Advocate Aurora Health wholeheartedly believes everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. We have worked relentlessly this past year, making meaningful strides to advance health equity, increase representation within our workforce and business partnerships, and effect real change for our patients, communities and team members.

This report details our 2021 progress including the following highlights:

- Initiatives to attract, retain and promote team members that reflect the communities we serve
- Programs to support minority- and women-owned business partners
- Services to meet social needs like safe housing, nutritious food, transportation and stable employment
- Efforts to implement unconscious bias training, language assistance services and culturally appropriate care

We are grateful for the progress that has been made, but we know our work is far from over. I’m proud of our leaders and team members who are passionate about and committed to helping people live well—ALL people. This drive will enable us to continue growing and building the health care system that individuals of every color, ethnicity, orientation and creed deserve.

Jim Skogsbergh
President and CEO
Advocate Aurora Health
LEADERSHIP
IN ACTION

Looking back on 2021, I would say the greatest change over 2020 was our ability to look up again, engaging with colleagues and partners in the outside world. While the threat of COVID-19 did not go away, we had a chance to engage in more forums and learning opportunities to inform new programs. We received a tremendous number of speaking invitations throughout the year – demonstrating the wealth of knowledge, insight, expertise and passion of those driving DE&I work in our organization. Our DE&I leaders received invitations to share best practices across the health care ecosystem, positioning Advocate Aurora as a leader in the growing world of DE&I. In turn, The exposure lead to deeper external partnerships and more published white papers, articles and editorials.

As we continue in our steadfast commitment to this critical work, I am certain we will continue to make a significant impact!

Cristy Garcia-Thomas
Chief External Affairs Officer

Internally, I’m most proud of

Standing up a leading practice with the development of a DE&I Committee at the board level – comprised of directors and external thought leaders in the work of DE&I in health care.

The Health Equity Council, comprised of chief executive officers and senior leaders, to oversee enterprise-wide initiatives to close gaps in outcomes, care and well-being for patients across disease categories. I am honored to serve as an executive co-lead with Dr. Gary Stuck, Chief Medical Officer.

Expanding our education and communication in a connected way with resources designed for and with the community.

Staying abreast of the rapidly changing demographics and increased volume of the voices we invited to inform us to truly make relevant and impactful change.

4
Thinking about the effects of COVID-19 on our efforts these past few years, it’s clear our darkest days shone the brightest light on the urgent need for DE&I across health care and employment. We know this is not a sprint and understand the remarkable effort and ingenuity required to face this challenge daily.

The urgency to provide COVID-19 treatment and vaccinations this year could’ve given us an excuse to step back and only focus on programs already in progress. Instead, we stepped forward to join other organizations in signing DE&I pledges, reinforcing our commitment to our purpose of helping people live well. Our DE&I strategy was an integrated plan influenced by our external pledges and internal commitments. These pledges hold us accountable for increasing access and ensuring equity in health care and employment.

But real change isn’t about words or signed documents. “Change” is a verb that requires action. Our pledges are becoming practice. And practice makes perfect.

We found more partners and expanded programs to include more people and resources than ever before to ensure those opportunities for our team members, patients and communities. These pledges challenge us to find new ways to work with other teams and partners for greater impact.

In April, Advocate Aurora President and CEO Jim Skogsbergh and I had a “REAL Talk” with more than 3,000 team members. It was an honest dialogue to share our reflections, frustrations and hopes for our teams and communities. We agreed that, as leaders, we need to model the dedication and courage we ask of others by dedicating time for candid conversations across our organization. The only way to learn, grow and transform Advocate Aurora – and the communities it serves – for the better is from the inside out. We need to keep working toward true equity and measuring our impact, year after year, to ensure all our endeavors remain relevant, insightful and necessary.

I’m honored to share this year’s impact report with you. It’s a testament to the profound dedication of our phenomenally gifted and passionate team members.

We continued our multi-year projects and started new programs, embedding our DE&I experts and values across our enterprise and communities. We established new partnerships and collaborated across more Advocate Aurora functional and operational areas to:

- Find commonalities and align our priorities for maximum impact on our team members, patients and communities
- Create sustainable change instead of independent projects executed one year and memorialized the next
- Obtain and increase internal and external resources to offer the greatest impact to those we serve
- Gather more data to inform fact-based, culturally relevant programs in areas we may not have considered before
In the last decade, we’ve signed seven strategic pledges with organizations that have the same DE&I vision to hold us accountable for advancing DE&I among our team members, patients and communities.

- **American Hospital Association (AHA) #123forEquity Campaign to Eliminate Health Care Disparities** and **Illinois Hospital Association (IHA) Racial Equity in Healthcare Progress Reporting**
  
  The IHA reporting advances the AHA #123forEquity campaign. The campaign asks hospital and health system leaders to accelerate progress increasing the collection and use of race, ethnicity, language preference and other socio-demographic data, cultural competency training and diversity in leadership and governance, and to improve and strengthen community partnerships.

- **Chicago’s Racial Equity Rapid Response Team**
  
  This team is a data-driven, community-based and community-driven mitigation of COVID-19 illness and death in Black and Brown neighborhoods. The goals are to flatten the COVID-19 mortality curve in Black and Brown Chicago communities and build the foundation for future work to address longstanding and systemic inequities in Black and Brown communities (health, economic and social).

- **Healthcare Anchor Network: Member**
  
  This network exists to incubate and scale strategies establishing the anchor mission as a health care sector priority and to lead innovation in anchor mission implementation, both internally and in partnership with community. Healthcare Anchor Network aims to define the health care leadership standard and promote industry collaboration for proactively addressing economic and racial inequities in community conditions that create poor health, also referred to as structural determinants of health.

- **Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce Region of Choice Pledge**
  
  With the goal of making Milwaukee’s workplaces and community more welcoming, pledging companies are committing to increase the number of African-American and Hispanic/Latino employees in Metro Milwaukee by 15%, and the number of African-American and Hispanic/Latino managers in Metro Milwaukee by 25%, by 2025.

- **CEO Action for Diversity & Inclusion Pledge**
  
  Leaders pledge to continue to make our workplaces trusting places to have complex and sometimes difficult conversations about diversity and inclusion, implement and expand unconscious bias education, share best and unsuccessful practices and create and share strategic inclusion and diversity plans with boards of directors.

- **Milwaukee Health Care Partnership: Member**
  
  Member health systems make significant investments in the community’s health by providing uncompensated care and prevention services to Milwaukee County’s vulnerable populations. This directly reflects their non-profit mission and commitment to serve those who are most in need.
In 2020, we launched REAL Talk sessions in partnership with Human Resources to support team members dealing with stressful times and to provide a safe space to share their thoughts, feelings and perspectives about current events. We held six train-the-trainer sessions with 72 participants. Now, those trainers can facilitate REAL Talks, creating greater opportunities for our team members across the organization to participate and feel included and heard. In addition, as part of our CEO in Action for Diversity and Inclusion pledge, our CEO and President Jim Skogsbergh and Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer Erickajoy Daniels hosted an all-company REAL Talk where they had a candid conversation about the challenges and opportunities before us.

Leadership education
Supporting our leaders’ development and holding them accountable for advancing DE&I is a critical component of our strategy. We offered five Inclusive Leadership training sessions for 260 senior leaders to develop their knowledge and understanding around:

- Building a culture of psychological safety
- Developing a growth mindset
- Building awareness of systematic racism and discrimination within our organization and application to our business outcomes
- Examining and exploring internal mental blocks, fears, blind spots, biases and microaggressions
- Deploying actionable strategies to promote and foster a culture of DE&I across our system

In a survey, 80% of those who participated said they recommend this course for other leaders.

Great outcomes come from great teams
Great teams come from having opportunities to learn and grow while feeling valued for their contributions. We know by cultivating an atmosphere of inclusion and compassion for our team members, we create a welcoming environment where team members can thrive and patients can heal.
Our focus on TEAM MEMBERS

Inclusive Hiring education
To help Advocate Aurora leaders create a more inclusive hiring experience for candidates, we facilitated 23 Inclusive Hiring sessions for almost 1,200 leaders designed to help them:
• Understand the business and moral case for diverse organizations
• Recognize and address implicit associations and unconscious bias
• Implement practical strategies for reviewing resumes, interviewing and creating an inclusive candidate experience
• Conduct hiring debriefs to evaluate candidates, ensure biases are eliminated and capture improvements
• Distribute surveys to gather candid feedback and identify opportunities and key takeaways

In a survey, 90% of those who participated said they recommend this course for other leaders.

Updating our policies to promote inclusive excellence
Our words, actions and behaviors are rooted in our purpose of helping people live well. Reflecting that commitment, we’ve embedded our DE&I principles into our Code of Conduct demonstrating language and behavior deeply matter, both within the workplace and on personal time. To that end, we now have clear standards for:
• Behavior on social media
• Interactions with the media
• Responding to difficult situations
In addition, our updated dress code policy reflects the values Advocate Aurora nurtures inside its walls by:
• Removing gender specifics
• Considering more broadly how policies may affect a variety of team members, such as those who may wear head coverings for religious and cultural reasons and those who may wear them because of a health condition
• Allowing leaders to decide whether hair, nails and tattoos may or may not impede a team member’s ability to provide compassionate care to patients

Step Up. Speak Up. campaign
Ensuring every team member’s psychological and physical safety is fundamental to helping them live well. To do this, we created the “Step Up. Speak Up.” campaign to encourage team members to report all incidents of inappropriate or harmful behavior. It’s each team member’s responsibility to report these incidents, and it’s our responsibility to hear, investigate and resolve reported incidents and ensure non-retaliation. This campaign increased reported incidents. Over time, we’ll continue to track the number of incidents using declining numbers to indicate a positive culture shift.

“The Enterprise Population Health Inclusion Council Core Team was well-versed in our high-reliability initiative for safety, quality and service errors and was encouraged to learn the Step Up. Speak Up. campaign promotes Code of Conduct behaviors. The use of educational scenarios effectively connects the unsafe and unethical behavior with real-life consequences and the importance of exhibiting courage is a theme. The resources support team members navigating inappropriate and sometimes uncomfortable situations and provide guidance for confidentially escalating their concerns. The campaign increased psychological safety among the team, empowered them to be safety champions and solidified that we are in this together.”
— Danita Powe, Manager, Ambulatory Care Management Central Patient Service Area
Returning Citizens Initiative
As part of our systemwide recruiting strategy, we proactively seek out new dimensions of diversity to recruit and create inclusive spaces for new team members from all walks of life. This is the impetus for our Returning Citizens Initiative, which offers job opportunities for people with criminal convictions on their record. Through the program we:

• Educate our leadership about how to best support returning citizens
• Develop strong community partnerships with organizations such as Center for Self-Sufficiency, Goodwill Workforce Connection, Milwaukee Jobs Work in Wisconsin, and Cara and Safer Foundation in Illinois to provide resources, support and job opportunities for program participants
• Help participants complete a Department of Human Services process that might allow them to work in health care if their prior conviction currently prevents it
• Reduce recidivism and boost household income for program participants

Hear from Karima Khalid who found hope and a fulfilling job because of our Returning Citizens Initiative.

MATC Milwaukee JobUp
JobUp Milwaukee provides under-represented groups access to professional-level jobs, a stable income while in school and advancement opportunities upon completion. Advocate Aurora partnered with the organization to allow students to work and learn while supporting the completion of their education through wraparound services and added support.

Facilities maintenance apprenticeship program
Marissa Hernandez says she always liked working with her hands and seized the opportunity to explore a new career path in facilities. With support from leadership and her team, Marissa demonstrates facilities is a viable career path for women.

“My two years at Advocate Aurora have been great. I have no complaints. Now I know for sure that it’s something I want to do and I want to stay with Advocate Aurora. I’ve never felt like my skills were doubted here. I’ve never felt excluded or that my abilities were questioned.”

— Marissa Hernandez, facilities maintenance apprentice at Aurora Medical Center – Kenosha

In 2021, Advocate Aurora hired 28 returning citizens
7 individuals completed JobUp
28 returning citizens
11 culinary apprentices
13
COVID-19 vaccine prioritization protocol

We leveraged technology and intelligence to increase health equity and narrow the gap between vaccinated Black, Hispanic and White patients. We introduced No Patient Left Behind, a program rooted in an ethical framework to optimize vaccine uptake by reaching out to secure appointments for patients in areas disproportionately affected by COVID-19. Leveraging the Area Deprivation Index to prioritize vaccine candidates and incorporating this data into our electronic health record system, we created patient lists and contacted select patients about their eligibility for vaccine access. During the pilot, these sites outperformed other primary clinics, with scheduling rates of Black and Hispanic patients nearly matching those of White patients.
Good communication is the key to good health

We continued our commitment to making sure consumers receive health information in their native language. Language service encounters are up 27% from 2020 and, for the first time in Advocate Aurora history, surpassed 1M encounters covering over 121 languages.

Addressing LGBTQ health disparities: LGBTQ-inclusive provider directory

To help LGBTQ individuals find the right provider, we created a provider opt-in program designed to vet providers and ensure safe, equitable care for our LGBTQ patients. Vetted providers are added to our public directory of LGBTQ-Inclusive Providers in Wisconsin and Illinois, so consumers can easily find the right resources for the care they need.

Despite some delays because of COVID-19, 17 providers are already part of the LGBTQ-Inclusive Provider Directory. We expect this number will grow exponentially over the next five years.

“We are able to tell providers what resources we have in the system that they may not be aware of. There is a lot of excitement surrounding the process. Through it, we have noticed an increase in synergy and connections that are developing.”

— Dr. Michael Otte, LGBTQ Clinical Director

LGBTQ Healthcare Equality Index

The LGBTQ Healthcare Equality Index (HEI) is a biannual national benchmarking tool evaluating health care facilities’ policies and practices that support the equity and inclusion of LGBTQ individuals. All 28 of our hospitals submitted the HEI survey this past summer for 2022, including Aurora Medical Center – Mount Pleasant, which opens in early 2022. The materials submitted for the survey present an estimated preliminary score of 100/100 points, meeting the initial criteria scoring. This year, leaders and team members across the 28 participating hospitals completed over 3,400 hours of LGBTQ learning. We also aimed to exceed the number of initiatives we met for each section in 2020, showing our continued commitment to advancing LGBTQ health and being a true leader in this space. Currently, the HEI has accredited all 27 of our open facilities.

Improving patient experience surveys

Our new surveys provided greater access for feedback resulting in:

• Increased number of respondents and highlighted gaps in outcomes between Black, Asian American patients and White patients.
• Narrowed gap between Black and Asian American response rates and White response rates, decreasing from 1:15 to 1:4, translating into a stronger voice and more accurate representation of the Black and Asian American patient experience.
• More Black and Asian American patient responses after replacing paper surveys with a new multimodal survey, increasing from 800 surveys in 12 months to 1,600 surveys in four months.

Our focus on PATIENTS

Success was achieved through

Completing a systemwide education program on Language Services regulatory requirements, educating over 70K team members, physicians and volunteers

Connecting our Language Services to communities by participating in community initiatives such as Brown County (WI) Hispanic Community vaccination clinics

Expanding access to Language Services by deploying 255 new iPads to bring our system inventory to over 1,700

Completing almost 1,000 translation projects covering over 40 languages
This year, the focus of our Living Well Community Conversations was COVID-19 vaccine education and participation. We held two virtual events in January and February to introduce the vaccine and address participants’ questions and concerns. Post-session surveys indicated 94% of survey participants felt the session was important, provided value and increased their confidence in the vaccine.

“I never heard doctors speak to an audience like they are speaking to family and friends. Great panel!” — Living Well Community Conversation participant

In March, we honored Women’s History Month by featuring an all-women panel providing COVID-19 vaccination safety information for women.

“This panel was super engaging and real. I truly felt like I was listening to girlfriends and sisters, and these were Advocate Aurora trusted physicians. After viewing this webinar, I got over my hesitancy and scheduled my first dose!”

— Living Well Community Conversation participant

The three sessions had over 450 participants with 11 Advocate Aurora leaders and physicians and community leaders featured as panelists.

Sound Remedies health literacy podcast

The Sound Remedies podcast, presented by Advocate Aurora, Radio Milwaukee and The Retreat, is a conversation about the lifestyle and health issues disproportionately impacting Black and Brown communities. The podcast is a new way to directly address the target audience, men of color, 24 to 45 years old. It focuses on dispelling myths, educating listeners about health resources and was created to increase health literacy in communities of color. The kitchen-table-style conversations explore physical, emotional and mental health topics that might otherwise be uncomfortable to discuss and feature sound advice from health care experts, stories from listeners and a journey into the healing benefits of music. The series received over 7,000 downloads.
Diversity partnership pilot program

Advocate Aurora Health Diversity Partnership Pilot Program...Building Tomorrow’s Healthcare successfully launched this year. As an anchor institution, Advocate Aurora is making a deeper community impact by partnering with our nine largest general contractors and industry leaders. Together, we’re providing opportunities for diverse contractors to gain knowledge about the complexities of health care construction and project experience along with certification and mentorship. Through referrals from nine organizations, the program enrolled nearly 30 vendors. These organizations grew by participating in 173 health care construction course enrollments and 120 individual and group mentor events, gaining general business practice insight and developing new relationships extending beyond Advocate Aurora. The program is designed to scale its impact as other institutions join us in transforming the face of construction to mirror the communities we all serve.

“Our team benefited from the program by not only working on projects with our partners but by also learning from the classes that were made available to educate our team members in areas of project management, health care construction, mechanical, electrical and plumbing coordination and leadership. Thanks to the program offering, I was able to earn my health care physical environment worker certification from American Society for Health Care Engineering. I hope the program is around for many years to come as I’m optimistic there will be many more diverse companies like mine that can grow their companies and team members by participating in it.”

— Manuel Reynoso, Advocate Aurora Health Diversity Partnership Pilot Program... Building Tomorrow’s Healthcare program participant

Community scholarship program

The Advocate Aurora Health Community Scholarship is for college students in health care-related fields, such as STEM, human resources, information technology and finance. Students historically underrepresented in STEM-related fields, such as women, racial and ethnic minorities, first-generation, low-income and educationally disadvantaged, are given preference. Selected individuals may receive scholarship awards of up to $5,000. We awarded $50,000 in scholarships to 10 community members from metropolitan Milwaukee and Chicagoland. Advocate Aurora partnered with the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Milwaukee and Phalanx Family Services of Chicago to select recipients and disburse these scholarships.

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Black board directors collaborate to eliminate health disparities

Founded in the spring, Black Directors Health Equity Agenda (BDHEA) is comprised of more than 100 directors and senior thought leaders from health and wellness institutions across the nation, including Advocate Aurora leadership. Members are solely focused on eliminating health disparities among the Black population where inequities are most persistent. This year, BDHEA hosted educational forums aimed at information sharing that featured national data for leaders. It also engaged more than 25 organizations to identify synergies and shared priorities.
Our focus on COMMUNITY

Public service announcements: #IGotMine
To increase team member, patient and community vaccine acceptance, our Community Relations team partnered with physicians and community and faith leaders to produce a series of public service announcements titled “#IGotMine.” These videos included candid, personal stories about reasons for getting vaccinated, vaccination experiences and other related topics. The #IGotMine campaign received over 50,000 views and based on viewer feedback, measurably increased vaccination confidence and immunizations after launch.

Grassroots outreach
In Washington County, Wisconsin, Advocate Aurora partnered with Casa Guadalupe Education Center to provide health and wellness sessions for Hispanic and Latino families and youth on the dangers of e-cigarettes and vaping, breast screenings, dental hygiene and more. Each of the eight sessions averaged 24 participants. We also presented Casa Guadalupe with a $1,500 grant to their scholarship fund for eligible Hispanic and Latino high school and undergraduate college students participating in their Dream to Succeed: College, Life and Career Readiness program. In addition, we awarded Casa Guadalupe with a grant to support COVID-19 vaccines in the Spanish-speaking community.
In Brown County, Wisconsin, Advocate Aurora strengthened relationships with Casa Alba Melanie through the Green Bay Hispanic Outreach team. Through this work, real-time enhancements were made to improve Advocate Aurora information used for the Spanish-speaking community, including enhanced flyers and call center staff training, two vaccine clinics and the creation of a community outreach role devoted to a diverse population.

Blood donations
Together with our partners at American Red Cross, Community Blood Center and Versiti, we organized 100 blood drives across Wisconsin and Illinois.

In-kind donations
Advocate Aurora donated more than $350,000 of in-kind assets, such as office supplies, medical equipment, personal protective equipment, office and other furniture and speakers bureau. We provided these assets and services throughout Illinois and Wisconsin to EMS and first responders, free clinics, Federally Qualified Health Centers, schools, universities, local businesses and nonprofits.

We collected nearly 4,000 units of blood potentially saving 11,784 lives.

Reflection on community impact
“Advocate Aurora has committed to advancing health equity in our workforce, for our patients and in our communities. Collaborations exist both across our organization and with community partners to lead and support our approach to building health equity, ensuring access and improving health outcomes in communities. Team members in DE&I, Community Health, Community Relations, Faith and Spiritual Care, Foundation, Population Health and many other areas lead and support evidence-informed services and innovative partnerships addressing medical needs and social determinants of our patients, team members and community.” — Mark Huber, System Vice President of Community Health
Our focus on COMMUNITY

Ronald McDonald Care Mobile program
Since 2008, Advocate Children’s has partnered with Ronald McDonald House Charities to deliver free primary health care via Ronald McDonald Care Mobile – fully-equipped medical clinics on wheels – to vulnerable, underserved school children on the north and south sides of Chicago. The teams also provided physician referrals, helped with Medicaid enrollment and housing assistance, screened for food insecurity – providing food and information about social services, food pantries and other resources – and distributed winter clothing and basic personal hygiene supplies.

- 2,400+ patient visits
- 4,665 immunizations
- 1,000+ physicals
- 62% Medicaid patients and 38% had no insurance

School-based health care program
The Maine Township School-based Health Center in Illinois is a partnership between Advocate Children’s Hospital and Maine Township District 207 to improve the physical and emotional health of the district’s diverse student population. Serving three high schools, our providers offer physical and mental health screening and medical treatment for students who often come from homes in which other languages are spoken and who might otherwise not have access to these services.

Primary Care Connection program
The Primary Care Connection program, located at four Advocate Aurora hospitals in Illinois, deploys Community Health Workers (CHW) to help patients in emergency departments (ED). CHWs educate patients about accessing the appropriate level of care and help provide follow-up appointments at a convenient care site. They also conduct community health assessments to identify barriers to health and connect patients to social and community resources that can improve patients’ overall well-being. This reduces unnecessary ED visits and helps to establish a primary care home for these patients. The program served 5,586 patients.

- 500+ mental health visits
- 75% increased utilization
- 2,600 medical visits
- 1,400+ patients
Our focus on COMMUNITY

Coverage-to-Care program
Coverage-to-Care, an intensive social work case-management and care-coordination program, assists patients with high ED utilization removing barriers to positive health outcomes and facilitating safe and effective care transitions. The program incorporates health care literacy, advocacy, and coordination and the introduction of medical homes. Hospitals currently participating in this program include Aurora Sinai Medical Center, Aurora St. Luke’s Medical Center and Aurora Medical Center – Kenosha. Coverage-to-Care has measured a total of 1,251 ED patients since 2015 that participated in six months of intensive care coordination services.

Food security
The COVID-19 pandemic continues to challenge food security across the U.S. During this difficult time, food pantries and food distribution sites have been essential in providing food to those suffering the economic strain of COVID-19. Advocate Aurora’s community health teams have activated food distribution plans to address food insecurity by collaborating with community service groups and faith partners. Across the Illinois market, there were nearly 20,000 consumers served and over 1.4 million pounds of food distributed. In Wisconsin, a new pilot program was initiated called the Kenosha Food Farmacy. A total of 4,100 food vouchers were distributed to Milwaukee residents and families.

Mobile health
Our mobile health team increases access to care for vulnerable populations by delivering services directly within communities of need and adapting services based on the changing needs of the community. We address both medical and social determinants of health in targeted communities to improve health outcomes in underserved groups.

Wisconsin: Our Community Health team secured funding in late 2021 from the Aurora Health Care Foundation Greatest Needs Fund to create a mobile team in Wisconsin with plans for a 2022 start up.

Illinois: The team provided outreach services to most vulnerable communities by working with community partners including faith and community-based organizations, federally qualified health entities and public health departments. The mobile unit also supported the Protect Chicago at Home program, providing in-home and mobile vaccinations to the Far South Community area in Chicago. The mobile health team provided over 2,600 in-home and mobile community vaccinations for COVID-19.

Federally Qualified Health Centers and Health Department vaccine partnerships
Advocate Aurora supported Federally Qualified Health Centers and local health departments with staff and resources to host community-based vaccine and COVID-19 testing clinics and mobile vaccine clinics and sponsored a neighbor-to-neighbor vaccine champion program. In Wisconsin, Aurora Medical Center – Oshkosh partnered with the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh and the Winnebago Health Department to support a mass vaccination clinic for the first six months of 2021. In Illinois, we partnered with the City of Chicago to support a mass vaccination clinic at Wrigley Field. Nearly 124,000 vaccinations were provided through these partnerships during a time when public and health care vaccination numbers had diminished.

On average, patients demonstrated a 42% decrease in ED visits and a 45% decrease in ED charges.
The DE&I team has over 75 years of combined service at Advocate Aurora and is leading the charge to drive meaningful change through the lens of DE&I.

To close out this year’s report, we asked the team to reflect on how the theme “From Pledge to Practice” connects to their work – the work they are most proud of, how their work impacts our team members, patients and communities, and how the pledges challenge us to find new ways to work with other teams and partners for increased impact.

**Joelle Espinosa, Civil Rights Director**

“The pledges are one more important step affirming our commitment to cultivating an inclusive and equitable culture. The work of the Civil Rights team is broad and impacts team members, patients and our communities. We’re so proud to be able to create inclusive policies and protocols, influence process changes when gaps are identified and facilitate key learnings for our fellow team members no matter where they are in their DE&I learning journey.”

**Mallory Krumrei, Health Equity Specialist**

“Coming from a public health background, I recognize health equity is much bigger than health care equity. I’m grateful my position allows me to bring this lens to the table, front and center. I take great pride in my work tracing the roots of health inequities and exploring how they’re exacerbated by the compounding and synergistic effects of intersectionalities and syndemics.”

**Maren Enriquez, Civil Rights Specialist**

“I’m most proud of the extension the Civil Rights teamwork has had on our team members, providers and leaders with awareness to Civil Rights laws. We continue promoting the understanding of all connections between Civil Rights law and our duties as caregivers, which directly relates to creating an equitable culture. Doing right in this field via our team members, providers, patients and their support persons is not only imperative per the law but also ensures that internally and externally we truly understand and support the needs of all.”

**Mallory Krumrei, Health Equity Specialist**

“I’m most proud of helping people from diverse communities live well through our education and outreach efforts. Whether it’s educating about the importance of COVID-19 vaccines or mental health – our work is making a difference! Virtual and hybrid engagement opportunities have had a significant impact on our consumers and the communities we serve. The pledges hold us not only accountable on how we serve but provide us the opportunity to be innovative and dig deeper for the care of our patients and communities.”

**Crystal Flenori, Community Diversity Engagement Director**

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**Ezra Otto, Intern Senior, Clinical Operations**

“Our work with the LGBTQ community seeks to close gaps in care and promote health equity, which is vital to the health and well-being of the communities we serve. Our work ensures ALL patients receive safe, accessible and equitable care. I’m proud to work with my fellow teammates to ensure our patients not only live well but thrive.”

**Emmanuel Chepkwoy, System Director, Cultural & Linguistic Services**

“I’m really proud of the development of my team members as they grow in purpose; they like what they see in the mirror. We help people live well by improving health and wellness outcomes of the limited English proficient, deaf, hard of hearing, literacy challenged and sensory impaired communities we serve. We bridge languages and cultures by connecting patients, family members and companions to information and services at the desired time, in the optimal place and utilizing appropriate modalities to provide an effective means of communication. This is the purpose of my team. The pledges challenge us to reflect on the pledge as we make decisions on our strategic plans.”

**Dru Bhattacharya, Vice President, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion**

“I’m most proud of executing our pledges to advance equity within our four walls and across our communities, being a thought leader and being a member of the best DE&I team across the nation! Pledges create an ethical imperative for us to do what is in the best interests of our patients and communities. They also offer an opportunity for us to lead where others have been reluctant because they have no financial incentive or legal obligation to do so. Our track record demonstrates how we’ve led in the field, and though we have much to do, I am immensely proud of our efforts, which are a testament to the character of our leaders and team members.”

**Erika Rodriguez, Administrative Assistant**

“As an Administrative Assistant, I provide support to team members of the DE&I and Language Services departments, I support service line translation and DE&I project needs. I enjoy sharing ideas, solutions and being part of the initiatives from start to finish.”

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**Emmanuel Chepkwoy, System Director, Cultural & Linguistic Services**

“I’m really proud of the development of my team members as they grow in purpose; they like what they see in the mirror. We help people live well by improving health and wellness outcomes of the limited English proficient, deaf, hard of hearing, literacy challenged and sensory impaired communities we serve. We bridge languages and cultures by connecting patients, family members and companions to information and services at the desired time, in the optimal place and utilizing appropriate modalities to provide an effective means of communication. This is the purpose of my team. The pledges challenge us to reflect on the pledge as we make decisions on our strategic plans.”

**Dru Bhattacharya, Vice President, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion**

“I’m most proud of executing our pledges to advance equity within our four walls and across our communities, being a thought leader and being a member of the best DE&I team across the nation! Pledges create an ethical imperative for us to do what is in the best interests of our patients and communities. They also offer an opportunity for us to lead where others have been reluctant because they have no financial incentive or legal obligation to do so. Our track record demonstrates how we’ve led in the field, and though we have much to do, I am immensely proud of our efforts, which are a testament to the character of our leaders and team members.”

**Erika Rodriguez, Administrative Assistant**

“As an Administrative Assistant, I provide support to team members of the DE&I and Language Services departments, I support service line translation and DE&I project needs. I enjoy sharing ideas, solutions and being part of the initiatives from start to finish.”
Jacquelin Coby-Beaver, Diversity, Inclusion & Equity, Clinical Operations Director

“All patients deserve to receive dignity, respect, and personalized care to live well. I am proud to partner with our team of clinicians to promote health equity by collaboratively working to identify and address health disparities and working across the enterprise to drive proactive approaches to health equity, patient experience and clinical inclusive strategies. Our work in DE&I underscores our commitment to ensuring all patients feel welcome and are treated with empathy, dignity and respect.”

Ashley Hines, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Director

“I’m grateful our leadership signed pledges with great intention. The shared commitments align with our organizational values, reflected in our DE&I strategy commitments and tactics. There are passionate and skilled team members across every Patient Service Area and several functional areas serving on our Inclusion Council. Our inclusion leaders advance our DE&I strategy and offer site-based insights. I’m honored to partner on embedding the principles of DE&I in all we do.”

Stacy Crouther, Supplier Diversity Manager

“Proud of our organization’s pledge to support diverse businesses. That commitment has allowed me to contribute to new and creative opportunities to elevate and support diverse businesses in the communities we serve. The community wants to live well and we are working diligently to make it easier for them to do it.”

Our Advocate Aurora team was forever changed this past year with the sudden passing of our dear friend and colleague, Daryl Hodnett, System Director for Supplier Diversity. Daryl was an inaugural member of our team and established our Supplier Diversity Program. He believed supplier diversity is an integral part of how you help grow, build and develop underserved communities by creating jobs and economic growth.

Under his leadership, Advocate Aurora established meaningful partnerships with organizations such as the Women’s Business Enterprise National Council, National Association of Minority Contractors, Urban Economic Development Association and the Healthcare Supplier Diversity Alliance. With his direction, Advocate Aurora participated in dozens of events geared towards diverse supplier recruitment and collaboration. Most notably, our spend with diverse suppliers increased by approximately 23% year over year.

Daryl had over 30 years as a supplier diversity leader and in 2020, he received the distinguished Milwaukee Business Journal Diversity in Business Award. The annual awards recognize those whose contributions toward growth, expansion and prosperity are making a difference in Milwaukee’s central city and others across the region.

It’s difficult to sum up the impact of such a remarkable person but simply put, there would be no Advocate Aurora Supplier Diversity without Daryl. He took us from concept to strategy and with his leadership, our vision is actualizing. Daryl worked passionately and tirelessly to advance economic inclusion and build strong partnerships between Advocate Aurora and the communities we serve. In all he did, Daryl brought a level of excellence, drive and integrity that was respected by many. He will be tremendously missed and his life will have never-ending impact.

See Daryl’s tribute.