Why Diversity, Equity and Inclusion?

Following the deaths of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and George Floyd, among others, people of every background have spoken out for change and the dismantling of systemic injustices, racism and discrimination. This has been a period of thoughtfulness, reflection and action for the country. That includes Envision.

As an organization, we welcome team members of every background and work in communities that reflect the racial, ethnic, sexual orientation and economic diversity of our country. But we can and must do more. In recent months, it has become clear that we must recommit ourselves to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) to foster a sense of belonging, both within our organization and in the work that we do for patients. This will be essential to improving our company and the communities we serve.

Addressing diversity and inclusion is not a competitive issue. It is a societal issue. We know that diversity is good for business. It improves corporate performance, drives growth and enhances employee engagement. Simply put, organizations with diverse teams perform better. On the other hand, the Center for American Progress finds that workplace discrimination against employees based on race, gender or sexual orientation costs businesses an estimated $64 billion annually. That amount represents the annual estimated cost of losing and replacing more than 2 million American workers who leave their jobs each year due to unfairness and discrimination.

As a national medical group, our primary job is caring for patients. Like any company, we will be in a better position to serve customers if we reflect the diversity of the market. A dramatic demographic shift is underway in the United States, which will be majority non-White around 2043, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Most importantly, we must recommit to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion because it is the right thing to do. Envision has a role to play in building a society that is more just and more inclusive. We can see the problems in front of us. By addressing these problems, we are making a long-term commitment to our organization, our team members and the well-being of our patients and communities.

What Are Diversity, Equity and Inclusion?

**Diversity** includes all the ways in which people differ, encompassing the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. While diversity is often used in reference to race, ethnicity and gender, we embrace a broader definition of diversity that also includes age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language and physical appearance. Our definition also includes diversity of thought: ideas, perspectives and values. We also recognize that individuals affiliate with multiple identities.

**Equity** is the fair treatment, access, opportunity and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. Improving equity involves increasing justice and fairness within the procedures and processes of institutions or systems, as well as in their distribution of resources. Tackling equity issues requires an understanding of the root causes of outcome disparities within our society.

**Inclusion** is the act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported and valued to fully participate. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people. It’s important to note that while an inclusive group is by definition diverse, a diverse group isn’t always inclusive. Increasingly, recognition of unconscious or implicit bias helps organizations to be deliberate about addressing issues of inclusivity.
How We’ll Get There

In order to chart our course to becoming a more diverse and inclusive organization, we must first acknowledge our starting point. In doing so, it is clear that we have work to do to more closely reflect the country and our communities, but we can also see that these goals are within reach.

Our Starting Point

Racial disparities in healthcare have been researched for decades. In 2002, the Institute of Medicine published the report “Unequal Treatment,” which found, “racial and ethnic minorities tend to receive a lower quality of healthcare than non-minorities, even when access-related factors, such as patients’ insurance status and income, are controlled.” The Affordable Care Act led to large coverage gains, but some groups remain at a higher risk of being uninsured, lacking access to care and experiencing worse health outcomes. The spread and treatment of COVID-19 illustrates this point: as of June 8, 47 percent of cases and 54 percent of deaths were in disproportionately Black counties. Despite the official investment and continued studies, progress in closing disparities has been slow. This puts the onus on us to tackle these challenges head-on. We don’t want to simply meet expectations. We want to exceed them.

As of 2019, in general, Envision’s workforce mirrors the U.S. workforce. The Envision Physician Services/Envision Healthcare workforce has higher Asian ethnic representation than the overall workforce, but lower Hispanic ethnic representation. The AMSURG workforce has both higher White and Black ethnic representation, but lower Hispanic ethnic representation and Asian representation.

Where we most fall short is executive diversity. In August 2020, Envision’s executives (which include the Chief Executive Officer’s direct reports, Group Presidents and Service Line Presidents) are 75 percent male, 85 percent White and 9 percent LGBTQ+. Envision’s senior leadership is well out of line with Best in Class Healthcare Diversity data compiled by AMN and Kaiser Permanente, which puts executives at 50 percent male and 47 percent White.

In June 2020, we began taking steps to address these issues head-on. Envision CEO Jim Rechtin signed the CEO Action Pledge, a commitment to work with and within the business community to advance diversity and inclusion in the workplace. As a part of the pledge, we have committed to these principles:

1. We will continue to make our workplaces trusting places to have complex, and sometimes difficult, conversations about diversity and inclusion
2. We will implement and expand unconscious bias education
3. We will share best – and unsuccessful – practices
4. We will create and share strategic inclusion and diversity plans with our board of directors

The CEO Action Pledge is just one piece of our commitment to the principles of equality and our work to create a more diverse medical group. Our efforts will go well beyond the action pledge and include naming a DEI Program Director and executive board, creating working groups that will have meaningful and tangible directives and outputs, and setting goals for ourselves that will require accountability.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Governance Structure

Many organizations have chosen to develop a DEI taskforce or hire an executive individual to address DEI. At Envision, we believe that Diversity, Equity and Inclusion must be infused throughout the entirety of our organization. The responsibility of all of these critical actions cannot rest alone with one person. If we desire to change our workplace culture, launch workgroups to address awareness, reverse recruitment shortfalls, design strategies to improve candidate pipelines and ensure a more inclusive environment, DEI requires the collective energy of our entire team. To this end, our efforts will be led by members of our executive team and guided by an Advisory Council and supported by a dedicated DEI Program Director.
Executive Sponsorship

Jim Rechtin, MBA, CEO, Envision Healthcare – Jim Rechtin became President and Chief Executive Officer of Envision Healthcare in February 2020. He has 22 years of healthcare experience with a focus on the delivery of value-based care in various medical group settings. Early in his career, Rechtin ran operations for a nonprofit health and human services clinic in Indianapolis, Indiana, and served in the United States Peace Corps in the Congo. He received a Master of Business Administration from Harvard Business School and a Bachelor of Arts from DePauw University. Rechtin is a board member of the Center for Health Care Strategies and Colorado Succeeds.

Adam Brown, MD, MBA, FACEP, President, Emergency Medicine – Dr. Adam Brown is a board-certified emergency physician and the President of Emergency Medicine. He also oversees Clinical Communication Strategy and is Co-Chair of the COVID-19 response for Envision. Prior to accepting the role of a Service Line President, Dr. Brown had been with Envision since 2008. He was born and raised in Wilmington, North Carolina, and completed his residency at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He also has his Master of Business Administration from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Currently, Dr. Brown serves on the board for UNC’s Center of Business in Healthcare and the business school’s Board of Advisors. He is a fellow of the American College of Emergency Physicians where he has chaired subcommittees on diversity and inclusion. He and his husband Steve live in Washington, D.C.

Kris Sanders, FACHE, Vice President, Operations – Kris Sanders, who has a Bachelor of Healthcare Administration and a Master of Business Administration, has more than 20 years of healthcare operational experience. She is board certified in healthcare administration through the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE). Sanders has been with Envision since 2016. In addition to her role at Envision, she has served as the Chairman and Co-Chairman of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee for the North Texas chapter of ACHE. She was the inaugural Chairman for this committee where she reignited the importance of DEI efforts. In addition to the work that Sanders performs within Envision, she prides herself on working with her community and especially with the underserved. She also spends countless hours volunteering with youth groups in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. She is passionate about providing service to all humankind. Sanders currently resides in Dallas, Texas.

DEI Advisory Council
Concurrent with the CEO Action pledge and naming executive sponsors, we have recognized the need to develop an Advisory Council to help guide the organization on DEI strategy and culture. Membership in this council will include internal and external subject matter experts in DEI, talent development, clinical practice, human resources, legal and healthcare administration. Additionally, membership will include those with a passion for improving diversity, equity and inclusion and will give of their time and talent.

DEI Program Director
In addition to identifying members of the Advisory Council, we will identify a Program Director for DEI initiatives at Envision Healthcare. The Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is charged with launching inclusion interventions, programs and initiatives that foster skill development and a more understanding and diverse workplace. The Director will also be responsible for shepherding all aspects of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives and will oversee projects, logistics, initiatives and day-to-day operations of the program.
An Overview of Our Plan

We have identified four main pillars upon which we can build and advance a more diverse, equitable and inclusive environment at Envision and have developed working groups around these pillars to advance their principles throughout our organization:

- Employee REDA (Recruitment, Engagement, Development and Advancement)
- Developing Awareness of Diverse Groups
- Creating a Supportive Environment
- Improving Our Communities and Society

The Employee Life Cycle Work Group will focus on ensuring DEI efforts are a part of every piece of a career starting with creating and reinforcing a strong pipeline of talent to ensure equal opportunities for growth and development at Envision for both clinical and clinical support team members. As the group primarily responsible for career development, this team will work with industry leaders to inform best practices and ensure current employees have the tools needed for career growth and advancement. This group will also promote and track diversity on our corporate board, within our executive team and on recruiting panels, helping us to accomplish real, substantive goals.

The Developing Awareness Work Group will focus on education and communication. This group will deliver diversity data results at All Hands and Regional Town Halls. It will integrate DEI into our internal and external communications plans and our learning modules for both clinical and clinical support teams. Since our organization is at the beginning of the DEI journey, this group will be tasked to launch early-stage DEI education and support tools for our team members. It will also develop a tiered education curriculum targeting executive leadership, clinical support staff, directors and clinical leaders. In addition to general courses and seminars on diversity, equity and inclusion, we hope to go further, giving our teams the tools necessary to navigating and respecting others’ differences and understanding unconscious bias.

The Ensuring a Supportive Environment Work Group will focus on employee feedback and organizational improvement. Members of this group will be specifically charged with listening to our team members and fostering open communication about where we can go and how we can improve. They will create a streamlined reporting structure, so discrimination and microaggressions can be addressed. This group will also build educational initiatives and employee resource groups around how to create a more supportive environment. Here are examples of how we want to support our teams:

- Establishing employee resource groups
- Providing internal and external wellness support
- Connecting with external organizations and companies that have robust programs
- Developing a website that houses our commitments and resources
- Ensuring opportunities for sponsorship and mentorship

The Improving Our Communities and Society Work Group will focus on healthcare disparities research, development of best practices and clinical education. This group will help lead our charge to close the disparities in care and outcomes in minority and underserved communities. The conversations taking place inside Envision and across the country make it clear that we must do more to represent and reflect the communities we serve so we can provide better care. This group will conduct additional research into healthcare disparities, starting with Emergency Medicine, Hospital Medicine and Women’s and Children’s Services. It will develop a comprehensive DEI education curriculum for clinicians. The group will also publish a white paper on how to improve care, close disparities and build Diversity, Equity and Inclusion into every part of the work that we do for patients.
**Measuring Success**

We have established transparent, verifiable metrics to hold ourselves accountable and ensure that our efforts create tangible results. These outcomes include a plan to build greater diversity in the executive team, on our board and in our talent pool. More specifically:

- We will publish our first progress report of our DEI efforts in June 2021
- We are committed to maintaining a minimum of at least two women and at least two non-gender diverse board members and increasing over time¹
- We will establish a DEI education curriculum, ensuring that at least 80 percent of all employees complete the training in 2021
- We will not establish hiring thresholds for diversity; however, to address our lack of diversity in the executive teams, we will set the expectation that every interviewing group of candidates for positions at the vice president position or above level be at least 50 percent diverse
- By the end of 2021, we will have more diversity among the members of our executive team than we did at the end of 2020²

In building a more diverse, more just workplace, we will strive to ensure our teams have a sense of belonging by utilizing pulse surveys, focus groups and other quantitative tools.

**We Will Always Strive to Improve**

The journey to making our workplace a more diverse and inclusive environment will be an ongoing process. We will foster collaboration, creativity, innovation, social support, psychological support and safety within our workplace, within our teams and within our leadership. We will ask for feedback and use it to improve and develop. Ultimately, we will aim to make Diversity, Equity and Inclusion part of every piece of the employee life cycle.

We will not simply declare victory when all the benchmarks are met, nor will we always feel like we are moving forward. We will assess our efforts continually and make adjustments and improvements to our strategy. We will not be complacent. We will not always get it right, but when we fall short, we will learn from those experiences and use them to grow. We will only be successful if we are engaging employees and continuously listening.

We look forward to working with every Envision team member to build an organization that thrives because of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and provides the highest level of care to patients because we best represent the communities and the people we serve.

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¹ The Executive Team includes the direct reports of the Chief Executive Officer as well as Group Presidents and Service Line Presidents.

² In August 2020, Envision’s Board of Directors is comprised seven members of which two are women and two are non-White members.