

DEIB

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging



Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) Report 2022-2023

Mercy⁺

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) Report

2022 and 2023

Jan. 1, 2022 - Dec. 31, 2023

CONTENTS

Introduction	4
DEIB at Mercy	5
Councils of the DEIB Cabinet	6
DEIB Cabinet	7
Meet Our Diversity Officers.....	9
Telling Our Story.....	10
2022-2023 Reports from the Councils.....	12
Looking Forward.....	23

Introduction



Dear Mercy co-workers and community,

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) are words used often by many organizations, but they are special at Mercy because their core concepts are found deep within the DNA of our Catholic ministry. Mercy's very origins are rooted in helping those who are treated differently by society, so when we work to end injustice, we are carrying on the work of our foundress, Catherine McAuley, and the Sisters who came before us.

We hope this report will provide you with an overview of what Mercy is doing to increase the diversity of our workforce to ensure we better reflect the communities we serve, treat our patients with the utmost respect, provide them with the best possible care, and create a culture in which all co-workers thrive and feel comfortable being their authentic selves.

We still have a long way to go, but our ministry is changing for the better every day. I hope you will be proud of what we have accomplished so far and will join us as we continue to strive for excellence in the years to come. Our DEIB work is ongoing. To stay up-to-date on our latest efforts, please visit mercy.net/deib or mercy.net/healthequity.

Sincerely,

Bridget Marzette-Bender
Vice President-DEIB

Mercy's deep abiding conviction is to cultivate a mission culture that honors every person's inherent dignity as made in the image of God.

DEIB at Mercy

Mercy's foundational value of dignity calls us to treat every person as made in the image of God. We strive to remain true to the Catholic social teaching principle of solidarity, which is about recognizing others as our brothers and sisters and actively working for their good. Because of this, we're continuously enhancing a mission culture that:

- Represents the diversity of our communities.
- Provides just and equitable access to health care opportunities and resources.
- Enables everyone to contribute at the top of their God-given talent.
- Fosters a sense of belonging for our co-workers, patients and communities.

At Mercy, DEIB is made of four parts:

1. **Diversity** refers to how we differ. It encompasses all the characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. Diversity does not only refer to race, ethnicity, and gender; its broader sense includes religion, age, marital status, sexual orientation, nationality, education, cultural background, disability, and socioeconomic status. Mercy's definition of diversity also embraces a variety of thoughts, ideas and perspectives.

2. **Equity** refers to the fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people; equity recognizes that advantages and barriers exist, and as a result, not everyone starts from the same place. As an organization, we will strive to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented some groups from fully participating.
3. **Inclusion** refers to bringing traditionally excluded individuals and groups into processes, activities and decision/policymaking in a way that shares power. It creates an environment where an individual or group feels welcomed, respected, supported and valued to participate fully.
4. **Belonging** is a state in which Diversity, Equity and Inclusion are ingrained in the organization's DNA, causing co-workers to feel their full potential is being engaged. Their inherent worth and dignity are recognized and the uniqueness of all co-workers is amplified. Where co-workers feel like they fit in and their views and values are integrated within Mercy, their sense of belonging increases.

Mercy's Diversity Leaders

Mercy's DEIB work is operationalized by seven councils overseen by a formal governance structure which we call our DEIB Cabinet. Members of our senior leadership team (SLT) are integrated through executive sponsorship, leadership roles and membership. The cabinet was founded in the belief that in our connected humanity, we are all called to build relationships and to address barriers for co-worker populations who are marginalized.

A key part of our governance structure are our diversity officers, who are located across our ministry. They serve as ambassadors, key members and strategic advisors of the DEIB Cabinet and to the rest of Mercy. Officers are aligned with community leaders, each council chair and executive sponsors to help drive goals across our organization and weave DEIB into the fabric of our culture.

Members include our Diversity Officers, officers of our councils, and others who represent senior leadership, our mission, communications, education and data analytics departments.

And so the body is not made up of one part, but of many.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:14

Councils of the DEIB Cabinet

DEIB work is performed by the DEIB Cabinet, which consists of seven councils:

- Health Equity Council** reduces disproportionalities and health disparities within the communities Mercy serves.
- Mercy Women in Leadership Council (MWL)** shares talents and promotes professional development and career advancement with next generation women leaders.
- Diversity Advancement Council** furthers the selection, development and promotion of diverse women and men serving in leadership and dedicated to advancing diversity and promoting inclusion across the ministry, working to advance underrepresented talent.
- Disability Resources Council** influences workplace strategies designed to increase equity in hiring, development, and advancement to positively impact the lives of individuals with disabilities.
- Social Determinants Of Co-Worker Health Council** promotes and establishes programs that provide equity and dignity for all co-workers by reducing systemic and other hidden barriers.
- Communications Council** works with other DEIB councils to communicate Mercy's DEIB work both internally and externally through digital, print and social media.
- Community Partnership Council** works to improve Mercy's engagement with the diverse populations within our communities through events, education and other means.

Because our Communications and Community Partnership Councils are smaller groups that work in tandem with the other five councils, we will only be examining the first five in-depth in this report.



DEIB Cabinet

Catherine Codispoti
Chief People Officer
Barb Grayson, Secretary
Chief Workforce Experience
Bridget Marzette-Bender, Chair
Vice President, DEIB
Ajay Pathak, Executive Sponsor
SVP-Chief Strategic Ventures Office

Senior Leadership Team

Cheryl Matejka
SVP-Chief Financial Officer
Kevin Minder
SVP-Mission & Community Health
Dr. John Mohart
President-Community Operations
Ajay Pathak
SVP-Chief Strategic Ventures Officer
Shannon Sock
EVP-Chief Strategist & COO
Philip Wheeler
SVP-General Counsel
Dave Thompson
SVP-Population Health and President,
Contracted Revenue
Mike Hubert
SVP-Chief Communications and
Government Relations Officer

Department Representatives

Jenna Speckart, Mission Lead
VP-Mission & Ethics
Jimmy Wilson, Education &
Awareness Lead
VP-Talent Development
Stephanie Huffaker, Data Analytics
Director-Talent Analytics

Committee Chairs, Vice Chairs, Secretaries, Diversity Officers

DEIB Marketing & Communications

Shannon Sock, Executive Sponsor
EVP-CSO & COO
Mike Hubert, SVP-Chief
Communications and Government
Relations Officer
Niki Burgdorf, Lead
Communications Manager

DEIB Community Partnerships

Kevin Minder, Executive Sponsor
SVP-Mission & Community Health
Denise Hill, Chair
ED-Compliance Deputy Privacy Officer

Health Equity Council

Kevin Minder, Executive Sponsor
SVP-Mission & Community Health
Dave Thompson, Executive Sponsor
SVP-Population Health and President,
Contracted Revenue
Danielle McPherson, Co-Chair
ED-Managed Care Contract
Ursula Wright, Chair
Chief Clinical Excellence Officer
Chris Pham, Diversity Officer
Manager-Consumer Marketing Analysis

Mercy Women In Leadership (MWL)

JoAnne Levy, Chair
Vice President-Research
Vi Le, Vice Chair
VP-Strategic Operations/Contracting
Tracy Riordan, Secretary
Physician
Esther Hong, Diversity Officer
Executive Director-Operations

Diversity Advancement Council (DAC)

Ajay Pathak, Executive Sponsor
SVP-Chief Strategic Ventures Office
Ayanna Pierce, Secretary
VP-Benefits & Talent Relations
Taylor Rhoades, Chair & Diversity Officer
Directory-Operations
Kenton Saunders, Vice Chair
Director-Operations

Disability Resources Council

Cheryl Matejka, Executive Sponsor
SVP-Chief Financial Officer
Tim Fields, Chair
Manager-Talent Selection
Marisa Hiatt, Vice Chair
Manager-Disability Inclusion Ops
Dana Brodeur, Staff Lead
Disability Resources Consultant
Taylor Rhoades, Diversity Officer
Director-Operations

Social Determinants of Co-Worker Health

Philip Wheeler, Executive Sponsor
SVP-General Counsel
Dr. John Mohart, Executive Sponsor
President-Community Operations
Ayanna Pierce, Chair
VP-Benefits & Talent Relations
Elizabeth Hairopoulos, Vice Chair
Director-Benefits
Stephanie Huffaker, Secretary
Director-Talent Analytics
Jenna Speckart, Mission & Ethics
Vice President-Mission & Ethics
Joi Cunningham, Diversity Officer
Director-Risk Claims & Insurance

Mercy Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging Cabinet 2024



Meet Our Diversity Officers



Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging



Joi Cunningham



Aura Hickey



Chris Pham



Taylor Rhoades



Esther Hong

In 2022, Mercy appointed two new Diversity Officers to join existing Officers, **Denise Hill**, executive director and deputy privacy officer, and **Danielle McPherson**, executive director, managed care contracting and operations: **Esther Hong**, executive director of operations and strategic initiatives at Mercy Hospital St. Louis, and **Taylor Rhoades**, director of operations at Mercy Hospital Ardmore. Diversity Officers are leaders (manager and above) who are DEIB champions working as strategic advisors to senior leadership and serving on DEIB councils. Their efforts help to advance this work across the ministry. Their service is in addition to their regular roles.

In 2023, Denise and Danielle's terms ended and on July 1, the DEIB Cabinet welcomed three new Diversity Officers, who join Esther and Taylor:

- **Joi Cunningham**, director, risk claims and insurance, Ministry Office and St. Louis
- **Aura Hickey**, manager, primary care nursing, Northwest Arkansas
- **Chris Pham**, manager, consumer marketing analytics, MTS

We recruit new officers every two years or at the discretion of the executive sponsor.


Telling Our Story

We share our DEIB efforts with co-workers and the community through updates in our publications, on Baggot Street (our intranet), on our website, and via social media. We work with our social media team to share a variety of related posts.

- Focusing on disability inclusion, LGBTQ+ issues, community health, health inequity among minorities, and more

Mercy
February 13

Mercy is honored to team up with [Developmental Disability Advocates](#) to help students like Ben find a good “pathway to employment.” Learn more about the program: <http://ow.ly/3bgF50MR3zH> ... [See more](#)




Transition Series Part 2: Life After High School | Internship

I am a Team Player.

- Sharing cultural traditions/recipes

Mercy
April 5

Chag Pesach Sameach! Happy Passover to all our Jewish co-workers, patients, families and friends. This dish, called charoset, is a traditional part of the Passover seder (ceremony). It is a deliciously sweet blend of fruits, nuts and spices. Try making it at home with this recipe from the kitchen of our co-worker, Lisa Fishman ... [See more](#)



- Educating about the history behind holidays such as Hannukah, Women’s History Month, or Ramadan


Mercy
December 18

Happy Hanukkah to all our Jewish co-workers, friends and family members! Hanukkah, which means “dedication,” commemorates the completion of the second temple in Jerusalem, as well as celebrating the miracle when a menorah in the temple stayed lit for eight days despite only having enough oil for one day ... [See more](#)



Mercy
February 1

This [#BlackHistoryMonth](#), we’re celebrating monumental contributions by African Americans in the history of medicine. Today we begin our series with Mary Elizabeth Mahoney who was the first Black nurse to graduate from an American school of nursing ... [See more](#)



- Sharing toolkits to help our teams observe holidays such as Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Juneteenth, National Women’s Equality Day, National Disability Awareness Month and Veteran’s Day
- Spotlighting historical figures in medicine

Mercy Hospital South (St. Louis)
March 8

We celebrate [#InternationalWomensDay](#) by recognizing International nurses like Mini Varghese who aren’t just embraced at Mercy, they are celebrated! Mini has cared of patients around the world — including in native India, as well as Saudi Arabia and Dubai. Today she’s a proud RN at [#MercySouthSTL](#), and is paving the way for others now calling this country home ... [See more](#)



- Highlighting co-worker stories related to a holiday or religious observance

Mercy
June 19


Wishing a joyful and meaningful [#Juneteenth](#) to all! Today honors the end of slavery in the United States and is considered the longest-running Black American holiday. On June 17, 2021, 150 years after the soldiers informed the slaves in Texas that they were free, President Biden made Juneteenth an official federal holiday ... [See more](#)

We gather in the presence of our God, whose favor is on justice, who loves the liberation of all.

We gather to celebrate freedom from oppression and the full humanity of every man, woman and child.

We gather to celebrate the resilience and contributions of Black Americans, and to pledge our continued work to build a just society.


We gather to pray.



- Offering prayers in conjunction with Mercy’s mission

Mercy
November 23

“The joy is that you see the whole family and, in a way, you become a part of their care in the community.” Three foreign-born doctors tell us why they decided to make their homes in smaller communities here in the US. Whether it’s the warm welcome they’ve received, their adopted families and churches, or getting to know their patients more personally — their families have woven themselves into the local fabric for good. [Read more: http://ow.ly/Ees750LMe8r](http://ow.ly/Ees750LMe8r)



- Featuring international doctors and nurses

2022-2023 Reports from the Councils

"[I have] an energized feeling with the mentoring opportunity." –A MERCY CO-WORKER

Health Equity Council

Previously called the Health Disparities Council, the Health Equity Council reorganized and reformed to better reflect the work we're doing Mercy-wide as part of the Framework for Health Equity established by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

Mercy has developed a strategic plan to ensure the continued success of the many programs we have in place today as they evolve with the changing needs of our communities. Our Health Equity Strategic Plan focuses on the following:

- Clinical disparities identification and management
- Social coordination hub and screening standardization
- Workforce diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging
- Strategic payor and community collaborations

Recent activities include:

- Ensuring Medicaid enrollees continue to be eligible for Medicaid coverage through Medicaid Redetermination.
- Instituting a Collaborative Care Model for behavioral health and substance abuse to help establish medical care and help patients be successful in recovery.
- Participating in prescription drug discount programs for underserved communities.
- Screening our communities for social determinates of health that might negatively affect their health and providing help where possible.
- Collecting and stratifying data based on race, ethnicity, and geography.
- Developing Health Equity strategic plans for all of Mercy's major hospitals.
- Creating overall Health Equity action plan based on each community and hospital.
- Defining clinical focus areas: behavioral health, hypertension and heart failure.
- Leveraging technology and data from Unite Us, Epic and IDP.
- Connecting patients to available resources, including through Humana + vEngagement.

- Conducting unconscious bias training.
- Updating of Health Equity page on mercy.net to help our patients, the public and the government understand what Mercy is doing to address hidden barriers to quality care in the communities we serve.

Mercy is also part of the Catholic Health Association's "We Are Called" pledge to prioritize health equity and eliminate the racial inequities in our marginalized communities.

Mercy Women in Leadership Council

MWL began in the fall of 2018. From the beginning, we have focused on supporting women leaders and being models for women at Mercy who aspire to become leaders. MWL has two high-level, outcome-based goals in calendar year 2023:

- Increase the number of female leaders (supervisors and above).
- Increase co-worker perception of belonging, as measured by Mercy Voice of the Co-worker surveys.

Each of Mercy Women in Leadership's (MWL) five subcommittees has their own goals and programs that help advance the status of women leaders at Mercy.

Mentoring Committee

The Mentoring Committee's purpose is to encourage, support and enable mentoring of current and future Mercy women leaders to add value to their professional experience at Mercy. Since July 2020, three groups — including 248 women or 124 mentor-mentee pairs — have benefited from this personal form of professional development.

Education and Events Committee

This committee focuses on offering events and education for MWL members. The main focus has been on planning our five year-anniversary event, which was held virtually Oct. 17-18, 2023. The event's theme was "Lasting Light: Building our Legacy Together."

"I feel a sense of belonging with my mentoring experience." –A MERCY CO-WORKER

Other events have included:

- A series called "Spilling the Tea" with MWL members to promote a sense of belonging and inclusion for all MWL members.
- A "Self-Care Week" that included eight live "lunch and learn" sessions for leaders and physicians. With more than 300 attendees, topics included happiness, sleep, communication, stress management, healthy eating, how to care for kids during a pandemic, a guided reflection and tips for designing a home office.
- Seven "MWL Presents How-to Videos" in which MWL members shared tips, talents, and more.
- An MWL book club with the first discussion on Matthew Kelly's book *Off Balance*.
- A book club in partnership with Mercy Neighborhood Ministry called Critical Concerns Book Club. Their first discussion was *The Price of Thirst* by Karen Piper.

Community Outreach Committee

This committee of approximately 50 women leaders from across the ministry identifies and promotes opportunities for women leaders to serve the community, especially helping those who are vulnerable and underserved.



Co-workers assembled over 2,500 care packages for bedside caregivers in spring 2022.

Events have included:

Caregiver Care Packages

Building on the model developed in 2020, in spring 2022, Mercy organized and delivered care packages (bags with treats and words of recognition and encouragement) to approximately 2,500 co-workers across the ministry in Environmental Services, Dietary and Patient Transport.

First Soup for Your Soul Event

This November 2022 lunch event drew 55 in-person and 25 virtual participants to hear a presentation by Pastor Alexander Andre, President of the Tabernacle Community Development Corporation (TCDC), a non-profit

Community Outreach Committee members delivered 80 gifts to 11 families in December 2022.



organization dedicated to helping eliminate poverty and social exclusion by improving the social, educational and economic infrastructure, which leads to self-sufficiency. In addition, attendees "adopted" 11 families (38 people) for the 2022 holiday season by providing gifts from an Amazon wish list for each family.

Second Soup for Your Soul Event

A second event was held May 9, 2023, at Mercy Hospital Fort Smith, benefiting the Cooper-Anthony Mercy Child Advocacy Center (CAMCAC) in Hot Springs. Co-workers from across the ministry joined the presentation virtually, including from the Virtual Care Center in St. Louis. Sister Judith Marie Keith, former CEO and President of Mercy Hospital Fort Smith, led formation for the attendees, reminding everyone of Catherine McAuley's skills, not only as a healer but as a leader.



Sister Judith Marie Keith speaks at a Soup for the Soul event in Fort Smith, Arkansas.

Tracey Childress, CAMCAC director, and Holly Heer, development coordinator, were on hand to discuss the impact CAMCAC has had on children in the region it serves. Located in Hot Springs, the center provided services for more than 830 children in 2022, a number that continues to grow each year. The center celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2023.

A third Soup for Your Soul event took place on Oct. 17, 2023 and benefited Mercy Family Center in Metairie, Louisiana. More than 300 virtual attendees raised over \$3,100 for the ministry.

Membership Committee

This committee manages MWL's member recruitment, relationships, retention and results (e.g., engagement, promotions and advancements). They also welcome new members and collaborate with the communications committee annually to survey MWL members. In 2022, the membership committee coordinated Q&A sessions for potential MWL members, hosted by each of the committee leads.

In Nov. 2022, this committee helped expand MWL membership to female managers across the ministry for the first time. Thanks to these efforts, they welcomed 838 new members, bringing total MWL membership to almost 2,000 women physicians, advance practice providers and leaders who are managers and above.

Communication Committee

Just as Catherine kept in touch with her Sisters scattered around Ireland and England, the communications committee is in charge of informing our members about news and events to the current and next generation of female leaders to sustain and grow the Mercy ministry. The Communications Committee produces a monthly newsletter, ad-hoc communications for events and maintains MWL's social media presence. These communications have consistently achieved well above an 80% open rate.

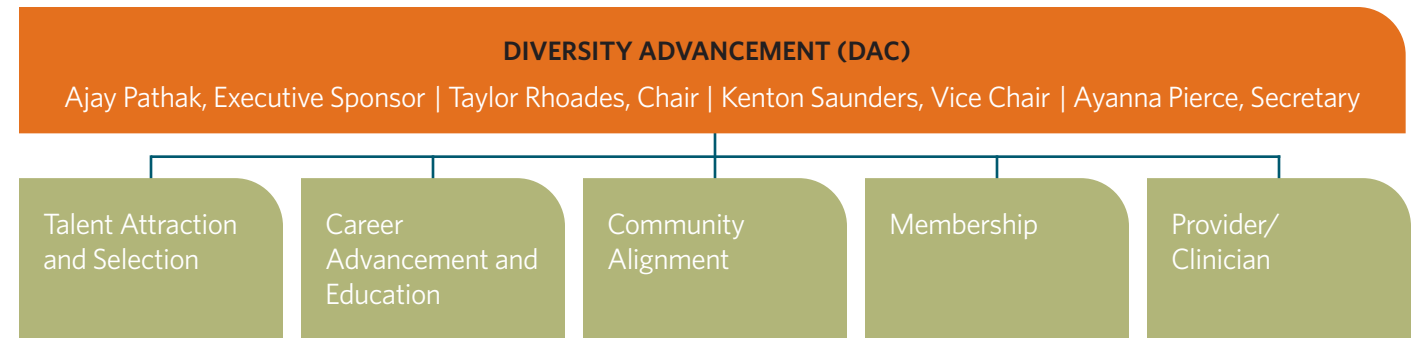


In addition, the committee started a formal communications calendar and added important historical events for women to the calendar to ensure they are recognized. Larger milestones are celebrated in a formal email communication (e.g., in the newsletter or monthly communication) and smaller, but important dates are celebrated in our private MWL Facebook group "This Day in History" posts.

Local Chapters Committee

This committee was formed in 2021, but was delayed by the COVID pandemic. Its work resumed in 2023 and focuses on having a more local impact on women in Mercy's communities. Each community has formed its own MWL local chapter. To date, those local chapters have sponsored social and educational events, emphasizing opportunities for building relationships at a local level.

A meeting of the local Springfield MWL chapter.



Diversity Advancement Council

Career Advancement and Education

This committee seeks to continuously enhance the education, knowledge and professional advancement opportunities for co-workers of all levels. This is done through both internal training and external programs that involve our local communities.

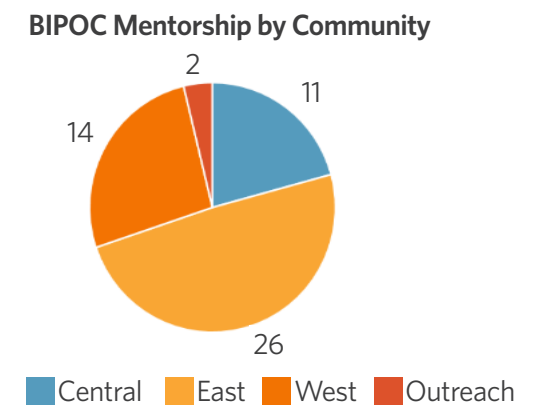
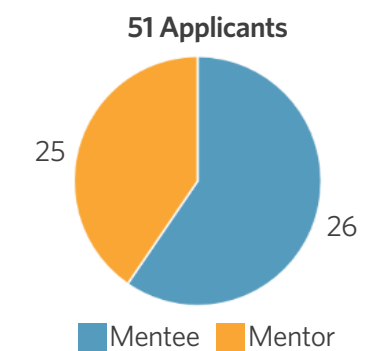
Mercy BIPOC Mentorship Program

Mercy launched our first Black, Indigenous, and (other) People of Color (BIPOC) Mentorship Program in January 2023. The objective of this mentoring program was to provide a mentoring experience for BIPOC managers who desire to develop professionally and personally through a six-month trusting mentor/mentee relationship with BIPOC leaders director and above. The program had 51 applicants total for mentors and mentees, with strong representation from across the ministry.

Mentorship is rooted in our Christian faith — Jesus mentored the disciples. It was modeled by our foundress, Catherine McAuley.

*"As one iron sharpens iron,
so one person sharpens another."*

-PROVERBS 27:17



Mercy
Institute of Talent Investment

DAC PURPOSE STATEMENT

At Mercy, we envision a workplace where diversity is not only recognized but actively empowered. Our DAC seeks to enrich the lives of every co-worker by fostering an inclusive environment that nurtures personal and professional growth, embodying the principles of justice and dignity.

St. Louis Business Diversity Initiative

Offered to co-workers across the ministry, the St. Louis Business Diversity Initiative (SLBDI) Fellows Experience is a one-year program that prepares minority co-workers for leadership, designed to address this group's interests and challenges as they work to develop and advance their careers. Focus areas include enhancing leadership capacity, advancing their careers through professional development, relationship building and civic engagement. To date, more than 50 current and previous Mercy leaders have completed this program, including five who participated in the 2023 program.

Co-worker and Provider Education

- Unconscious bias training for providers and clinicians offers awareness and mitigation strategies often found in health care. Over 4,700 physicians and co-workers were trained in this reporting period.
- Celebration toolkits were created to help all co-workers celebrate Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Juneteenth and National Women's Equality Day.

Community Alignment

Volunteering in the Community

Council members volunteered with these St. Louis organizations:

- **Bethesda Temple Church Community Fair**, providing health education information and connecting with the community.
- **Heart and Soul-Urban League Fair**, part of a community outreach partnership with the St. Louis Urban League. Mercy's workshop on heart disease and stroke prevention was part of the kickoff to a health series which focused on healthy living, healthy eating, and healthy habits for women of color.

Provider/Clinician

SOAR@Mercy — Working with Lift for Life Academy

This was a new program at Mercy that lasted from August 2022 through May 2023. High school juniors and seniors spent time on the Mercy Hospital St. Louis campus shadowing co-workers in various departments and learning about health care and health care career pathways.

Ponce Health Sciences Partnership

Since June 2021, Mercy St. Louis has been collaborating with Ponce Health Sciences University, a fully accredited, private, for-profit institution with campuses in Puerto Rico and downtown St. Louis, to offer clinical training to local medical students. Ponce's 40-year history reflects their dedication to recruiting students from diverse backgrounds and providing a culturally competent health care education.

The first 30 students enrolled in August 2022. They have been enjoying a variety of hands-on training that combines a traditional cadaver lab with high-tech three-dimensional anatomical software, while also working with an underserved community, an important part of Ponce University's medical training. The school aims to create new pathways to professional health programs for health science students, especially students coming from untraditional backgrounds, and help ease the physician shortage by encouraging its students to work in communities where health care is desperately needed. Students have also been doing half-day shadowing, and six are conducting summer research in critical care. All will begin their core rotations at Mercy Hospital St. Louis in July 2024.



Taylor Rhoades, center, director of operations - performance division and diversity officer for the Oklahoma Communities, accepts the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services Employer of the Year Award in 2022.

Disability Resources Council

Mercy is on a continuous journey to create a more disability-inclusive workplace, from making our website more accessible and providing assistive technology to our co-workers to creating a more inclusive experience for our patients with disabilities. To do this, we have created a Disability Resources Council that is actively developing strategies designed to increase equity in hiring, development, and advancement to positively impact the lives of individuals with disabilities.

We do this through:

1. Education
2. Community Outreach
3. Training and Development

Education

One of the areas we focus on in education is training our recruiters and hiring leaders on how to best accommodate candidates with disabilities. In 2022 Mercy held Inclusive Interviewing Training to empower the recruitment team to interview and hire people with disabilities. As a means of ongoing education, the Disability Resources Council is offering short educational videos or micro-learnings to hiring leaders.

Mercy also holds educational workshops for all co-workers. In 2023, Dr. John Bruno, pre-employment program supervisor and autism specialist, held virtual and in-person workshops to help health care workers better understand neurodiversity, how people on the spectrum think and how to understand and work with their perspective.

The Disability Resources Council is constantly expanding our educational offerings based on feedback from our communities and co-workers.

Community Outreach

Several years ago Mercy began celebrating October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month. In 2022, the Disability Resources Council launched a series of inclusive interviewing events in each of our regions for individuals with disabilities. This event looks like a traditional interview, but leaders and co-workers were given resources like modified interview questions and disability etiquette training.

Participants were provided with information on what to expect and how to prepare for the interview. We were also able to have our therapy dogs present to help calm nerves

DRC PURPOSE STATEMENT

To achieve an inclusive workplace that offers all co-workers an equal opportunity to succeed and develop in their roles.



Click the icon to watch a video, produced for the Catholic Health Association, that gives an overview of diversity work at Mercy.

Attendees at the 2022 Inclusive Interviewing Event, including Mercy co-workers, applicants and Mercy therapy dogs



for both the interviewers and candidates. This event reinforced community connections and resulted in several new hires across our service area.

In addition, Mercy is an active member of Nexus, a group that connects employers with agencies that support candidates with disabilities who are seeking employment. Representatives attend every possible event in order to promote our disability inclusion initiatives and intentionally collaborate with our local communities to meet their needs.

Training and Development

Pathway to Employment began as a way to provide high school students with disabilities with a variety of real-life work experiences to better prepare them for future employment, but has evolved into an employment-based internship model. It provides students with an opportunity to focus on training in one department, learning an entire job while interacting with Mercy leaders and co-workers.

This model has resulted in many students beginning their careers at Mercy after graduation. Pathway to Employment is now offered in several hospitals across the ministry and continues to expand into additional communities.

We also offer summer work experience for students with disabilities to gain skills prior to graduation. In 2022, we hosted students at three hospitals in Missouri and Oklahoma, and expanded to seven hospitals in 2023.

Supported Employment

Another way Mercy has been at the forefront is through our dedication to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We have been fortunate to secure grant funding in the St. Louis area to train and support this specific population who have become such an important reflection of our mission in action and dedication to those we serve.



Marisa Hiatt, manager – disability inclusion operations, accepts awards on Mercy’s behalf for our efforts to create a more inclusive culture for co-workers with disabilities.

For over a decade, Mercy has operated a Pre-Employment Training Program through Supported Volunteering at Mercy Hospital St. Louis. This is a skill-building program for volunteers with intellectual and developmental disabilities who live in St. Louis county or city. Supported volunteers work to gain technical and social skills to reach their goals, which could be anything from seeking competitive employment to volunteering in the community.

Over the years, many of our volunteers have become Mercy co-workers. Recently, we expanded this program to Mercy Hospital South and in 2023, served over 50 volunteers, 15 of whom are now employed either with Mercy or in the community.

To continue the success of this population, Mercy now operates a Supported Employment model. At the end of 2023, we served almost 90 co-workers with developmental or intellectual disabilities at both hospitals, where we have a team dedicated to assisting co-workers in

the maintenance and advancement of their role at Mercy. This proactive support has led to many of our co-workers being promoted or moving into a role that is more challenging after years of service.

Awards

- Missouri Rehabilitation Association 2022 Employer of the Year
- Accommodation for Success Exceptional Supporter of Inclusive Practices 2022
- Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services Employer of the Year 2022

Employer of the Year

Recognizes an employer in the community who has made a significant difference in advancing employment opportunities of individuals with disabilities.

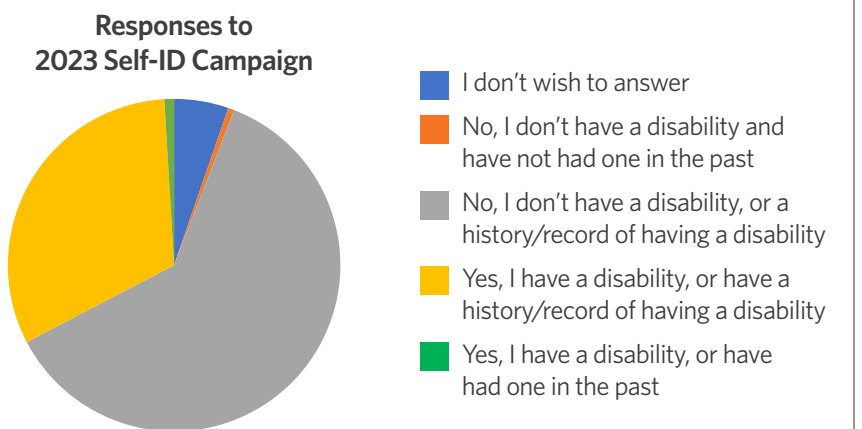
2021 AWARD WINNER

Mercy Hospital, STL Transportation Team

MERCYHOSPITAL.COM @MERCYHOSPITAL F MERCYHOSPITAL

Voluntary Disability Self ID Campaign

Mercy’s mission culture honors every person’s inherent dignity as made in the image of God. As part of this, we held our first voluntary disability self-identification campaign in June 2023. We did so in order to better understand the number of co-workers with disabilities who serve in our ministry. There were 2,451 co-workers who updated their Workday profile with one of the following responses:



Social Determinants of Co-worker Health Council

What are social determinants of health?

Social determinants of health (SDOH) are the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks.

SDOH can be grouped into five domains:



Economic Stability



Education Access and Quality



Health Care Access and Quality



Neighborhood and Build Environment



Social and Community Context

The Social Determinants of Co-worker Health Council establishes programs that provide equity and dignity for co-workers by working to eliminate systemic and hidden barriers to health care, financial stability, tuition and other necessities.

As reported in questions asked during our annual health risk assessment, 22% of respondents (4,650) reported that it was “somewhat hard” or “very hard” to pay for the basics, including housing, food, transportation, and health care.

Programs

To help address these issues we have implemented the following programs:

Gas Stipend

From June to September 2022, when gas prices were high due to the war in the Ukraine, Mercy offered the temporary Gasoline Stipend Assistance Program to help ease the increased cost of commutes to and from work during the height of gas prices. We were able to support more than 3,000 co-workers who took advantage of the program, and 41% of those were also approved for the Medical Premium Assistance Program.

Medical Premium Assistance Program

In order to help our co-workers pay for health care, we are continuing a popular, long-running program through which those in financial need may receive a 40%, 45% or 50% savings on Mercy medical plan premiums. Qualification is determined by Experian and is based on federal guidelines. The Medical Premium Assistance program is offered to new co-workers upon hire/enrollment in benefits as well as to all co-workers annually during Open Enrollment.

We have seen a steady increase in applications and approvals over the last three years. During Open Enrollment for 2023, more than 5,000 co-workers applied and 73% of applications were approved, resulting in an estimated \$6.3 million of premiums paid for co-workers in 2023.

Co-worker Assistance Resource Hub

We launched a hub on Baggot Street that connects co-workers in need with resources for food, clothing, housing, financial assistance, crisis resources and mental health services. Since the page was created, more than 13,000 co-workers have visited.

Earned Wage Access

This program allows co-workers in need to access wages earned prior to pay day as a safe alternative to payday loans. Earned Wage Access is not a loan, has no hidden fees and doesn't need a credit check. Co-workers can get up to 50% of their next pay check's earnings (max of \$500) and choose how to receive it. Through the end of FY23, co-workers accessed over \$32 million through more than 228,996 transactions.

Education

DollarSense

The DollarSense Hub on Baggot Street is a centralized place where co-workers can find information, tools and resources to help get started or continue growth in their financial wellness journey. This site offers information on items such as budgeting, savings and debt tools and investing in the future. Four DollarSense modules were released in 2022:

1. Prioritize Your Debt
2. The 50/15/5 Budget Rule
3. Beneficiaries 101
4. Basics of 401(k) plan

More than 25,000 co-workers have used one or more of these modules.

Tuition Reimbursement

Mercy offers tuition reimbursement for co-workers seeking to advance their education. Full-time co-workers can receive up to \$2,000 each fiscal year. Co-workers who make \$16/hour or less may be reimbursed half of their approved amount up front to help offset out-of-pocket expenses related to education. In 2023, Mercy reimbursed 53 co-workers a total of \$68,130 up front for Tuition Reimbursement.

Co-worker Discounts

Purchasing Power

Purchasing Power allows Mercy co-workers to pay for thousands of new, brand-name major purchase items, such as electronics, furniture, phones and appliances, by payroll deduction, rather than cash or credit. This allows them to pay it back over time instead of taking a large financial hit all at once. From April 2022, when it was launched, through July 2023, more than 4,900 co-workers registered and placed more than 2,300 orders.

Benefit Hub/Co-worker Discounts

Mercy offers our co-workers discounts on more than 2,000 vendors in our communities and across our service area, available on Baggot Street or by downloading an app. Since launch, approximately 13,500 co-workers have used it; the top five categories are travel, event/attraction tickets, cell phones, auto and clothing.



LGBTQ+ Health Care

While not a formal committee in our DEIB structure, since early 2022 a dedicated group of Mercy co-workers, physicians and leaders — some of whom are part of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+) community — have been studying ways Mercy can better serve our LGBTQ+ patients. While respectfully following the Ethical and Religious Directives and teachings of the Catholic Church, this group has studied how having greater access to sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) patient information can help providers improve the quality of care LGBTQ+ patients receive, as well as help them have a more positive, welcoming experience at Mercy.

They have found that patients experience better clinical outcomes when we have complete clinical information on our patients, so in July 2023, after consulting with Mercy senior leaders, physicians and other caregivers, changes were made in our electronic health record (EHR) system, Epic, to allow for additional documentation related to gender identity, biological sex noted at

birth, and sexual orientation. These fields, in addition to obstetric information, are evaluated within Epic to determine the “clinically relevant sex” which determines how clinical decision support tools react when interacting within the EHR.

This was done because, due to the way the EHR record was set up, there was a potential for the legal sex of the patient, gender identity, and the biological sex of the patient to not match with one another. This gap in information sometimes led to inappropriate selections and wrong information being presented to the clinician.

In addition, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services recently released an updated framework to further advance health equity, expand coverage, and improve health outcomes for the more than 170 million individuals supported by CMS programs. This includes a priority to expand the collection, reporting, and analysis of standardized data, which includes SOGI information.

Looking Forward

The future of DEIB at Mercy holds much potential and our cabinet is working hard to realize the possibilities quickly. While each of our councils is aiming to increase membership, each has their own goals for the coming year as well.

Health Equity Council (HEC)

- Set and enforce clinical standards related to focus area action plans: behavioral health, hypertension and heart failure, and ambulatory.
- Leverage technology, including Epic, telehealth and Social Hub, to connect patients to available resources.
- Coordinate public health emergency and redetermination for Medicaid and uninsured population coverage.
- Expand coverage for whole person care through Collaborative Care Model and SURP.
- Conduct DEIB cultural competency training.
- Expand Social Hub to new populations.
- Expand community partnerships and community-based organization (CBO) networks.
- Optimize plans, payment bundles and social risk adjustment.

Mercy Women in Leadership Council (MWL)

Each committee has its own goals, but in general include the following:

- Increase member interaction through increased social media activity, clicks on newsletter articles and survey responses.
- Increase community outreach volunteering.

- Build on the momentum of the five-year anniversary of MWL with ministry-wide virtual events and local opportunities for gathering and relationship building.
- Reengage and reestablish MWL Local Chapters by identifying new ways to support, grow and mentor women leaders in our communities.
- Launch additional mentoring classes and expand to managers and possibly physicians and APPs.

Diversity Advancement Council (DAC)

- Launch second session of BIPOC Mentorship Program with learnings from first group.
- Begin Health Care Mentoring Program.
- Introduce MercyOn3 activities in St. Louis and then to the rest of the ministry.
- Expand celebration toolkits to encompass more holidays and represent more groups of people.
- Announce the 2023-2024 cohort to participate in the St. Louis Business Diversity Initiative.
- Continue collaborating with Ponce University to train emerging BIPOC physicians.
- Evolve diversity education for co-workers and physicians with new topics.
- Increase community volunteering and attendance at community events across the ministry.
- Select students for the next St. Louis Internship Program.

Disability Resources Council (DRC)

- Conduct second Self-ID Campaign.
- Establish an enterprise ride share program.
- Expand educational opportunities around caring for patients with disabilities.
- Increase job shadow opportunities for students with disabilities.
- Refine/expand inclusive interviewing events in celebration of National Disability Employment Awareness.

Social Determinants of Co-worker Health Council (SDCHC)

- Offer more smaller scale, in-the-moment assistance for our co-workers through additional programs.
- Work with Fidelity on the BeFine application in order to meet our co-workers where they are financially, allow them to define their own financial success and connect them to programs to build good financial habits so that they eventually won't need our assistance programs.
- Increase participation in Co-worker Assistance Programs through co-worker outreach.
- Share best practices, increase leadership engagement with and expand scope of the work done by the ministry, local Social Determinants of Co-worker Health committees and the Crisis Fund.
- Continue to review and update Mercy's Living Wage Philosophy.





Your life is our life's work.