



Creating a safe, healthy and inclusive environment through Diversity & Inclusion

2020-2023 Framework

We are stronger *together*

Our mission

We are called to continue the healing ministry of Jesus by serving with compassion, upholding the sacredness of life in all stages, and caring for the whole person—body, mind and soul.

Our vision

Inspired by our mission of service, we will be leaders and partners in transforming health care and creating vibrant communities of health and healing.

Our values

As a Catholic organization, we are committed to serving people of all faiths, cultures and circumstances, according to our values: compassion, respect, collaboration, social justice, integrity and stewardship.



Our commitment

We will honour the different cultures, traditions, faiths and beliefs of those we serve, and promote inclusive practices.

This commitment to diversity and inclusion extends to our staff, physicians and volunteers, who equally represent a rich mosaic of cultures and backgrounds.

The intrinsic dignity and incalculable worth of every human being is a foundational belief of Catholic healthcare. It informs our vision of how we view and interact with other people, regardless of their circumstances. This belief reminds us that every human encounter is a moral encounter, challenging the assumptions and judgments we may have unconsciously adopted that preclude us seeing the person before us in the entirety of their being. Assumptions and judgements can negatively impact health outcomes. As a Catholic healthcare organization, we are compelled to identify and address any systemic discriminatory practices that may conflict with our fundamental values.

Diversity and inclusion are at the heart of Catholic healthcare. In fact, Catholic healthcare has a long tradition in providing quality, compassionate care to all individuals. This is reflected in Covenant Health's commitment to serving people of all faiths, cultures and circumstances, according to our values. This commitment to respecting diversity and ensuring inclusive practices also extends to our staff, physicians and volunteers, who equally represent a rich mosaic of cultures and backgrounds.

Diversity and inclusion

What is diversity?

The range of human characteristics that live in all of us that make us unique. We are all a distinctive blend of different identities, perspectives and experiences.

What is inclusion?

Deliberately creating an environment that welcomes and sustains diversity means inviting perspectives, experiences, continuously being open to learning about differences and embracing those learnings.

The more we recognize the differences that exist in every person, the better equipped we are to address the needs of people who have experiences, backgrounds and perspectives that contrast our own. It is not enough to only recognize our differences; we need to deliberately create a climate that fosters and sustains diverse thinking, action and consideration at all levels, without judgment — a truly inclusive environment.

Background & principles

In today's world, globalization and migration are forces that are reshaping societies around the world. Recognition of diversity and promoting inclusion is seen as a necessary component of empowering communities and workforces to capitalize on the inherent wealth of abilities and perspectives available to strengthen connections and advance goals.

While contemporary institutions, organizations and governments are engaged in tapping into diverse abilities and perspectives, the call to embrace diversity and inclusion has a long tradition in Catholic healthcare. From its earliest inception, Catholic healthcare built its foundation on the values of respect for human dignity, community, solidarity and hospitality. These values are explicitly stated in our Health Ethics Guide.

Respect for human dignity holds that all persons are respected regardless of what they accomplish or what characteristics they hold.

The call to community and participation recognizes that all persons are social and that how we organize ourselves will impact each individual's capacity to grow.

While our actions are directed to the common good, we do not lose sight of the well-being of those who are marginalized by external forces. In this way, Catholic healthcare is attentive to those who are excluded and embraces an ethic of inclusiveness expressed as solidarity.

Hospitality is a global concept with a long tradition across cultures and faiths. In Catholic teaching, we are called to welcome the stranger offering food, shelter and safety. In welcoming others, we are committed to treating each other as equals.

Examples of ongoing initiatives & deliverables

- Policy development (e.g. responding to patient requests for specific health care providers)
- Comprehensive interpretive and translation services
- Include diversity and inclusion related questions on surveys
- Maintain liaisons and partnerships with the Multicultural Health Brokers Co-op
- Promotion of diversity and inclusion related educational opportunities
- Implementation and planned expansion of made-to-order meal service
- Continued development of spiritual care networks and partnerships
- Development and implementation of a patient and resident engagement framework
- Availability of Mental Health First Aid and Mental Health Aware programs
- Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) program for staff
- Comprehensive employee and family assistance program
- Launch of a series of learning modules that focus on Indigenous awareness and sensitivity
- Continue to engage and develop relationships with Indigenous communities

The changing demographics of our patients, residents, physicians, volunteers and staff challenge Covenant Health to be more explicit in our messaging and expectations regarding a respectful environment and workplace. As an organization, we aspire to create a workplace that makes us all feel psychologically and emotionally safe, healthy, valued and able to reach our full potential regardless of any physical, spiritual, mental, situational or other differentiating factors. The true strength of our organization is our people – who bring passion and purpose to work each day and contribute to creating strong teams and compassionate care environments focused on providing the best for the people we serve.

Covenant Health's commitment to diversity and inclusion is not just a response to a trend but rather reflects a long-standing commitment to uphold fundamental values.

Living our mission and values inspires us to embrace diversity and inclusion with practical and measurable initiatives aimed at developing and sustaining a respectful and inclusive health care environment.



The framework

The Covenant Health Diversity and Inclusion Framework lays the foundation that will drive our organization's commitment to diversity and inclusion practices over the next three years. An integrative approach will guide our organization to incorporate diversity and inclusion values and practices into new and existing corporate processes, initiatives and activities.

Key desired outcomes from this framework include:

1. A workforce, leadership team and Board of Directors that reflects the diversity of the communities we serve
2. Further development of community partnerships resulting in positive relations and collaboration
3. An engaging and effective set of learning opportunities for staff, physicians and volunteers
4. A pervasive feeling of inclusion in our diverse workforce
5. Recognition in the community as an organization that is dedicated to a diverse and inclusive environment
6. An empowered leadership team that is equipped and supported to manage culturally sensitive or challenging situations
7. An ongoing promotion of respectful practices in the workplace, including psychological safety

Support those we serve

Why is this important?

The healing ministry of Jesus calls us to care for the whole person – body, mind and soul. Caring for the whole person includes the feeling of being welcomed and comfortable in the care environment. In order to provide excellent and culturally appropriate care, it is essential that we recognize and are attentive to the diversity of our patient and resident populations.

Goals

Preserve and grow environments that are safe, inclusive, comforting and welcoming

Provide respectful, sensitive care and healing that meets the needs of our patients, residents and families

What we plan to do

Increase awareness, usage and development of interpretive services program

Enhance spiritual care that expands awareness and incorporation of Indigenous healing and other inclusive practices

Expand patient and resident-centred routines and services

Focus on ease of access to inclusive and welcoming facilities for our diverse patients, residents and visitors

Ensure awareness of and access to chapels and multi-faith rooms for patients, residents and visitors

Increase awareness and promote celebration of diverse cultures and faiths

Support our teams

Why is this important?

We each bring our unique gifts and experiences to Covenant Health. We will celebrate this. Our unique perspectives contribute to our vibrant culture. Compassionate teams produce healthy and engaged employees, an increase in job satisfaction and ultimately results in more meaningful care for those we serve.

Goals

- Achieve and maintain a workforce, leadership team, and Board of Directors that reflects the diversity of the communities that we serve
- Hold leaders and teams accountable to act in accordance with Our Commitment to Ethical Integrity document
- Increase awareness to cultivate a feeling of inclusion for all of our workforce
- Strive towards a psychologically safe workplace for everyone

What we plan to do

- Launch and promote a diversity and inclusion online presence
- Enhance awareness of employee family assistance programs
- Enhance awareness and promotion of psychologically safe workplaces
- Continue promotion and access for staff to the Mental Health First Aid and Mental Health Aware programs
- Focus on ease of access to inclusive and welcoming facilities for our diverse team members
- Continue promotion and development of the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Program
- Increase awareness and promote celebration of a diversity of cultures and faiths
- Incorporate diversity and inclusion language and strategies into overall branding and recruitment
- Implement data analytics to collect staff census information on a voluntary basis to better understand and serve our teams
- Develop and implement supports and educational/reflection tools for teams

Strengthen & expand community partnerships

Why is this important?

The importance of developing and strengthening trusting relationships and partnerships in the community cannot be emphasized enough. In order to understand, appreciate and respectfully respond to the needs of our teams and our patients and residents, an ongoing rapport with community leaders and groups will help move this forward. Additionally, it is recognized that our teams at all levels of the organization should be representative of those that we serve and those we serve with. As part of a strategy in attracting and retaining a diverse representation of staff, physicians, volunteers and Board of Directors, Covenant Health would be at an advantage to have a voice and place in these communities. And as a forward-thinking community, it is imperative that we have strong relationships with the community to continuously be able to meet its changing needs.

Goals

- Foster recognition in the community as an organization that is dedicated to a diverse and inclusive environment
- Maintain representation of the community on the Covenant Health Diversity and Inclusion Council
- Grow and sustain partnerships and engage with community partners and advocacy groups

What we plan to do

- Include Covenant Health in diverse community groups
- Learn about the needs of diverse community groups
- Participate at key community meetings to contribute and hear concerns from community members

Commit to Indigenous health & awareness

Why is this important?

With significant disparity between the health of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Alberta, there is an urgent need to close the gap, to recognize the value of Indigenous healing practices and to address the need for cultural awareness and intelligence in health care.

Goals

- Establish positive connections to Indigenous communities
- Recognize and embrace traditional Indigenous healing practices
- Develop cultural awareness and intelligence of our teams relating to Indigenous peoples

What we plan to do

- Increase understanding of Indigenous populations
- Enable completion of the Indigenous peoples in Alberta Introductory Learning Module for all staff
- Continue development of resources to support Indigenous patients, residents and families
- Continue to incorporate Indigenous healing and other inclusive practices for spiritual care
- Develop strategies to engage with Indigenous communities
- Enhance spiritual care that expands awareness and incorporation of Indigenous healing and other inclusive practices
- Expand staff positions that promote Indigenous health and wellness