commitment from our leadership, Hugh Chatham Health will nurture an inclusive, transparent and collaborative culture so that all our team members can be authentic, and perform at their best. The organization will seek to recruit,

hire and retain team members from historically underrepresented communities by investing in equitable talent acquisition, compensation practices, and education.

### **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Goal**

Foster an inclusive culture and increase diversity throughout all levels of Hugh Chatham Health.

#### **Summarized Objectives**

- Advance DEI education for leadership and all care team members.
- Finalize a policy and guidelines for responding to patient bias and discrimination and begin roll-out, including education and support tools.
- Establish a workforce diversity analytics dashboard that monitors hiring, retention, promotions, development and terminations.
- Identify and mitigate bias in the talent acquisition process.
- Leverage resources for disability best practice, establish a multi-year plan to improve the experiences of team members experiencing disability.
- Conduct a Workforce Diversity Assessment to assess progress toward a diverse and inclusive workplace for all care team members.

## **2. Patients & Population**

Providing patient-centered care means delivering care that is equitable and flexible; giving patients the care they need when they need it. We acknowledge that there are systemic barriers that prevent some people from achieving their full health potential and contribute to inequities in care access and health outcomes. Hugh Chatham Health will build upon our health improvement work and commit to building system-wide infrastructure that begins to address these barriers, including equitable access to language and translation services, leveraging data to understand and improve health outcomes for historically underrepresented and rural communities, enhancing cross-cultural care, and implementing best-in-class LGBTQ+ sensitive patient care. Patient-centered care means high-quality, accessible care to all, so that we become a trusted and reliable resource for all communities we serve.

### **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Goal**

Develop functions to support and advance equitable care for every Hugh Chatham Health patient.

#### **Summarized Objectives**

- Establish and support a system-wide Health Equity Advisory Group (HEAG).
- Develop and provide cross-cultural awareness education to reduce any identified education gaps.
- Increase patient data collection of Race, Ethnicity, Language (REL) and Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity (SOGI).
- Establish health equity tracking benchmarks and begin to stratify performance data on quality, safety and patient experience, by race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation and gender identity, income, and disability status. Identify gaps and develop plans to improve performance and reduce disparity.

- Expand and integrate LGBTQ+ patient-related services across the system.
- Support our volunteer chaplains to ensure equitable access to spiritual care providers.

### **3. Value**

Hugh Chatham Health is a place that honors diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI), an engaging place to work where our communities turn to obtain excellent and equitable care. Advancing these principles requires deliberate work to lay the foundations and build upon successes to establish an organization known for its consistent commitment to DEI and continuous improvement. This cultural journey includes Hugh Chatham Health embracing and supporting all care team members and patients in accordance with our values—regardless of race, ethnicity, cultural and religious belief, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other dimension of diversity—and building the infrastructure to ensure our continuous and long term success.

#### **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Goal**

Establish an infrastructure to ensure alignment and continuous improvement of our diversity, equity and inclusion strategy.

#### **Summarized Objectives**

- Establish suitable administrative structures to advance health care equity.
- Establish system-level guidelines and policies related to the care of historically underrepresented populations (e.g., race & ethnicity, LGBTQ+ health, culture and language access).
- In partnership with community organizations, participate in any local DEI committees/activities to support a community wide focus.
- Develop and implement a work plan to assess and improve representation and accessibility of marketing/communications, website, new staff orientation and the Learning Management System.
- Conduct a Workforce Diversity Assessment, evaluate gaps against Global Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Benchmarks and other DEI integration tools to evaluate progress.

#### **Immediate priorities for 2024**

1. Establish a system-wide Health Equity Advisory Group (HEAG)
2. Conduct a workforce diversity assessment
3. Develop a dashboard for Health Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Measures based on IFDHE recommendations  
([https://ifdhe.aha.org/system/files/media/file/2020/12/ifdhe\\_inclusion\\_dashboard.pdf](https://ifdhe.aha.org/system/files/media/file/2020/12/ifdhe_inclusion_dashboard.pdf))