

CHCF CHIP Summary

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Professional Title, Organization: Chief Medical Officer, CommuniCare Health Centers (Primarily) and Health Sciences Clinical Professor, Family and Community Medicine, UC Davis HEALTH (20%)

CHIP Title: Representation and Inclusion in a Community Health Center

Project Description:

I knew I wanted to improve diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) at CommuniCare Health Centers (CCHC) shortly after I became CMO. I have been passionately committed to cultural humility and DEI efforts throughout my career, and I brought this passion with me when I joined CCHC. This particular project is a piece of a larger effort at CCHC, in which I am participating with a team of colleagues, to improve DEI at CCHC. Initially, I focused on increasing the diversity of our primary care providers, but I quickly realized that representation without true inclusion is not sufficient to improve equity. I had recently participated in a microaggression training at UC Davis HEALTH, led by Dr. Kupiri Ackerman-Barger in the School of Nursing, and it became clear that this could be useful training at CCHC as well.

For my CHIP, colleagues I recruited and I adapted her workshop regarding addressing microaggressions in the academic health environment to be appropriate for the community health setting. The goal of the project was to increase inclusion at CCHC by helping everyone at all levels understand microaggressions and how to address them to support each other in feeling included and respected as valuable members of our teams—to ultimately increase the sense of belonging for all.

Key Findings and Lessons Learned:

- Between 2019 and 2022, non-White primary care providers increase from 42% to 70% and URM (Underrepresented in Medicine) providers increased from 8% to 33% of the total, with the goal of more closely representing our patient population.
- Prior to the project, 25% of CCHC staff reported witnessing a microaggression from leadership/management over the past year, and almost 50% reported witnessing a microaggression from a patient/client.
- All staff in our perinatal, dental and administrative departments as well as all of our primary care providers have received the 2-hour addressing microaggressions workshop.
- After the workshop, participants have reported increased confidence in recognizing and responding to microaggressions.
- Microaggressions from patients/clients continue to be a particularly vexing issue, especially for an organization that seeks to be patient-centered in our service to historically marginalized and vulnerable populations.

Next Steps:

- Complete the training with the remaining primary care and behavioral health staff.
- Repeat the employee DEI survey to see if there has been a decrease in microaggressions from leadership/management over the next year.
- Work on more approaches to addressing microaggressions from patients/clients.
- Continue to reinforce the steps of addressing microaggressions in staff meetings and other trainings, as well as include in all new hire trainings.