

# Simple Strategies to Shape Organizational Infrastructure and Culture

## Why it is Important

Hospital leaders should be encouraged to embrace cultural competency interventions as an important step toward reducing health care disparities. Promoting culturally and linguistically appropriate care, expanding diversity within hospital leadership, institutionalizing cultural competency into hospitals' central missions and training are all methods that health care leaders should use to improve the equity of care.

It is important to create a workforce that is as broad and diversified as the patient population it serves. For instance, it has been demonstrated that racial and ethnic concordance between patient and provider is likely to enhance communication and understanding and provide opportunities for building trust that would improve adherence to medical treatment plans.

Ensure you have an individual who has leadership responsibility and accountability for health equity efforts, such as a director of health equity. This individual does not need to be part of the C-suite. The hospital leader should be responsible for engaging with patients, families and community partners to ensure that strategic and action planning activities reduce disparities in health outcomes for all patient populations.

### Basic/Intermediate:

Adopting activities to enhance patients' access to culturally and linguistically appropriate services is essential for reducing disparities and building a health care system that delivers high-quality care to every patient, regardless of race, ethnicity, culture or language. To align with Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) standards, activities would include:

- **Recruiting and promoting** diverse governance, leadership and workforce that are responsive to the population in the service area.
- **Advancing organizational governance and leadership** to promote health equity through policy, practices and allocated resources.
- **Educating and training** governance, leadership and workforce in CLAS practices on an ongoing basis.

According to an [Institute of Medicine \(IOM\) report](#), increased levels of culturally competent care may improve the accuracy of diagnoses, prevent patients from exposure to unnecessary risk diagnostic procedures and improve the knowledge and attitudes of health care professionals.

### Action Items:

- Review the [Competent Care Webinar](#) for patients with disabilities
- Review [A Practical Guide to Implementing the National CLAS Standards](#) (pages 18-20) to access multiple training webinars.
- Check out [Department of Health & Human Services website](#) for training material, [videos](#), a library of [tools](#), [recorded presentations](#) and a [checklist](#) of practical cross-cultural communication skills.

### Advanced:

Display a commitment to equitable care by incorporating it into policies, protocols and strategic planning. For an institutional cultural competency initiative to be effective, it must involve the entire organization and stem from a companywide commitment. Equity strategies must be part of the overall strategic plan and should be incorporated into the overall strategic vision. Efforts to address equity must address issues of **evaluation, planning, implementation, communication sustainability** and **dissemination**.

### Action Items:

- Use the [Implementation Checklist](#) to start the conversation on how to apply CLAS standards.
- Review [A Practical Guide to Implementing the National CLAS standards](#) (requires registration to download but is free of charge).
- Use the [CLAS tracker](#) to check the progress of other states regarding cultural competency training.