

**The Role of Wealth in Healthcare-Closing the Disparities Gap in Healthcare through Diversity and Inclusive Excellence**

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Some seven years ago, the American College of Healthcare Executives, the American Hospital Association, the Association of American Medical Colleges, the Catholic Health Association of the United States, and the National Association of Public Hospitals and Health Care Systems, all came together in an effort to eradicate health care disparities, particularly among diverse and underrepresented populations. They argued that it will be those who are most underrepresented and most vulnerable who will have the greatest need for safe, efficient, effective, and quality health care services. As such, there has to be more intentionality on preparing both the healthcare provider and the patient for the diverse encounter of experiencing each other. As those in need of healthcare become more diverse, understanding their total being-their values and beliefs, and having a greater sense of cultural competence will prove to make a significant impact in providing effective healthcare, and in closing disparities in healthcare.

Problem statement: There is a notable gap in wealth (not financial) between healthcare professionals and those to whom care is being provided. Healthcare providers have a wealth of knowledge in understanding patients, conditions, the healthcare landscape, and the associated nomenclature. Meanwhile, patients and families often know very little about healthcare, healthcare conditions, and or the healthcare landscape. The wealth of the family and patient lie in understanding their loved one and their own cultural makeup. This gap or lack of wealth in cultural awareness between healthcare provider and patients, between healthcare provider and families, and between patients and their understanding of healthcare is widening. As demand increases for those needing healthcare, and as the shortage of healthcare providers widens, particularly in underserved areas, the need for greater cultural understanding and inclusive excellence practicing could not be at a more critical time.

Principles for Cultural Competence: The goals of this presentation are threefold. First, this presentation will follow-up and build on last year's presentation on the strategic initiative and planning for diversity and inclusion, to now reporting on the benefits of cultural competence in the healthcare setting. Additionally, this presentation will explore approaches for healthcare organizations to become more inclusive and culturally competent. Lastly, this presentation will describe the implications on our society and our healthcare system if this gap in wealth and understanding is not minimized and closed.