

In this issue

- 1
Introducing
Destination Diversity!

- Corporate Diversity Charter

- 2
GNYHA'S Health Care
Leadership Institute

- Focus Groups and Surveys
Shed Light on Diversity

- 3
Corporate Diversity Council
Leads Initiative

- 4
Cultural Competency
Standards for All

- 6
Diversity Awareness
Sessions Raise Issues

- Glossary of Diversity Terms

A Message from the President and CEO of Continuum Health Partners



Introducing Destination Diversity!

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *Destination Diversity*. Through this newsletter, we will inform you of the various facets of Continuum's new and ongoing cultural diversity initiative, Destination Diversity, being led by Continuum's Human Resources Department.

The rationale that drives this initiative is simple. Never before have we faced as many challenges as we do today as a multicultural and multiethnic workforce. In addition, the communities we serve are growing increasingly diverse. Therefore, we must examine and change wherever necessary our organization's culture if we are to remain competitive in the health care marketplace, foster an environment where everyone feels valued, and deliver medical care to our patients that fully addresses their cultural and linguistic needs. We also want to be the "employer of choice" in New York City's health care industry, enhance our reputation for high-quality service, and better reflect the many different patients who come to our hospitals every day.

Without a doubt, this is a formidable endeavor, and it will require a long-term commitment from all of us. We should take enormous pride in the fact that Continuum is at the forefront among health care providers in New York City in taking a comprehensive approach to the diversity challenge.

We formally began Destination Diversity back in July 2005. Since then, we've conducted a number of focus groups and surveys across the many racial and ethnic components of our workforce, and held a two-day diversity conference this past July to fine-tune our Destination Diversity objectives. We've also established a dedicated Diversity Office, directed by **Tanya Straker**, and a Corporate Diversity Council to oversee this initiative.

In this first issue of *Destination Diversity*, we report on the Council's activities and the results of the focus groups and surveys, as well as how effectively the individual hospitals that Continuum comprises are meeting federal standards aimed at making health care services more culturally and linguistically accessible.

The Continuum family, some 15,500 strong, is like many other large companies today, and just like the communities we serve, is reflective of society at large. Through the Destination Diversity initiative, we look forward to becoming even more closely aligned with our patients and to providing our employees with a workplace in which they can reach their fullest potential.

Stanley Brezenoff
President and CEO, Continuum Health Partners

Continuum's Corporate Diversity Charter

The goal of Destination Diversity is to champion a diverse workforce and foster an inclusive culture that delivers quality care to a diverse patient population, and to create a multicultural environment that works for everyone and capitalizes on the diversity of our employees.



Partnerships

GNYHA's Health Care Leadership Institute

The Greater New York Hospital Association (GNYHA), in partnership with Baruch College, has established the GNYHA Health Care Leadership Institute to promote diversity among the leadership of health care institutions in New York City. Participants in the 10-month, executive development program attend classes taught by master teachers from the field of academia and by senior administrators and health care leaders from various city hospitals and institutions. Upon successful completion of the program, participants are positioned to assume new levels of responsibility within their sponsoring organization.

Continuum Health Partners is sponsoring five employees to take part in the program. They are:

- **David H. Ortiz**, Administrator, Ophthalmology, Phillips Ambulatory Care Center, Beth Israel
- **Anibal Negron**, Manager, Access Unit, Water Street, Beth Israel
- **Steve Armand**, Manager, Materials Management/Transportation, St. Luke's and Roosevelt Hospitals
- **Marian Scott**, Director, Community Health Education, St. Luke's and Roosevelt Hospitals
- **Tanya Straker**, Director, Diversity Office, Human Resources



What's New

Focus Groups and Surveys Shed Light on Diversity

A little over a year ago, Continuum retained The FutureWork Institute to help launch Destination Diversity. FutureWork is a company specializing in guiding organizations through their diversity initiatives.

Its first assignment was to organize a series of focus groups to identify areas of improvement relating to diversity. A total of 36 groups were held between December 2005 and March 2006 at numerous locations throughout Continuum and its member hospitals. Participants, who were randomly selected, included physicians, managers and administrators.

Once participants were selected, they were broken into affinity groups representing African Americans, Hispanics, Asian Americans, multicultural employees, white males and white females, and house staff. Four key questions were posed to all 147 focus group participants:

- What word or phrase best describes the climate of diversity within Continuum?
- What factors would help Continuum be an "employer of choice"?
- What factors hinder improvement in cultural diversity at Continuum?
- What actions should be taken to address your chief concerns?

"We already possess the proficiencies needed to create positive change."

Shortly after the focus groups were held, a similarly structured survey was administered to get input from more management staff. Invitations were randomly sent to employees at Beth Israel, St. Luke's, Roosevelt and LICH. Four-hundred managers completed an online questionnaire called the Organizational Culture Inventory (OCI). "The OCI is a cultural assessment that is widely used by companies and organizations throughout the world to illustrate what behaviors their members believe are expected of them and others in the workplace," notes **Tanya Straker**, Diversity Director.

In addition, non-management staff at

Continuum received a paper survey called the Culture for Diversity Inventory (CDI), which was mailed to their homes. The CDI is based on the OCI, but more directly evaluates the current culture of a company or organization with respect to how members of different groups interact with one another and approach their work. One-hundred and seventeen non-management staff turned in a completed survey.

Results of the focus groups and surveys demonstrated that while Continuum has a diverse workforce, it is not as culturally competent as it could be. Specific findings revealed that Continuum:

- has good, hardworking people, but managers sometimes treat them disrespectfully;
- has good supervisors, but they often feel overwhelmed and overworked;
- inspires a sense of mission, but its leaders need to set a better example;
- increases its employees' job skill sets, but needs to offer more opportunities for career development and advancement;
- has supportive employees, but not all of them feel valued.

Interestingly, the feelings among the survey takers were consistent across the board, regardless of race, gender and position within Continuum. "The results indicated that our employees love what they do," notes Straker. "At the same time, inconsistencies in our practices and systems have a negative impact. The good news is that in acknowledging these inconsistencies, we recognize that we already possess the proficiencies needed to create positive change."

Leadership Report

Corporate Diversity Council Leads Initiative

After receiving the focus group and survey results, Continuum held a two-day executive strategy session to discuss the findings and identify priorities. Among the many recommendations to come out of the meeting was the formation of a Corporate Diversity Council to oversee the full diversity program.

"Diversity is not just about hiring more minorities. It's also about better serving our patient communities," points out **Pamela Abner**, Assistant Vice President, Corporate Human Resources, and Council Cochair. "We're committed to the charter, goals and objectives of Destination Diversity. As Council members, we look to set the direction for this initiative, lead the charge throughout Continuum, and function as ambassadors."

The Council first met in October 2006. Since then, its members, who represent a culturally diverse group of clinical and administrative leadership "hand selected" from throughout Continuum, underwent an extensive three-day diversity training. "We learned skill sets to be public leaders, and became better educated in what it means to embrace diversity," says **Gail Donovan**, Continuum's Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer and Council Cochair.

Currently, the Council is focusing on five follow-up areas: succession planning, mentoring, training and education, recruitment and retention, and communication. It will set parameters for these areas, and establish sub-councils at Continuum's member hospitals and the West 57th Street office that will implement initiatives at each site.

"Not only do we want people to understand what we're rolling out, but we also want to encourage everyone to participate," Donovan adds. "We want this to be an inclusive process."

Corporate Diversity Council Members

- Pamela Abner**, Assistant Vice President, Human Resources*
- Samuel Acquah, MD**, Attending Physician, Pulmonary Medicine, Beth Israel
- John Byrne**, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Long Island College Hospital
- Selina Chan**, Administrative Director, Asian Services, Beth Israel
- John Collura**, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, Continuum
- Millicent Comrie, MD**, Director of Women's Health Initiatives, Long Island College Hospital
- Frank Cracolici**, Interim President and Chief Executive Officer, St. Luke's and Roosevelt
- Gail Donovan**, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Continuum*
- Wael Fakhry**, Corporate Vice President, Finance, Beth Israel
- Richard Freeman**, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Beth Israel
- Rhona Hetsrony**, Vice President, Administration, Beth Israel-Kings Highway Division
- Elpidio Jimenez, MD**, Chairman of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, Long Island College Hospital
- Jim Mandler**, Corporate Director, Public Affairs
- Donna Mendes, MD**, Division Chief of Surgery, St. Luke's, and Medical Board President, St. Luke's and Roosevelt



A trainer from The FutureWork Institute educates Council members about diversity.

- Bart Metzger**, Corporate Vice President, Human Resources
- Loida Ramos**, Assistant Vice President, Real Estate Services
- Malcolm Reid, MD**, Associate Medical Director and Chairman of Rehabilitation Medicine, St. Luke's and Roosevelt
- Susan Singer**, Director, Human Resources, New York Eye and Ear Infirmary
- Tanya Straker**, Director, Diversity Office, Human Resources
- Carmen Suardy**, Assistant Vice President, Labor and Employee Relations
- Debbie Visconi**, Senior Vice President, Administration, Beth Israel
- Rosa Williams**, Director of Nursing, St. Luke's and Roosevelt

* Council Cochairs

Calling All Employees! We Need Your Input!

Destination Diversity is looking for nominees to sit on the site councils at each of the following Continuum locations: Roosevelt, St. Luke's, LICH, Petrie, Kings Highway, NYEEI, West 57th Street.

Site Council members should:

- be respected within the organization
- demonstrate a strong commitment to Continuum
- communicate well
- be a role model who can manage and promote diversity.

Know anyone who fits the bill? If so, nominate that person by contacting **Tanya Straker** at (212) 523-2011 or tstraker@chnet.org.

Meeting Standards

Cultural Competency Standards for All

Sensitivity to diversity has become a nationwide concern, so much so that the United States Office of Minority Health has established 14 national standards to ensure “Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services” (CLAS) in health care. These standards consider the systems, policies, procedures and beliefs of institutions or organizations involved in providing health services to people of different cultures. They also call for CLAS “to be integrated throughout an institution or organization and undertaken in partnership with the communities being served.”

While some of the standards are mandated and others recommended, they all are organized according to one of three themes:

- culturally competent care
- language access services, and
- organizational supports for cultural competence

Throughout the Continuum network of hospitals, efforts are being made to meet these standards. Here are highlights of some of the CLAS activities that are occurring at Continuum.

The Cultural Competency Committee at Beth Israel: Meeting Standard 1

Health care organizations should ensure that patients/consumers receive from all staff members effective, understandable and respectful care that is provided in a manner compatible with their cultural health beliefs and practices and preferred language.

Formed in 2001, the Cultural Competency Committee at Beth Israel has devoted itself to enhancing physician awareness of how cultural differences impact on a patient's needs, understanding and expectations. It is hoped that this awareness will improve interpersonal and communication skills among physicians and house staff, as well as the delivery of care to the hospital's diverse patient population. This subcommittee was formed by the Graduate Medical Education

(GME) Committee and includes attending physicians, house staff, human resources personnel and other non-physician employees.

“Our primary objective is to analyze what we've done so far in terms of addressing cultural sensitivity in caregiving, and develop programs to enhance the cultural competence of our house staff,” says **Harris Nagler, MD**, Chairman of the Sol and Margaret Berger Department of Urology and the Chief of Graduate Medical Education/Academic Affairs. “We want to continue to maintain interest and achieve cultural competency.”

Today the Committee oversees numerous activities through the Office of Graduate Medical Education, which is directed by **Gale Cantor**. It facilitates journal clubs for house staff that encourage discussion of cultural issues in medicine. It also incorporates cultural competency training into house staff orientation. For the past three years, the Graduate Medical Education Committee has hosted an annual cultural competency fair in Podell Auditorium, where house staff report on their research in cultural issues. Many of the cultural competency initiatives are archived and available on the GME Web site.

“The unifying theme of all our initiatives is making people more aware of and sensitive to the importance of cultural competency,” notes Dr. Nagler.

The New York Eye and Ear Infirmary's Diversity Awareness: Meeting Standard 3

Health care organizations should ensure that staff at all levels and across all disciplines receive ongoing education and training in culturally and linguistically appropriate service delivery.

“Last summer was all about finding out what our diversity needs were,” recalls **Susan Singer**, Director of Human Resources at the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary. “We learned that we had to better represent our patient population, and have diversity not only in all departments, but also as part of our organization's foundation.”



“Diversity Diner” poster reinforces NYEEL's diversity message.

Toward this end, NYEEL has put the “Diversity Diner” at the top of its “menu” of diversity initiatives. This half-hour video, set in a diner, conveys two critical messages—that everyone needs to be respected and valued, and that we should focus on our similarities rather than our differences. It was broadcast to every department between October 2006 and January 2007. NYEEL simultaneously displayed posters with the same look and theme as the video to reinforce its messages.

While Singer says it's too early to tell what the long-term impact of “Diversity Diner” will be, initial feedback from employees has been positive. The video has been incorporated into new employee orientations, and will be required as part of the annual in-service training. The hospital also has begun efforts to recruit more diverse staff, and has hired a language-assistance specialist to meet patients' communication needs.

(continued on next page)

Meeting Standards

Cultural Competency Standards for All *(continued from previous page)*

Language Services at St. Luke's and Roosevelt: Meeting Standard 6

Health care organizations must assure the competence of language assistance provided to limited-English proficient patients/consumers by interpreters and bilingual staff. Family and friends should not be used to provide interpretation services (except on request by the patient/consumer).

At St. Luke's and Roosevelt Hospitals, in 2005 alone, the Language Services Program conducted more than 2,600 language interpretations, including 240 in American Sign Language. Program Director **Roxana Lash**, her three staff interpreters and some 50 trained volunteers are kept busy. They interpret medical and other information from and into Spanish, French, Italian, Russian, Cantonese, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese and Punjabi, among others. The entire SLR staff has access to the Language Line, a national service with which SLR has a contract that provides interpretation in over 150 languages.

The Language Services Program is modeled according to standards and ethics set forth by the National Council of Interpreters of Health Care. Staff and volunteer interpreters undergo 16 hours of rigorous training that includes shadowing experienced interpreters, learning medical vocabulary and developing cultural awareness.

Upon either inpatient or ambulatory admission and registration, patients' language preferences are entered into a special computer system that generates reports on their daily language needs. "This system helps us to be in compliance and to best serve our patients," says Lash. "It enables us to be cost-efficient and save time as well."

Interpretations are available in person or over the telephone. Lash, herself, is now working closely with NYEEL and Beth Israel to train their clerical staffs.



Healthy Families' Program Director Necole Brown (standing, third from left) and Executive Director Reverend Dr. Paul Smith (standing, sixth from right) pose with program officials, trainees and interns.

LICH's Healthy Families Program: Meeting Standard 12

Health care organizations should develop participatory, collaborative partnerships with communities and utilize a variety of formal and informal mechanisms to facilitate community and patient/consumer involvement in designing and implementing CLAS-related activities.

Long Island College Hospital, in partnership with the Arthur Ashe Institute for Urban Health, seeks to raise health awareness and overcome barriers to care in two Brooklyn communities—and it is doing so with the help of residents from those neighborhoods. For its new Healthy Families program, the hospital has reached out to the New York City Housing Authority's Gowanus and Wyckoff housing developments in Boerum Hill, and is now training resident volunteers to become community health navigators.

The idea behind the program is to empower people indigenous to neighborhoods in Brooklyn to be healthy family advocates and guide their fellow residents, who often use the ER for primary care, in accessing appropriate services. Their job also will involve identifying barriers to care, such as lack of insurance and childcare to keep appointments.

"What we're doing is improving the community's health by working with the community," says **Necole Brown**, Healthy Families Program Director. "We're recruiting, training and supporting a sustainable volunteer group to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate health education."

To find their trainees, Brown and the

Healthy Families staff first met with the Tenants' Associations (TA) for each of the housing developments, then attended TA meetings, and finally distributed to every apartment flyers seeking volunteers. They received an overwhelming response, and the 12 who were selected underwent an intensive interview process. The training, which began this past January and takes place at Gowanus, covers communication and counseling, health access and outreach, as well as CPR and first aid. On-site lectures and screenings will follow, and the navigators will be asked to report their progress to LICH on a regular basis.

"Hospitals must have a relationship with their communities, and do what they say they're going to do if they are to engender trust," stresses **Reverend Dr. Paul Smith**, Healthy Families Executive Director, LICH Board member and founding Board member of the Arthur Ashe Institute. "This program is a model of shared leadership, and I think we bring a lot of energy and spirit to it."

LICH will administer in-service Healthy Families training to staff this spring, and hopes to take the program soon to other housing developments and communities of faith, like churches, mosques and synagogues.

Hands-On Exercises

Diversity Awareness Sessions Raise Issues



Staff at Beth Israel-Petrie, Beth Israel-Kings Highway, Beth Israel-PACC, Roosevelt and St. Luke's engaged in a bit of structured improvisation this past fall during several Diversity Awareness Sessions, offered in partnership with SEIU 1199. The goal was to bring to light appropriate and inappropriate behaviors in the workplace. Along with professional actors and diversity trainers, 621 employees participated in hospital-based, diversity-related scenarios that stemmed from focus group results. Various issues were explored during the hands-on exercise.

hands-on exercises

Glossary

Common Diversity Terms

- **Affirmative Action:** A legal mandate that attempts to correct the social injustice of denying certain populations opportunities for jobs and promotions.
- **Cultural Competence:** A set of behaviors, attitudes and policies that enables a system, agency or professionals to work effectively in multicultural situations.
- **Equal Employment Opportunity:** A legal protection built into the system that protects all employees from discrimination and harassment.
- **Managing Diversity:** The art of balancing the needs, aspirations, contributions and unique qualities of the organization with those of each individual in the organization.
- **Workplace Diversity:** People with different characteristics brought about by life experience, race, age, culture, gender, religion, physical abilities, work experience, sexual orientation or other unique qualities.



Continuum Health Partners
 555 West 57th Street
 New York, NY 10019



PRESORT
 STANDARD
 U.S. POSTAGE
 PAID
 PERMIT NO. 8048
 NEW YORK, NY