

Chapter 9

An Assessment of Diversity From Senior Healthcare Executives

Diane M. Howard

Rush University Medical Center, USA

Kimberly Enard

St. Louis University, USA

ABSTRACT

The National Association of Health Services Executives and Deloitte Consulting administered a survey to assess the status of diversity, equity, and inclusion in March 2021 following social unrest in the United States. One-hundred and five NAHSE members responded to the topics on personal experience working in healthcare, organizational priorities and strategies in DEI, and opportunities in career advancement. A follow-up webinar in February 2022 with 211 participants explored compliance, accountability, and sustainability of diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. Sixty-seven percent stated there was no measurement in determining achievement of DEI goals. One-third of respondents stated there was no accountability if DEI goals were not achieved. The good news was that 53% of respondents thought the DEI initiatives developed at their organization would be sustained.

BACKGROUND

The National Association of Health Services Executives (NAHSE), working with Deloitte Consulting, surveyed the membership of NAHSE to determine what initiatives were being explored to address diversity, equity, and inclusion. Senior leaders from Deloitte worked with the NAHSE executive director and members of its Research Committee to gather survey data from NAHSE members and to gain insights into DEI activities in their respective organizations.

NAHSE is a personal membership group based in Washington, DC with 30 chapters throughout the country. Founded in 1968 for the purpose of promoting the advancement and development of Black

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health care leaders and elevating the quality of health care services rendered to minority and underserved communities through mentoring, educational programming, and policy development.

Deloitte is a leading global provider of audit and assurance, consulting, financial advisory, risk advisory, tax, and related services. With more than 150 years of hard work and commitment to making a real difference, the organization has grown in scale and diversity—approximately 286,000 people in 150 countries and territories, providing these services—yet the shared culture remains the same. Deloitte serves four out of five Fortune Global 500® companies.

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion survey was administered in Year 2 of the pandemic (March 2021 to August 2021). There were social disruptions in the summer 2020 after the killing of George Floyd who was in Minneapolis police custody. The filming of his death by a 17-year-old with a cell phone brought attention to the unequal treatment of people of color. There was the rise of attacks on Asian, Jewish, Latinx, and Muslim persons around the country.

Survey Participants and Results

NAHSE and Deloitte designed and fielded an online survey to more than 2,000 NAHSE members in March 2021. A total of 105 respondents completed the survey (Deloitte Insights, 2021). The respondents were primarily Black women (91% identified as Black, and 68% identified as women). Respondents were C-level/executive management (22%), senior management (29%), mid-level management (30%), and entry-level/non-management (30%), and entry-level/non-management staff (8%). The remaining 12% were physicians, nursing leaders, or other clinicians. Most respondents worked at hospitals or health systems (57%), with 10% coming from universities or academic institutions, and the remaining respondents working at health care associations, medical device and digital health companies, and health plans. In addition, there were 10 executives leading DEI initiatives at health systems and health plans that Deloitte interviewed for further elaboration.

Two out of three respondents agreed that their management and leaders encourage them to continue with their professional growth and development. Four in five respondents reported their organization had active DEI committees or were launching initiatives. Sixty-one percent of these organizations had funding directed toward these initiatives/committees. Two in three respondents felt that all employees have not been fairly treated regardless of differences in background. Three in four respondents did not believe that everyone in their organization has the same general ability to get promoted regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic backgrounds, or other factors.

The respondents indicated that there were four strategies that bring DEI to life in an organization. The four strategies include: (1) make DEI enterprise wide where the entire C-suite is involved; (2) cultivate employee resource groups through executive sponsorship; (3) develop talent and leadership pipelines; and (4) measure DEI and lead assessments with data (Deloitte Insights, 2021).

In an accompanying chapter (see *Fifteen Years of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago*), the four strategies have been implemented.

Make DEI Enterprise-Wide and Involve the C-Suite

The Rush Health System CEO, Rush University Medical Center CEO, System Chief Diversity Officer, and University Provost are members of the Diversity Leadership Council that meets monthly to drive

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