

Domain: Our Organization

Metric 4: Leadership Practices to Advance Racial Equity

Focus Area: Community Engagement Inclusion in Strategic Plan

Leading Practice Standard

Healthcare institutions should incorporate community engagement into their strategic plans to foster trust and collaboration between healthcare providers and the communities they serve. By actively involving community members in decision-making processes, healthcare institutions can gain valuable insights into local health needs, disparities, and social determinants of health. This collaborative approach ensures that healthcare services are culturally sensitive, responsive, and tailored to address the unique challenges faced by diverse populations. Integrating community engagement strategies into strategic planning efforts enhances patient satisfaction, improves health outcomes, and promotes health equity within the community. These community engagement plans should include the following:

1. Recruiting & Retaining Relationships
2. Identifying Problems & Solutions
3. Action Planning & Strategizing
4. Evaluating & Documenting Progress

[\(Community Engagement Toolkit: A Participatory Action Approach Towards Health Equity and Justice\)](#)

Example

Example. Silver Cross Hospital created the Silver Cross Healthy Community Commission (HCC), a community-based organization, in 2008 that is committed to creating a stronger, healthier future by providing support for education, workforce development training, and enrichment activities for youth to improve the quality of life for the disadvantaged communities they serve.

If you are interested in learning more about the HCC, please contact Leslie Newbon at lnewbon@silvercross.org.

Background

Community engagement is increasingly recognized as essential in hospital strategic planning due to its myriad benefits for both healthcare institutions and the communities they serve. By actively involving community members in decision-making processes, hospitals can build robust relationships founded on transparency and mutual respect, fostering trust and collaboration.² Furthermore, partnerships with community organizations allow hospitals to conduct comprehensive needs assessments, identify health disparities, and develop targeted interventions, thus promoting health equity and reducing disparities.⁴

Incorporating community engagement into strategic plans aligns institutional goals with the diverse needs of communities.³ Patients are more likely to seek care from institutions perceived as trustworthy and culturally sensitive, emphasizing the importance of community trust in healthcare access and outcomes.¹ Thus, community engagement serves as a cornerstone of hospital strategic planning, ensuring responsive and effective healthcare services that address the evolving needs of diverse populations.

Resources

1. [A Playbook for Fostering Hospital-Community Partnerships to Build a Culture of Health](#)
A resource guide to advance hospital-community partnerships by using methods and strategies to develop and evaluate effective and sustainable collaborations.
2. [Community Engagement Toolkit for Rural Hospitals](#)
A toolkit aimed at helping administrators leverage their hospital's strengths and resources to engage in a community dialogue about health and form sustainable community partnerships.
3. [Community Engagement Plan: 2016-2019](#)
Minnesota Department of Health's 3 year Community Engagement Plan that was developed with a variety of activities to identify vision statements, strategies, and actions to support MDH in its efforts to listen authentically to and partner with communities and to meet the intent of the MDH Strategic Plan and the recommendations of the Advancing Health Equity report.

References

1. Emanuel, E. J., Wendler, D., & Grady, C. (2000). What makes clinical research ethical?. *Jama*, 283(20), 2701-2711.
2. Minkler, M., & Wallerstein, N. (Eds.). (2011). *Community-based participatory research for health: From process to outcomes*. John Wiley & Sons.
3. Viswanathan, M., Ammerman, A., Eng, E., Garlehner, G., Lohr, K. N., Griffith, D., ... & Whitener, L. (2004). *Community-based participatory research: Assessing the evidence: Summary*. AHRQ evidence report summaries.
4. Wallerstein, N., Duran, B., Oetzel, J. G., & Minkler, M. (Eds.). (2017). *Community-based participatory research for health: Advancing social and health equity*. John Wiley & Sons.