

Domain: Our People

Metric 1: Board, Management, and Workforce Resemble Our Community

Focus Area: Board Diversity

Leading Practice Standard

Healthcare institutions should prioritize diversity in board membership to ensure inclusive governance reflective of community demographics. Diverse board members offer varied perspectives and expertise vital for informed decision-making and patient-centered care. Institutions should utilize the following strategies for creating and sustaining a more diverse board:

1. Define diversity as it relates to the composition of the community.
2. Identify the gaps between the diversity of the community and the diversity and experience of the board.
3. Establish goals for achieving diversity.
4. Track progress.

Example

[Recruiting for a Diverse Health Care Board | AHA Trustee Services](#)

In 2013, a nationally ranked children's hospital took proactive steps to enhance the demographic diversity within its board structure. The hospital established a dedicated Board Diversity Subcommittee of the Nominating Committee of its parent Board of Directors. This Subcommittee played a pivotal role in identifying and recruiting individuals from diverse backgrounds to serve on the board and various committees of the parent organization and its affiliated organizations. In 2020, the responsibilities of the Board Diversity Subcommittee were absorbed into the newly formed Nominating and Governance Committee of the parent Board. This strategic move further solidified the Hospital's commitment to diversity by embedding it into the core decision-making processes of the organization.

In 2022, to assess its progress and ensure accountability, the Nominating and Governance Committee administered a comprehensive online board survey to evaluate the professional, leadership, and demographic composition of the boards of the parent and its affiliates organizations. With the self-reported survey data, the Committee then established measurable goals and identified opportunities for improvement.

By establishing the Board Diversity Subcommittee and incorporating its objectives into the Nominating and Governance Committee, the hospital has ensured that diversity remains a priority in its decision-making processes. Currently, the parent Board of Directors consists of 56 voting members. Of these members, 17 are female and 10 come from underrepresented backgrounds. This increased representation of women and individuals from underrepresented backgrounds on the Board reflects the hospital's commitment to creating a more inclusive and equitable environment that better reflects the diversity of the community it serves.

Resources

1. [Recruiting for a Diverse Health Care Board](#)

Increasing diversity in health care governing boards is not an easy task. In this article, you will learn more why it is important to recruit a diverse set of voices who are better at speaking the needs of the community and how to be inclusive once you select new members.

2. [Building a More Diverse Board: A Toolkit for Healthcare Boards and Executives](#)

In this toolkit, from The Governance Institute, the authors share the rationale behind increasing board diversity, the lack of progress to date, strategies and tactics to close the gap, and examples of success from using this toolkit.

3. [How and Why to Increase Board Diversity](#)

Learn how others were successful in increasing board diversity at their health care organization.