

Working to End Health Care Disparities

America's hospitals and health systems are working to ensure that every person who walks through our doors receives the highest quality care.

Achieving this goal means understanding why disparities in care and health persist for some patient populations, and developing solutions to eliminate these disparities.

This is essential work. Each community is unique and individuals represent a diversity of cultural characteristics. They are exposed to different socioeconomic conditions, environments and workplace hazards.

Many communities lack access to affordable, nutritious foods and safe places to exercise. Many individuals face health literacy and language access challenges that hinder communication with their health care providers, leading to poor compliance and fragmented care.

Hospitals are leading the way to ensure equitable care is delivered to every person in every community.

Ending these disparities should be a priority in every health care setting. And hospitals are leading the way to ensure equitable care is delivered to every person in every community, regardless of their race, religion, ethnicity, disability status, age, gender or sexual orientation.

The American Hospital Association (AHA) last year launched the #123forEquity Pledge to Act Campaign to Eliminate Health Care Disparities. Hundreds of hospitals and health



Richard J. Pollack
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systems have signed the pledge, and each day, more are joining this effort.

In addition, more than 30 local and national organizations, including the National Urban League, American College of Healthcare Executives, Association of American Medical Colleges, Catholic Health Association of the United States and America's Essential Hospitals have

endorsed the pledge.

Hospitals have committed to begin taking specific actions during the next year that we believe will lead to more equitable, safer and higher quality care for all individuals.

These priorities include:

- Increasing the collection and use of race, ethnicity, language preference and other characteristic data and applying them to care improvement efforts;
- Increasing cultural competency training for employees so they are prepared to address unique cultural and linguistic factors; and
- Increasing diversity in hospital leadership and governance to reflect the communities served.

Many hospitals and health systems have been working diligently on these initiatives. They are working with community partners to develop innovative programs and strategies that are resulting in improved care and outcomes for diverse patients.

Together, we can make a real difference in the health of our communities.



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