CHAPTER 5:

Reflect and Respect Diversity

Introduction

In public health settings, recruiting a diverse workforce is a necessity from a legal standpoint, a competency standpoint and a business standpoint.

You may be aware of federal laws and state laws governing workforce diversity (see Appendix B), but how do these laws impact your organization? Consider this:

A 2008 report from the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination[1] (MCAD) reported that discrimination complaints filed in Massachusetts increased 30 percent in 2008 (4,500 filed in 2008 compared to 3,500 in 2007). The report further indicated that in difficult economic conditions, discrimination claims increase. In the current economy, taking measures to hire and retain diverse employees and making sure that grievance and complaint processes are handled in a culturally sensitive way are common-sense liability protections.

Beyond liability, hiring a diverse workforce is essential to culturally competent care. You are more likely to understand, serve and attract diverse client populations when your staff reflects their background. Based on CLAS workforce diversity standards, this chapter offers an approach to help your agency meet legal requirements, better serve clients and improve your ability to attract diverse populations.

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CLAS Standards Covered

Standard 2

Hire staff and leadership that reflect the demographic profile of the service area.

Use recruitment, retention and promotion strategies that enhance diversity.

Standard 13

Implement grievance procedures that are culturally and linguistically appropriate.

Identify, prevent and resolve cross-cultural conflicts or complaints.

Step 1. Reflect Local Diversity in Your Workforce

Many studies[2,3] indicate that hiring racially and ethnically diverse employees can offer your agency many benefits, including:

- Increased access to care. Racially and ethnically diverse providers are more likely to serve underserved communities.
- Higher levels of satisfaction. Racially and ethnically diverse patients report higher levels of satisfaction with care provided by minority health professionals.
- Reduced cultural and language barriers. Diverse health providers can help reduce cultural and linguistic barriers and improve cultural competence.
- Better understanding of cultural factors. Health professionals with diverse backgrounds may be more likely to take into account social and cultural factors when meeting the needs of racially and ethnically diverse populations.

Across the United States, racially and ethnically diverse persons are underrepresented in the health care field. Massachusetts is no exception. Though a growing percentage of the Commonwealth's population is of a race and ethnicity other than non-Hispanic white, this level of diversity is not reflected in the health professions.

Analyses done by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health reveal that certain groups, particularly black and Hispanic persons, are severely under-represented in Massachusetts health professions.

The table below reflects this under-representation only by race. When other factors, such as languages spoken, culture and country of origin are considered, the gap between the backgrounds of clients and the health professionals serving them becomes even broader.

As the Massachusetts population continues to grow and change, this disparity will only increase—unless more diverse peoples are encouraged to enter the health professions.

The question of why minorities are under-represented in health professions is not easy to answer. A number of external factors, opportunities and systems have contributed to the problem. **The question you can answer, as a public health agency, is how you can more closely reflect the populations you serve in *your workforce*.**

Minorities are underrepresented in Massachusetts health professions

Race/ethnicity	% of Mass. Population	Physicians	Registered Nurses	Dentists	Pharmacists
White (non-Hispanic)	80.0 %	78.9 %	91.7 %	89.2 %	80.1 %
Hispanic/Latino	**7.9 %**	**2.9 %**	**1.2 %**	**1.7 %**	**0.8 %**
Black	**6.9 %**	**2.4 %**	**3.9 %**	**0.8 %**	**3.0 %**
Asian	4.9 %	14.4 %	1.9 %	6.5 %	14.0 %
American Indian, Alaska Native	0.3 %	0 %	0.1 %	0.2 %	0.0 %
Native Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander	0.1 %	0.1 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %

Sources: Workforce Development and Diversity Report, Massachusetts Department of Public Health (2008), U.S. Census (2000)

Does Your Workforce Reflect Your Clients?

Just like other cultural competence initiatives, reflecting a diverse workforce goes back to understanding who your clients are. Though you may have a general sense of where your clients come from and what languages they speak, casual observation may not be enough. You need to collect data on the race, ethnicity and languages of your clients. Data will offer a clearer picture of the clients in your service area and help you anticipate trends.

Identifying diversity gaps in your organization's workforce should follow naturally as you seek to identify the core health needs of clients. These questions should be part of a broader cultural competence assessment.

See Chapter 3: Collect Diversity Data and Chapter 4: Benchmark.

Diversifying Leadership

Many Massachusetts public health professionals indicated that staff diversity seems more widespread in entry-level positions, while diverse employees are scarce in upper management positions.

Increasing diversity at all levels is essential to increasing cultural competence throughout organizations. This is particularly important at the board level. Because boards play a key role in planning and budgeting, it is crucial that they be committed to cultural competence.[4]

For many public health organizations receiving federal funding, having a client-majority board of directors is a federal requirement. While it may not be a requirement for all agencies, having a board representative of clients can bring your agency many benefits, and can set the tone for organizational cultural competence.

FIELD LESSONS

Developing Diverse Boards

The following example highlights best practices used by the Caring Health Center (CHC) in Springfield, Massachusetts. The CHC has successfully maintained a diverse board of directors. Their 11-member board includes six patients, and four black, three Latino, four Vietnamese, and two white board members. Their board is also representative of diverse identities, socioeconomic and professional backgrounds.

Recommendations to achieve organizational cultural competence

- Establish programs for minority health leadership development.
- Hire and promote racially and ethnically diverse employees.
- Involve community representatives in planning and quality improvement meetings (See Chapter 2 for more on community partnering).

Sources: Betancourt, J.R., Green, A.R., Carrillo, J.E. (2002)[5]

Developing Diverse Boards (cont.)

Make a Compelling Case for Diverse Boards

CHC strategies to encourage board members to diversify and overcome resistance include:

- Sharing relevant articles, training materials and data
- Addressing federal board diversity requirements
- Presenting compelling cost, client and service benefits
- Bringing current diversity issues to the table (e.g., invite diverse staff and providers to make brief presentations)

Include a Range of Diversity and Skills

As you select potential board members, be sensitive to a range of diversity, such as race, ethnicity, language, refugee status, income, gender, sexual orientation, housing, and neighborhoods of residence. Look for skills or life history that may make clients good board members. The CHC recommends clients who are aware, are observant of issues, raise good questions about care, and are engaged in the health care process.

Maintain a Pool of Potential Board Members

Maintaining a pool of potential board members has allowed the CHC to quickly fill vacancies in their board. To identify candidates, the CHC enlists help from staff and providers who work closely with clients.

Keep Board Members Engaged

"We try to retain members by keeping the board very interesting and making sure they are contributing," says Anne Awad, CEO of CHC. Some of her strategies to keep board members informed and engaged include:

- Developing an orientation package with relevant background information
- Offering opportunities for meaningful participation in areas of interest
- Following up often to address concerns

Highlight the Benefits of a Diverse Board

As a result of their efforts to develop a diverse board, the CHC has seen growing benefits, including:

Increasing Funding Opportunities
Increasing the diversity of their board has made the CHC eligible for more funding, and has resulted in their winning a number of grants.

Improving Client Care
Having a client-representative board ensures that client issues are at the forefront. Gaining a real perspective from client communities ensures that programs are linked to real needs and that the care offered is relevant.

Opening Minds
"Watching a banker and a patient from a humble background sitting at the same table, working together, and developing respectful peer relationships as fellow board members has been invaluable," Awad says. "It really works. The privileged get their assumptions shaken up; the humble get to meaningfully participate and gain respect."

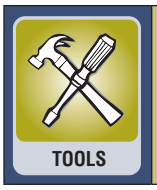
Decreasing Workload for Executive Officers
When a board buys into the benefits of diversity, it becomes the source of cultural competence initiatives. As this happens, executive officers can spend less time "pushing" initiatives.

"When you have an inclusive board, it isn't the usual movers and shakers doing good; it becomes a more dynamic board that receives constant feedback from the people you are trying to deliver services to."

– Anne Awad, CEO, Caring Health Center

Developing Diverse Boards

1. Make a compelling case for diverse boards.
2. Include a range of diversity and skills.
3. Maintain a pool of potential board members.
4. Keep board members engaged.
5. Highlight the benefits of a diverse board.



See:
Board Source: http://www.boardsource.com
Why CLAS? (p. xii)
Tool 5.6: Leadership Diversity Resources

Step 2. Recruit a Diverse Workforce

The Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) standards specify that organizations should develop unique strategies to recruit, retain and promote a diverse workforce.[6] These strategies should be tailored to agency needs and outlined in the organization's overall cultural competence plan (see Chapter 4 for more on cultural competence planning).

Strategies to Recruit a Diverse Workforce

Finding and recruiting qualified public health employees from diverse populations can be challenging. It requires creativity and use of several resources. The following chart was developed using provider feedback and a variety of sources. The tools at the end of this chapter also offer helpful resources and ideas.

Organizations should develop unique strategies to recruit, retain and promote a diverse workforce. These strategies should be tailored to agency needs and outlined in the organization's cultural competence plan.

Strategies for Attracting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

Reflect cultural competence goals in hiring policies and practices.

- Designate funds for diverse hiring policies.
- Adapt job descriptions to reflect desired linguistic and cultural skills.
- Assign a staff member to oversee diverse recruiting.
- Develop policies that encourage leadership-building from within.
- Develop and use appropriate grievance and complaint processes.

Diversify job posting and advertising.

- Advertise job openings in ethnic media.
- Post jobs in different languages.
- Advertise jobs with community partners (e.g., professional minority associations, community organizations, immigrant assistance services).
- Develop a staff referral program.

Network with community partners.

- Find candidates through mentoring programs and community-based and university internships.
- Recruit at minority health fairs and job fairs.
- Sponsor and support cultural events and celebrations.
- Seek referrals from community partners.

Maintain a diverse, welcoming work environment.

- Encourage the exchange of cultural information in informal and formal settings (staff meetings, trainings, team-building events, potluck lunches).
- Offer staff mediation and other conflict-resolution mechanisms.

Offer incentives and opportunities for advancement.

- Offer continuing education credits for cultural competence training.
- Link cultural competence with certification programs.
- Offer scholarships and continuing education opportunities.
- Promote from within.

Sources: MDPH Provider Discussions (2008)[7]; QSource[8]; TA Partnership (2002)[9]

Working with Diverse Contractors

As a public health agency, you can encourage workforce diversity not only by hiring diverse employees, but also by working with businesses owned by ethnically and linguistically diverse individuals. Make working with minority-owned businesses part of your purchasing policy.

Massachusetts laws underscore the importance of preventing discrimination and working with certified minority or women-owned businesses. Massachusetts Executive Order no. 478 specifically states that "…all Executive Branch contracts… shall contain provisions prohibiting contractors and subcontractors from engaging in discriminatory employment practices… and **committing to purchase supplies and services from certified minority or women-owned businesses, small businesses or businesses owned by socially or disadvantaged persons or persons with disabilities (emphasis added).**"

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health is committed to increasing business opportunities for certified Minority and Women Business Enterprises (MWBEs) and participates in the Affirmative Market Program (AMP). When applying for state contracts, you can increase your marketability by showing your commitment to working with diverse vendors.

Programs to Support Diverse Contracting
Affirmative Market Program **http://www.mass.gov/amp** State Office of Minority and Women Business Assistance **http://www.mass.gov/somwba**

As a public health agency, you can encourage workforce diversity not only by hiring diverse employees, but also by working with businesses owned by ethnically and linguistically diverse individuals.

See:
Tool 5.1: Strategies and Resources for Diverse Recruiting
Tool 5.2: Working with Diverse Vendors

Step 3. Retain and Promote Diverse Employees

Retaining qualified employees of diverse backgrounds is one of the greatest challenges that public health agencies face. Small agencies may not be able to compete with larger facilities with more funding. However, there is much agencies can do to ensure their work environment, policies and incentives are conducive to retaining diverse staff.

Create a Welcoming Environment

Consider how your organization promotes cultural diversity. Is your work environment inclusive of everyone? Consider your policies and programs. Offering cultural competence training, developing standards and policies, and resolving discrimination complaints adequately can all contribute to an inclusive, welcoming environment.

While formal policies are important, small cultural exchanges can also make an impact. Culture and languages can be an enriching part of an organization's environment and activities. Encouraging staff to share and learn important aspects of each other's culture can have a powerful impact. Promote a cultural exchange among staff as they build a supportive and understanding relationship with each other.

As you develop an atmosphere in which people with different backgrounds and experiences feel supported, they will be more attracted to your organization and more likely to stay.

Promote Diversity Through Policies

Having a diverse population does not guarantee cultural competence. While it is important to reflect diversity in your workforce, it is equally important to intentionally create a culture of inclusion. This can be accomplished through policies, training, and education. These policies should provide concrete ways to hire and retain diverse employees, prevent discrimination and provide ways to address cross-cultural conflict (see chapter 4 for more on planning).

Some examples of diversity-promoting policies include:

- Instituting a zero tolerance policy against discrimination or any forms of racism;
- Offering mandatory cultural competence training for all employees and as part of new employee orientation;
- Being supportive by being flexible about cultural holidays or important community events; and
- Modeling effective communication and joint problem-solving skills among staff.

"The issue of staff turnover is huge in making communities feel like our agency is a resource for them. Every time an employee leaves, we have to establish that trust all over again."

– A Southeastern Massachusetts public health professional

"For every person we invest in, as soon as they hit close to the top of our pay scale, they're still near the bottom of a more profit-driven pay scale, so once they've 'made it,' they're gone, which can be exhausting."

– A Metro West Massachusetts public health professional

Keep Employees Happy, Save $

Staff turnover can be costly. Searching, retraining, and learning curves all take time and money. Planning for diversity may require an upfront investment, but can result in long-term cost-savings. To retain employees, consider incentives that increase employee satisfaction, such as scholarships, tuition reimbursement and certification opportunities. By doing so, you can increase retention and efficiency.

Offer Incentives and Advancement Opportunities for Diverse Staff

In Massachusetts as well as throughout the United States, qualified racially and ethnically diverse health professionals are in short supply. The demand continues to grow at a faster pace than the supply. Many agencies have felt the impact of this phenomenon.

Although you can't change market forces, one approach to this challenge is to "grow your own" qualified candidate. Agencies can accomplish this by supporting diverse employees as they improve their skills through learning opportunities and by filling open positions by promoting from within.

The following can encourage professional growth:

- Integrate cultural competence measures into employee performance evaluations.
- Offer training and certification opportunities.
- Incorporate cultural and linguistic competence into human resources and staff development.
- Create incentives for cultural competence training and learning languages (e.g., continuing education credits).
- Develop a mentoring program.
- Offer scholarship, education and certification opportunities.

Help Staff Feel Valued

It is true that public health agencies may not be able to compete with the salaries offered by larger organizations. However, at the end of the day, job satisfaction is one of the main reasons employees stay with an organization.

There is no single factor that determines how happy employees are in an organization. A welcoming work environment, fair policies and advancement opportunities are all essential. Perhaps it is feeling valued and having a sense of ownership of their organization's mission that makes the strongest impact.

It is true that public health agencies may not be able to compete with salaries offered by larger organizations. However, at the end of the day, job satisfaction is one of the main reasons employees stay with an organization.

FIELD LESSONS

Food, Signs and Culture Sharing

For one Southeastern Massachusetts nutrition program, sharing food is a positive way to share culture. The staff plans regular "cultural exchange potlucks" where they gather to try new foods and discuss their different cultures.

Staff from a Western Massachusetts rape crisis center have learned more about Deaf culture to better communicate with Deaf staff members and clients. This has increased understanding and solidarity, and has made the agency a welcoming place for the Deaf community.

TOOLS

See:
Tool 1.4: Key Cultural Competence Skills

Step 4. Respond to Complaints Through a Culturally Appropriate Grievance Process

The goal of a grievance process is to resolve complaints related to the delivery of culturally competent services in a timely, fair way. This is essential to creating an atmosphere that fosters diversity. As discussed earlier, it is also liability protection.

Laws Governing the Grievance Process

Massachusetts Executive Order 478, section 11

Section 11 of Executive Order 478[10] grants power to the Massachusetts Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity (ODEO) and the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) to develop guidelines establishing a complaint resolution process for individuals who allege discrimination.

In cases where this process does not resolve the complaint, ODEO and MOD can submit complaints to the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD). MCAD can initiate investigations and, where necessary, file complaints against agencies or persons in violation of anti-discrimination laws.

According to Massachusetts Health Insurance Consumer Protection Law 105 CMR 128.000, clients must be offered:

- A clear, concise and complete written description of the internal grievance process
- Toll-free telephone numbers for assistance
- Notification regarding availability of these resources

The following is an example of how some agencies are required to offer culturally relevant grievance processes.

A process that resolves complaints related to the delivery of culturally competent service delivery in a timely, fair way is essential to creating an atmosphere that fosters diversity.

Grievance Policies for Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act

From a Request for Response (RFR) issued by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health in 2006:

"All clients must be offered notification of their rights to reasonable accommodations under ADA (including name and contact for agency ADA officer), and grievance policies (including steps and contact information for filing grievances) verbally and whenever possible in writing. ADA, grievance policies, and client rights must be posted in areas accessible to clients and offered at intake and at any time when requested by clients. Client rights, confidentiality and grievance policies must be provided in the **two most common languages in the service area,** (emphasis added) with translation provided upon request. ADA, grievance polices, and client rights must be approved by MDPH."

Developing a Tailored, Culturally Competent Grievance Process

As part of an overall cultural competence plan, agencies should have a culturally appropriate grievance process. A culturally appropriate grievance process makes it clear to clients and employees what steps they are entitled to take when they wish to file a complaint.

As you develop a culturally appropriate grievance process, consider what recourses are available to clients from diverse races, ethnicities and languages to resolve instances of misunderstanding or potential discrimination. Consider how accessible your policies, forms and recourses are to diverse clients and staff. The following questions can serve as a guide:

- Does the grievance process address the cultural and linguistic needs of clients?
- Does the grievance process address the needs of clients with disabilities?
- Are translations of grievance procedures, forms and responses to grievances available to clients with limited English proficiency?
- Do clients have access to interpreters to assist them with the grievance process?
- Are forms and policies written in simple, clear language to meet the needs of lower-literacy clients?
- Has your agency developed a policy describing how your grievance system complies with anti-discrimination regulations?

A model grievance protocol may involve:

- Notifying clients of their right to file complaints
- Offering client complaint/grievance forms as requested
- Providing assistance for clients with limited English proficiency, visual or other communicative impairment
- Notifying clients of their right to file a complaint with external sources
- Resolving disputes
- Offering remedies to disputes or refer clients to other dispute resolution forums
- Keeping a log of cultural and language complaints and resolutions (ideally integrated into electronic systems)
- Generating reports of cultural and language access complaints
- Submitting grievance data to external sources according to legal requirements
- Reviewing complaint logs for trends of discrimination or disparities
- Identifying and responding to disparities and discrimination trends
- Developing antidiscrimination policies.

As you develop a culturally appropriate grievance process, consider what recourses are available to clients with diverse races, ethnicities and languages to resolve instances of misunderstanding or discrimination.

Ensuring Culturally Competent Grievance Processes[11]

- Enlist the help of multicultural staff and community partners as you develop a grievance process.
- Translate complaint and grievance forms into appropriate languages.
- Ensure clients with limited English proficiency can use the complaint process.
- Develop a clear follow-up process.
- Hire client advocates.
- Make sure complaint forms include race, ethnicity and language information.
- Analyze complaint logs and data by ethnicity.
- Look for disproportionate trends by ethnicity and culture.
- Look for patterns of discrimination.
- Offer measurable and timely corrective action.

Source: Betancourt, J., 2002

See:
Tool 5.4: Sample Grievance Protocol
Tool 5.5: Sample Grievance Policy and Forms

Step 5. Resolve Cross-Cultural Conflicts

Diversity in the workforce is vital. Yet, working as an organization with diverse employees and clients from so many backgrounds can be challenging. All of us bring a set of assumptions and preconceptions to the workplace. We view the world through our own cultural lens, based on individual experiences. Often, those views may conflict. Diverse organizations must develop policies that encourage open communication and provide ways for employees to resolve conflict and to learn and grow from it.

Policies that Reflect Cultural Commitment

Agencies can show their commitment to cultural diversity by developing and implementing antidiscrimination policies and grievance process protocols, and by having diverse hiring standards.

Offer Cultural Competence Training
Cultural competence training offers an excellent opportunity for staff to review different points of view and weigh personal biases. Trainings can be the starting point for thoughtful discussions about a variety of topics and issues. All staff should complete cultural competence training. Maximizing opportunities for informal cultural exchanges in day-to-day settings can also encourage an environment of openness to new ideas and points of view. See Chapter 1 for more information on cultural competence and training.

Encourage Dialogue
By encouraging dialogue in staff meetings and forums and by having an open door policy to discuss concerns, you can increase opportunities for employees to respectfully share and accept different points of view.

Be clear about unacceptable behaviors, such as culturally insensitive remarks, and encourage staff to speak openly about any incidents, without fear of retribution.

Train Staff Mediators
Designating a neutral third party to mediate conflict can help resolve conflicts that arise. Training staff to serve as mediators in cross-cultural conflicts is a promising practice.

Identify Trends
Collecting and maintaining a log of client and employee complaints can help you identify issues and address recurring conflicts. Compare and analyze complaint logs by race and ethnicity, and look for recurring issues and patterns of discrimination.

Correct Recurring Problems
Agencies should ensure that conflicts are resolved in a timely and respectful way, and that both employees and clients feel respected and understood in the process. Seek to stay informed of trends and patterns of grievances and conflicts by reviewing reports of complaint logs on a regular basis. As you identify recurring problems and trends, you can create policies to prevent discriminatory practices.

All of us bring different views to the workplace. Often, those views may conflict. Organizations must develop policies that encourage open communication and provide ways for employees to resolve conflict and to learn and grow from it.

See:
Tool 5.3: Ground Rules for Cross-Cultural Dialogue

Conclusion

As you:

- **reflect** local diversity in your workforce and board
- **recruit** a diverse workforce
- **retain** and promote diverse employees
- **respond** to concerns through a culturally appropriate grievance process, and
- **resolve** and prevent cross-cultural conflicts

your agency can increase in cultural competence and develop an inclusive, welcoming environment for clients.

CASE STUDIES

Case Study 5: Improving Connections through Diverse Staffing

The Program: Rape Crisis Center of Central Massachusetts
Services: Counseling, medical and legal advocacy, volunteer services
Client Diversity: White (47.7%), black (6.1%), Hispanic/Latino (7.2%), Asian (0.8%), unknown (36.4%)*

Background

The Rape Crisis Center of Central Massachusetts (the Center) serves a client population with diverse racial backgrounds and ability status. The Center assists sexual assault or physical abuse survivors, primarily women. The Center works with volunteer advocates who, after completing mandatory sexual assault training, support survivors of sexual assault in Central Massachusetts through the reporting and recovery process.

Challenge

After many encounters with Deaf and hard-of-hearing clients, Denise Roy, Director of Volunteer Services, and her staff believed there was more the Center could do to reach the Deaf and hard-of-hearing community. They set a goal to better serve the needs of Deaf victims of sexual assault and domestic violence and to manage counselors working with them by hiring a Deaf person to lead the project.

Approach

Led by a Project Implementation Board, the Center developed a project to recruit volunteers, to sensitize staff to issues facing the deaf community, and to offer education and outreach to the deaf community. The Center's general approach to staffing illustrates universal principles on hiring a diverse workforce.

Prioritize Diverse Staffing

To make room in their budget for the Deaf Counselor Coordinator, the Rape Crisis team had to combine a number of different resources. "But it was a priority, so we made it happen," Roy said.

Diversify Recruiting Sources

While the Center has found candidates as a result of strategic job postings, they have also seen an increase in interested candidates as a result of outreach in the community. The Center's recruitment strategies are outlined in the box on page 119.

Create a Welcoming Environment

The Center has created an inclusive, welcoming environment by offering training, American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters for clients and staff, and beginning-level ASL classes for all staff. Involving their new Deaf Counselor Coordinator in all initiatives has been essential.

"We try to make sure our Deaf Counselor Coordinator is included in everything we do." Roy says. "Every meeting, whether it's a staff meeting or a client meeting, we make sure there is an ASL interpreter there for her."

"We need that kind of leadership within the Deaf community to take on the issues of sexual assault and domestic violence. A lot of these women are really isolated and don't get the information that is very available to others. It's a very small community. It's a challenge."

– Denise Roy, Director of Volunteer Services, Rape Crisis Center of Central Massachusetts

Data are from incident reports taken by the Rape Crisis Center of Central Massachusetts in Fiscal Year 2007 (July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007). These data reflect the diversity of clients contacting the agency for the FIRST time. The agency serves many more ongoing clients who are not reflected in these numbers. Clients are not required to provide demographic data (and are able to receive services 100% anonymously).

Case Study 5: Improving Connections through Diverse Staffing (cont.)

Expose Staff to Diverse Cultures
As the Center's staff has become more familiar with deaf culture, their comfort level and ability to meet the needs of deaf clients has increased. Gaining a better understanding of a group and its culture, according to Roy, is the best way to overcome fear of the unknown and improve communication.

Use an In-House Promotion Approach
As opportunities arise around different jobs, the Center has an in-house promotion approach. When positions open, they are first made available to staff so the team can "build from within."

Encourage Open Group Communication
The Center encourages employees to seek opportunities to openly discuss problems or discomforts—during group discussions at staff meetings or in one-on-one meetings.

Partner with Agencies and Organizations
By partnering with sister agencies and organizations, the Center has been better able to reach a broad population of Deaf clients. They have become well-known for their efforts to reach the deaf community. When other rape crisis centers encounter Deaf or hard-of-hearing clients, they often refer these clients to the Center.

Recruitment Strategies of the Rape Crisis Center of Central Massachusetts

- *Post job openings and volunteer opportunities with partner agencies* (e.g., Jane Doe, The Massachusetts Office of Victim Assistance [MOVA], rape crisis centers across the state)
- *Outreach at cultural events*
- *Participate in roundtables and community events*
- *Use outreach opportunities to spread the word* (Women of Color Caucus, Worcester Clothesline Project, Hablamos program)

"Having someone on our staff who understands the needs and language of the deaf community is essential. Deaf women know that they can come into our agency and they will be able to communicate with someone in their language. This has allowed us to have a connection. We are saying: 'We're here. We want to help you. We're trying to understand your culture. We can communicate with you in your own language.'"

– Denise Roy, Director of Volunteer Services, Rape Crisis Center of Central Massachusetts

Chapter 5 Checklist:
Reflect and Respect Diversity

This checklist includes suggested ways for your agency to become more culturally competent. All agencies may not be able to accomplish these right away. Some may be goals for the future. These measures describe specific ways to document CLAS efforts when responding to Requests for Responses (RFRs) and contracts.

Step 1. Reflect Local Diversity in Your Workforce

- ❍ Racial/ethnic staffing is proportional to the populations of focus.
- ❍ Race, ethnicity and preferred language data of staff at all levels is collected.
- ❍ Policies and procedures promote workforce diversity.

Step 2. Recruit a Diverse Workforce

- ❍ A designated staff member oversees diversity recruiting.
- ❍ A percentage of the annual budget is designated to culturally competent hiring practices.
- ❍ Job descriptions reflect desired linguistic, cultural competence skills and values.
- ❍ Job openings are advertised in diverse media.
- ❍ Internship programs exist.
- ❍ A staff referral program is in place.
- ❍ The recruiting process involves community organizations, health fairs, etc.
- ❍ RFRs for contract services contain language that encourages diverse contractors.

Step 3. Retain and Promote Diverse Employees

- ❍ Retention and career development plans exist for racially, ethnically, culturally and linguistically competent staff.
- ❍ Advancement programs are available for employees of diverse backgrounds. For example, wage incentive programs exist for staff who complete interpreter training, mentoring programs, employee scholarships, and continuing education opportunities.
- ❍ Employee certification programs encompass cultural competence.
- ❍ Mandatory cultural competence training is offered.

Step 4. Respond to to Concerns through a Culturally Competent Grievance Process

- ❍ A formal grievance process is in place for clients and employees.
- ❍ A protocol of the grievance process exists and is shared with staff and clients.
- ❍ Client complaint and grievance forms are translated into key languages.
- ❍ Right of clients to file complaints is contained in the Client Bill of Rights.
- ❍ Reports of client complaints/grievances are generated regularly.
- ❍ Reports of client complaints/grievances are included in evaluations.

Step 5. Resolve Cross-Cultural Conflicts

- ❍ Formal conflict resolution mechanisms are in place.
- ❍ Trained staff mediators are available.
- ❍ Cultural competence training involves strategies to promote effective communication and joint problem-solving skills.
- ❍ Anti-discrimination policies and procedures are in place (e.g., zero tolerance policy against racism).

Chapter 5 References

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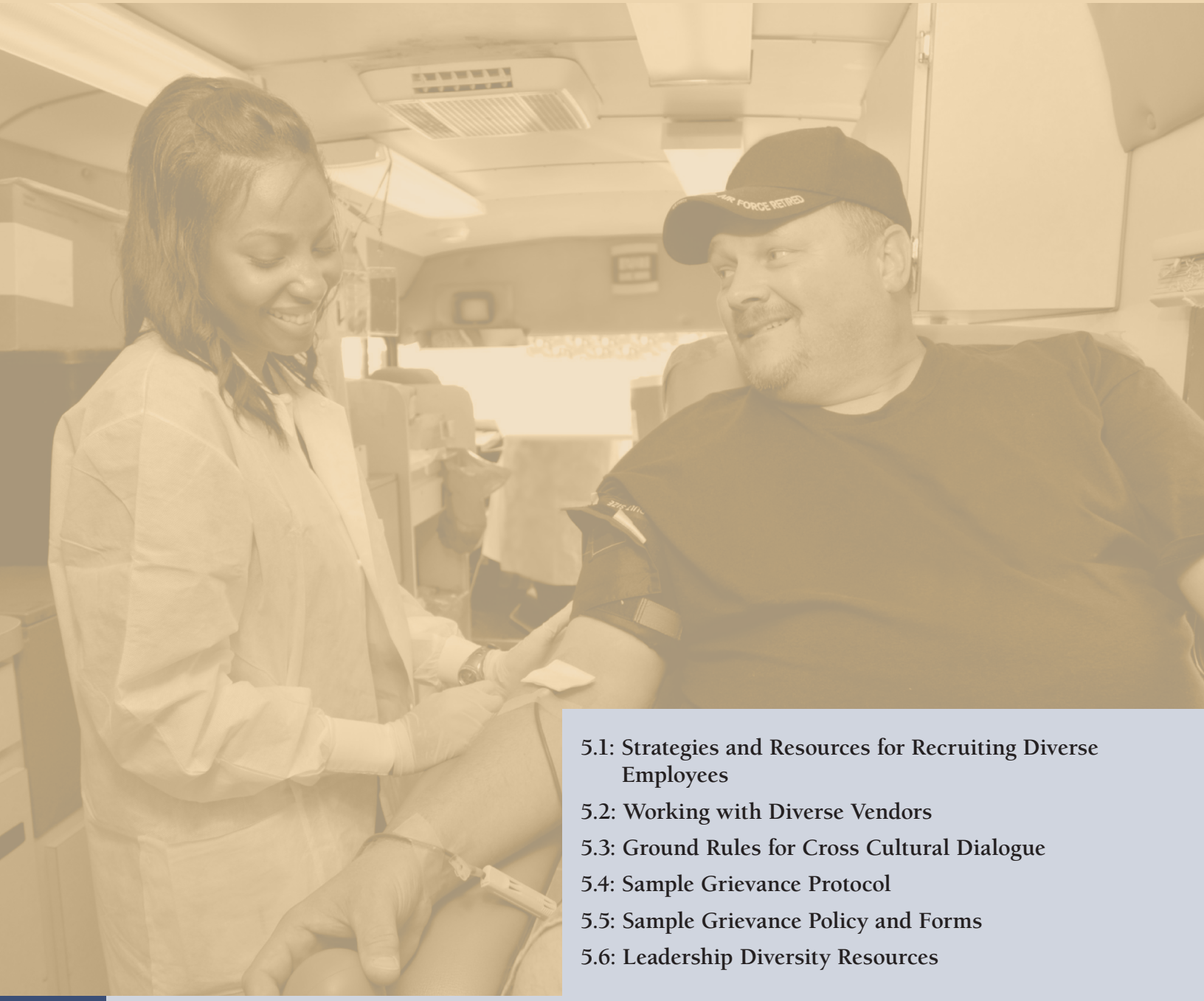
CHAPTER 5: Reflect and Respect Diversity

Tools



5.1: Strategies and Resources for Recruiting Diverse Employees

5.2: Working with Diverse Vendors

5.3: Ground Rules for Cross Cultural Dialogue

5.4: Sample Grievance Protocol

5.5: Sample Grievance Policy and Forms

5.6: Leadership Diversity Resources

Tool 5.1: Strategies & Resources for Recruiting Diverse Employees

Partner with Massachusetts Area Health Education Centers

The seven **Massachusetts Area Health Education Centers** (AHECs) are dedicated to promoting diversity in the health professions. They receive funding to develop their own programming to: promote diversity in health-related professions; support training; provide information, resources, and area-specific technical assistance to health workers, provider agencies and educational institutions; and promote culturally and linguistically competent disease control efforts. Following are links to the Web sites of each AHEC:

Berkshire AHEC: http://www.berkshireahec.org

Boston AHEC: http://www.bumc.bu.edu/busm-ahec

Central Massachusetts AHEC: http://cmahec.org/

AHEC, Southeastern Massachusetts: http://www.hcsm.org/ahec

Merrimack Valley AHEC: http://www.glfhc.org

Pioneer Valley AHEC

Work with Ethnic and Multilingual Media

Ethnic and multilingual media are ideal partners for your recruitment efforts. They work closely with diverse communities and often sponsor cultural and professional events. They are also the ideal place to post job openings when you are seeking candidates with diverse backgrounds and language skills.

UMass Boston Center on Media and Society
Ethnic Media Project
http://www.mediaandsociety.org/directory
The Ethnic Media Project offers an excellent directory of ethnically and linguistically diverse media in Massachusetts. This comprehensive resource site is well-maintained and updated regularly. The site offers links and updated contact information for ethnic and cultural cable, radio, television, online media, magazines, newsletters and newspapers throughout the state.

Partner with Professional Minority Organizations

Organizations of ethnically and racially diverse professionals can be an excellent source for recruiting and mentoring. Partner with these organizations to:

- Recruit diverse employees
- Participate in career fairs and networking events
- Identify mentoring opportunities

The following list includes links to a number of state and national professional minority organizations.

American Indian Science and Engineering Society
http:// www.aises.org

Association of Latino Professionals in Finance and Accounting
http:// www.alpfa.org

Tool 5.1: Strategies & Resources for Recruiting Diverse Employees (cont.)

Asian American Civic Association, Inc.
http:// www.aaca-boston.org
Provides limited-English speaking and economically disadvantaged people with education, occupational training and social services enabling them to realize lasting economic self-sufficiency. AACA offers: workforce development; education (ESOL, Mandarin and acculturation classes for business people); assistance with immigration, housing, health insurance and primary care, translation and interpretation, and college support; and youth leadership development.

HireDiversity Job Board
http://www.hirediversity.com
HireDiversity.com is the nation´s leading online service for diversity recruitment and career development. HireDiversity.com provides top quality services and networking opportunities, while linking under-represented candidates with Fortune 1000 corporations, government Agencies, and nonprofit/educational institutions.

Hispanic Alliance for Career Enhancement
http:// www.hace-usa.org
HACE has as its mission to inspire and guide Latinos in achieving their professional aspirations and positively contributing to communities. The Web site includes a calendar of events, including career conferences, recruitment and networking events. Also includes links to job postings and internship, student ambassador and mentoring programs.

Japan Society of Boston
http:// www.us-japan.org/boston
A non-profit membership organization dedicated to strengthening communication, understanding, and enlightened relations between the people of Japan and Massachusetts. Offers Japanese classes, education and a job bank.

Latino Professional Network
http:// www.lpn.org
The LPN creates career, educational and social opportunities for Latino professionals by connecting Latino professionals with employers seeking to identify, retain and develop Latino talent. LPN offers monthly networking sessions hosted by area corporations, educational institutions and non-profit organizations. The LPN Web site includes a membership directory and job bank.

National Association of Asian American Professionals - Boston
http:// www.naaapboston.org
A non-profit professional organization that promotes the career advancement and leadership development of Asian-American professionals in all fields.

National Association of Hispanic Nurses
http:// www.thehispanicnurses.org
NAHN provides a forum for nurses to promote and encourage Hispanic nurses throughout the nation to analyze and evaluate the health care needs of the Hispanic community, promote culturally sensitive models, collaborate and disseminate research findings. The Web site provides a link to a Massachusetts chapter.

National Association of Black Social Workers
http:// www.nabsw.org/mserver/Home.aspx
The National Association of Black Social Workers, Inc., comprised of people of African ancestry, is committed to enhancing quality of life and to empowering people of African ancestry through advocacy, human services delivery, and research. There are two active chapters in Massachusetts.

National Black MBA Association, Boston Chapter
http:// www.bostonblackmba.org

National Association of Black Accountants, Boston Chapter
http:// www.nababoston.org

National Black Nurses Association
http:// www.nbna.org
The mission of the NBNA is "to provide a forum for African American nurses to investigate, define and determine what the health care needs of African Americans are and to implement change to make available to African Americans and other minorities health care commensurate with that of the larger society." NBNA represents approximately 150,000 African-American nurses from the USA, Eastern Caribbean and Africa, with 76 chartered chapters nationwide. NBNA has two chapters in New England:

- New England Regional Black Nurses Association (617) 524-1951
- Western Massachusetts Black Nurses Association (413) 734-5915

National Forum for Black Public Administrators, Boston Chapter
http://www.nfbpaboston.org/
The NFBPA is a national organization representing over 2500 members and over 350 jurisdictions with 43 chapters across the United States. The organization includes city, state, county and federal managers as well as professionals, educators, business people, students of public administration and allied disciplines.

National Society for Hispanic Professionals
http://www.nshp.org
NSHP is dedicated to providing Hispanic professionals with networking and leadership opportunities and information on education, scholarships, grants, careers, jobs and entrepreneurship.

National Society of Hispanic MBAs
http://www.boston.nshmba.org

National Alaska Native American Indian Nurses Association
http://www.nanainanurses.org
NANAINA is committed to promote a continuum of health among Alaska Native and American Indian people, to serve the professional needs of Alaska Native and American Indian nurses and promote leadership and advancement of Alaska Native and American Indian nurses.

Network of Arab American Professionals
http://www.naaponline.org/boston
NAAP-Boston serves the Arab and Arab-American community by promoting professional networking and social interaction among Arab-American and Arab professionals.

Network of South Asian Professionals of Boston
http://www.netsapboston.org
A professional, not-for-profit organization dedicated to serving the professional, political, cultural and civic needs of the Indian and South Asian community in the Greater Boston area.

Saheli Boston – Friendship for South Asian Women
http://www.saheliboston.org
Founded in 1996 as an affiliate of the India Association of Greater Boston (IAGB), provides support, guidance and resources in the areas of career and economic empowerment, physical and mental health, legal and immigration issues, support for families and social and cultural volunteer opportunities.

Vietnamese American Civic Association
http://www.vacaboston.org
A multi-service Mutual Assistance Association dedicated to promoting family self-sufficiency and well being, and to facilitating community empowerment among the Vietnamese population of Greater Boston. Offers ESOL classes, citizenship classes, health awareness and outreach activities, social services counseling, youth programming, elderly services and employment services.

Young Black Women's Society Incorporated
http://www.ybws.org/joomla
An organization that is committed to empowering and advocating for black women between the ages of 21 and 35 through social activities, professional development, and community involvement.

Connect with Local Colleges & Universities

Colleges and universities can also be valuable partners in your recruitment, professional development and mentoring efforts. Work with local colleges and universities to identify career fairs and promising candidates. Develop partnerships with colleges to offer internships or service learning opportunities. Use the following links to search for colleges in your area.

Association of Minority Health Professions Schools
http://www.minorityhealth.org
A nonprofit, educational, scientific and charitable 501 (c)(3) organization that provides support for professional education, research and community service that promotes optimum health among minorities and the under-served. AMHPS member schools, collectively known as the Association of Minority Health Professions Schools, are drawn from historically black colleges and universities, regarded as the nation's primary educators of minority health professionals.

U.S. College Search
http://www.uscollegesearch.org
U.S. College Search offers a searchable database of colleges and universities by name, city, state, ZIP code and program.

Partner with Community Organizations and Attend Local Events

Working with community organizations not only helps you stay connected with the clients you serve but can also be a good way to develop relationships with potential employees from diverse communities.

See Tool 2.3 for a list of community organizations and events.

Tool 5.2: Working with Diverse Vendors

Working with diverse vendors is a great way to support locally- and minority-owned businesses, and it can also help you secure state contracts. When responding to state Requests for Responses (RFRs) or meeting contract requirements, you will be asked to demonstrate your support for minority and women business enterprises.

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health is required to allocate a minimum of 10% of Requests for Responses (RFRs) points to plans promoting growth of minority and women business enterprises.

Tips for Working with Diverse Vendors

- **Document your efforts.** Keep a log of what you do—keep copies of contracts with minority businesses or receipts for services purchased from MWBEs. If you have a plan, even better. That way, when it's time to document for the state, your agency is prepared.
- **Develop your own plan.** Decide how much money you will assign to specific MWBE initiatives/purchases. Plan on integrating diversity, not only in your internal hiring policies, but also in how you spend your funds.
- **Use the State Office of Minority and Women Business Assistance (SOMWBA) Web site to purchase goods and services.** The site includes a directory of SOMWBA-certified businesses throughout the state.
- **Find out what your vendors are doing to support diversity.** Encourage subcontractors to purchase goods and services from MWBEs.
- **Attend networking events for professional minority organizations and associations,** like the "Meet the M/WBE Vendor" annual kick-off event hosted by the AMP program.
- **Mentor minority or women-owned businesses.**
- **Spread the word.** If you have had a good experience with MWBEs, recommend and refer them to others.
- **Get support.** Both the Affirmative Market Program and the State Office of Minority and Women Business Assistance have staff available to answer your questions and assist you. (See boxes to the right for links.)

Affirmative Market Program

http://www.mass.gov/amp
Find information on networking events, outreach and education, AMP-DCAM certification workshops, quarterly newsletters highlighting procurement initiatives, and up-to-date online procurement tools.

State Office of Minority and Women Business Assistance

http://www.mass.gov/somwba
Offers a directory of SOMWBA-certified businesses, links to events and opportunities, workshops and certification.

What is the Affirmative Market Program (AMP)?

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health participates in the AMP, a state program that encourages departments to make plans to work with minority and women business enterprises (MWBEs).

Key Elements of AMP Plans

According to OSD rules (August 2007), no contract will be awarded to a vendor without a strong AMP plan with measurable commitments. AMP plans focus on at least one of the following areas:

- **Subcontracting:** A commitment to contract MWBEs
- **Growth and Development:** Education, training, mentoring, resource sharing, joint activities and assistance that would increase industry capacity and the pool of qualified SOMWBA-certified companies
- **Ancillary Uses** such as the purchase of office supplies

Tool 5.3: Ground Rules for Cross-cultural Dialogue

These "ground rules" can help create an open, accepting environment in the workplace that facilitates cross-cultural dialogue.

We will:

- Understand that each of us comes to the conversation with cultural beliefs and values that impact our communication.
- Engage with each other as a circle of individuals with thoughts, ideas, feelings, and experiences—we will recognize that we are more than just the job we do every day.
- Respect the right to disagree—respectfully.
- Express our real concerns as they relate to our own perspective.
- Look for common goals and interests.
- Open ourselves to different points of view.
- Listen carefully to the ideas of others—one person talking at a time.
- Ask for clarification instead of making assumptions.
- Allow the facilitator to keep the discussion moving. We will respect the timelines of the agenda.
- Try to stay on the theme of discussion.
- Be sensitive to the diversity in communication styles-understand some are linear conversationalists and some are storytellers. We will remain patient!

From: *Minnesota Department of Health, Community Engagement*
http://health.state.mn.us/communityeng/multicultural/cross.html

Tool 5.4: Sample Grievance Protocol

Having a defined process for client and employee grievances is essential to ensuring a consistent, fair handling of complaints. The following list offers the key steps of a culturally competent client grievance process.

1. Notify clients of their right to file complaints.
   - ❍ Post notices in visible places.
   - ❍ Include notices in written documents, like the Client Bill of Rights.
2. Offer client complaint/grievance forms as requested.
3. Provide assistance for clients with limited English proficiency or visual or other communicative impairments,
   - ❍ Translate grievance procedures and forms into primary languages.
   - ❍ Offer access to interpreters through the grievance process.
   - ❍ Offer telephone relay systems for the hearing impaired.
4. Notify clients of their right to file a complaint with external sources.
   - ❍ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Civil Rights 1-800-368-1019
5. Resolve disputes in a timely, sensitive way.
6. Offer remedies, or refer clients to other dispute resolution forums.
7. Keep a log of cultural and language complaints and resolutions.
8. Review complaint logs to identify trends and disparities.
9. Submit grievance data to external sources, according to legal requirements.
10. Identify and respond to disparities and discrimination trends.
11. Develop a written policy describing how your agency offers a culturally competent grievance process through:
    - ❍ Forms and important documents in key languages
    - ❍ Availability of interpreters for LEP and relay systems
    - ❍ Anti-discrimination policies

Tool 5.5: Sample Grievance Policy and Forms

The following tool offers examples of a grievance policy and form templates. If you use this as a model for your own grievance policy, be sure to adapt it based on your organization's policies, hierarchy and laws.

Purpose

The client grievance procedure is a way to solve problems between you and your health worker. This policy does not change your rights under Massachusetts statutes as they may apply.

Procedure

You are encouraged to try to solve this conflict directly with your worker. If you want to bring this matter to the attention of the agency, please write out your concerns or the nature of the problem in a note.

Send the note to the supervisor of the staff person with whom you are working. Your worker's supervisor will investigate and respond to you in writing within one week.

If you are not satisfied with the decision of the supervisor, you may write out your objections or concerns and send them to the Director of Operations [or insert title]. The Director will review the issues and respond in writing within one week.

If you are not satisfied with the decision of the Director of Operations, you may report these concerns in writing to the Director. The Director will examine the issues and will respond to you in writing within one week.

If the problem is still unresolved, you may write out your concerns and forward it to the [Administrator] whose decision will be final. Each of these people may want to meet with you as they work with you to solve the problem.

Client Grievance Form

Instructions

If you have a problem or want to make a complaint, you have the right to have it handled fairly and quickly.

Here's what YOU do:

1. Talk to us. Let us know what complaint you have..
2. Ask us for a complaint form if you are not satisfied with how our staff member handled your issue.
3. Fill out the form. If you cannot fill it out by yourself, have someone help you.
4. Give the form to our staff person at the front desk.

From: *Blue Earth County Grievance Form, www.co.blue-earth.mn.us*

Tool 5.5: Sample Grievance Policy and Forms (cont.)

Here's what WE will do:

1. The staff person will give your complaint to the office manager the day you turn it in.

2. The office manager will have ___ working days to go over your complaint. During that time, the office manager will:
   - Correct the problem.
   - Tell the appropriate staff member about your complaint and ask him/her how to handle it.
   - Explain to you why the problem happened and what we are doing about it.
   - If the problem can't be fixed, we will explain why it has to be the way it is and what you can still do about it.

3. We will call you no later than ___ working days after you turned in your complaint to let you know how your complaint was handled. If your complaint is something we are not able to handle, we will give you a telephone number to call so you can direct your complaint to the right place.

If you are still not satisfied with the way your complaint was handled, you may call [relevant contact information]. We value you as our client. Your satisfaction is important to us.

From: *FMAQI, The Medicare Quality Improvement Organization for Florida (under contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services).*

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Client Complaint Form

Nature of Complaint	
Signature of Individual Initiating Complaint	Date
Employee's Response	
Signature of Employee	Date
Supervisory Action	
Signature of Supervisor	Date

Tool 5.6: Leadership and Diversity Resources

Further Reading

Julie T. Chyna. Mirroring Your Community: A Good Reflection on You. *Healthcare Executive,* Vol. 16 #2, pp. 18-23

Rupert M. Evans, Sr. 1999. Increasing Minority Representation in Health Care Management, *Health Forum Journal,* Nov/Dec, 1999, Vol. 42, #6.

Jason Drucker. 2008. The Art of Founding an Inclusive Board. *Board Member,* Vol. 17, Issue 6.

Institute of Medicine. 2004. *In the Nation's Compelling Interest: Ensuring Diversity in the Health Care Workforce*. Washington, DC: The National Academy Press.

Web Resources

Board Source
http://www.boardsource.org
BoardSource, formerly the National Center for Nonprofit Boards, is dedicated to increasing the effectiveness of nonprofit organizations by strengthening their boards of directors. Their Web site offers links to books and tools, consulting resources, articles, workshops and events. Membership is required to access some resources.

Institute for Diversity in Health Management
http://www.diversityconnection.org
Committed to expanding health care leadership opportunities for racially and ethnically diverse individuals entering and advancing in the health care field.

National Center for Healthcare Leadership
http://www.nchl.org
The NCHL seeks to improve the health status of the country through effective health care management leadership.

Strategies for Leadership: Does your hospital reflect the community it serves?
A Diversity and Cultural Proficiency Assessment Tool for Leaders (2004)
American Hospital Association
http://www.aha.org/aha/content/2004/pdf/diversitytool.pdf
A practical overview of key workforce diversity principles, promising practices and resources. Includes a diversity assessment checklist, action steps, case studies and a bibliography.