



# UPDATES FROM OUR CEO

Robin D. Wittenstein

Friday, February 4, 2022

## Progress in Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

*Bringing our Anchor Mission to Life*



Dear Colleagues,

We are fortunate to live and work in an increasingly diverse community. However, within Denver Health, and in our society, we know that people experience inequities because of their race, ethnicity, gender identity, physical ability and many other factors. As a mission-based, safety-net hospital, and an Anchor Institution, it's our role to step up and address these inequities. With that front of mind, I want to share some news regarding our ongoing diversity, equity and inclusion efforts at Denver Health.

### Equity Blueprint

In December 2021, we shared the Denver Health Equity Blueprint with staff in the 411. The blueprint is our three-year road map to advance diversity, equity and inclusion within Denver Health and our community. Its framework was built on input from employees, leaders, stakeholders and members of the community. We identified several themes that relate to how people of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds feel about our organization, and these insights guided the creation of the blueprint's goals and initiatives. You can review our [Equity Blueprint here](#). This work is a top priority for Denver Health, and in the coming weeks, accountability for achieving the blueprint's goals will come to life as members of the senior management team, the Equity Blueprint Steering Committee, and DEI Council members work to define specific action plans, set targets and start to measure our performance, all as part of our 2022 Organizational Goals. The blueprint is a living document, and it will continue to evolve as we make progress in this critical area.

### DEI Council

I would like to thank the members of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Council. They propelled much of the work behind the Equity Blueprint and will continue to play an important role as we formalize the goals and embark on the initiatives.

### The Center for Equity, Diversity and Opportunity

If you have attended a recent Town Hall meeting, you know we're making progress on bringing our anchor mission to life by establishing our Center for Equity, Diversity and Opportunity (CEDO). It has three components – the Workforce Development Center; procurement efforts to target buying from local, minority-owned businesses; and the Office of Health Equity, which will help us identify and reduce disparities in health outcomes and partner to address social risk factors. We are in the process of selecting a chief impact officer who will lead the center, funded through philanthropy. The recruitment process is underway, and I hope to announce the selection of a candidate soon.

### Workforce Development Center

Finding ways to improve professional and financial opportunities for our employees is an important priority for Denver Health. Our newly established Workforce Development Center (WFDC) is the focus for much of this work. The center will offer financial support and counseling, coaching on career pathways and training, and resources to help staff in their personal and professional lives. We have selected a leader for the WFDC, and I'm pleased to announce the appointment of Erin Howard as senior director for Organizational and Workforce Development. Erin currently leads our Organizational Development team and has worked at Denver Health for six years. As part of the WFDC offering, we've partnered with [Operation Hope](#), an organization that provides financial coaching and resources to help people improve their credit score, reduce debt and achieve greater financial independence. Look out for more details on Operation Hope and other WFDC services in the coming weeks.

This is important work, and I look forward to sharing further updates on our progress. If you have questions or would like to make a suggestion, please feel free to email me. You can also submit comments or ideas to [DenverHealthIdeas@dhha.org](mailto:DenverHealthIdeas@dhha.org).



## 3 GOOD THINGS



Denver Health Pediatrics at Denver Public Schools is opening its 19th school-based health center inside George Washington High School later this month to provide physical and behavioral health services to students. "Our school is the last comprehensive high school in Denver to open a school-based clinic, and we're excited about this partnership," said Kristin Waters, principal of George Washington High School. The students, staff and community have stepped up to make this health center a reality by taking an active role in the planning process and raising funds to cover a \$50,000 shortfall.



Denver Health is responsible for vaccinating 162,000 people, and the number continues to increase, thanks to our community outreach efforts to equitably distribute the COVID-19 vaccine. In Denver, 78% of residents 12 and older are fully vaccinated. Our large-scale vaccination clinics, mobile health centers, school-based health centers and community health centers have all played a vital role in reaching this achievement. As the community's immunity rises and our inpatient COVID cases decline, we remain committed to vaccinating our neighbors as the best defense against omicron and possible future variants.



People from around the world are hearing firsthand about the challenges our frontline workers are experiencing in the hospital, in large part because of the COVID-19 omicron wave. Dr. Morgan Eutermoser, emergency medicine physician, shared some of the difficult situations she's faced in [this interview](#) with Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) that aired this week. Dr. Eutermoser was also recently profiled by other national media outlets, including National Public Radio and MSNBC.

With gratitude,

Robin D. Wittenstein, Ed.D., FACHE  
Chief Executive Officer

An archive of CEO communications is [located here](#).

