

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
CRITICAL TO DIVERSITY SUCCESS

A Diversity Action Plan is critical if a health care organization's diversity program is to be successful. The plan is the roadmap, detailing how the organization will integrate diversity activities into the daily business, while supporting the health care organization's overall corporate strategy and helping achieve intended outcomes. Diversity plans have several key elements, all of which, when included and used cooperatively, lead to successful implementation of diversity activities.

A diversity initiative is not static. It is a continually evolving process, making the diversity action plan a living document that accommodates various shifts in strategy, demographics and other factors that affect the health care organization. It changes as the organization changes, but most importantly supports the critical asset of any organization – the employees.

The plan sets the framework to value, appreciate and celebrate the contributions of each employee. Since employees have varied backgrounds, experiences and behaviors, the plan enables a health care organization to make efficient use of each employee's talents and abilities.

Today's health care field demands specialized talent. A plan establishes the organization's commitment to diversity, giving them a competitive edge to attract – and more importantly, retain – those top notch employees with specialized training who will further the mission, vision and values of the organization.

In addition to making the health care organization an “employer of choice,” a comprehensive, well-executed diversity initiative will enhance the organization's position

within the marketplace, making it the health care provider of choice for communities that are becoming increasingly diverse – a trend that will continue for years to come. The plan doesn't address just diversity but also how the organization will manage diversity for the benefit of all stakeholders – health care workers and patients alike. Short term and long-term goals for achieving this marketplace position, along with measurable outcomes, should be clear in the plan.

And the plan also should address not just the social and business imperatives, but also the emerging compliance imperative as we look for more culturally and linguistically competent health care staffs.

As health care organizations develop and implement a diversity action plan, they should also keep in mind what specifically the plan should include, such as:

- Mission Statement
- Vision Statement
- Objectives: short and long term
- Areas of focus: (i.e. leadership, mentoring, succession planning, recognition, accountability, recruitment/retention, awareness, communications, training)
- Measurement/evaluations
- Financial implications/budget

A comprehensive approach to diversity activities and plan development, linked to corporate strategy, ensures that the program meets the organization's needs.

Communicating the approach, activities and overall plan to all employees within the health care organization fosters a sense of ownership that ultimately will lead to successful plan implementation.

Diversity action plan article provided by Johnson & Lee Consulting, LLC This firm specializes in training, team building and leadership development in the area of diversity. Johnson & Lee Consulting, LLC has proven knowledge and experience in cultural competency for healthcare and initiating diversity plans for hospitals. Visit them at www.johnsonandlee.com.



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