



2023 CAROLYN BOONE LEWIS EQUITY OF CARE AWARD WINNER (Emerging)

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital | New Brunswick, N.J.

Overview

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) was awarded the American Hospital Association's Equity of Care Award in the Emerging category. Hospitals and health systems in the Emerging category are recognized for leveraging AHA's Health Equity Roadmap to dismantle structural barriers in the communities they serve. RWJUH's commitment to health equity is demonstrated by their Health Equity Department, which focuses on strengthening the delivery of equitable, person-centered and culturally sensitive care to the communities they serve.

In 2022, RWJUH's Health Equity Department established a model consisting of workforce equity, health equity and community impact. The model aims to improve access to care for the diverse communities they serve with a comprehensive approach that consists of several initiatives which include care optimization through population-specific navigation services while impacting the social drivers of health specific to their patient population. Further, RWJUH created an equity/population health steering committee to improve their collection of race, ethnicity and language, and sexual orientation and gender identity data. The hospital conducts data analyses by assessing different key measures such as

quality, patient experience and readmission rates. As part of its workforce equity efforts, RWJUH engages its employees through a number of affinity groups known as business resource groups dedicated to promote career advancement and enhance cultural sensitivity in the work environment. These efforts improve employee satisfaction and retention rates, enrich the patient's experience and better serve the communities they serve.



RWJUH's medical students and physicians at its Community Health Fair and Football Watch Party, where they provided blood pressure and blood glucose screening for the community. The fair consisted of many community organizations and health related program information including prostate cancer and HIV testing.

rights of employees and medical staff from discriminatory requests, but exceptions are made based on gender to protect a patient's religious or cultural beliefs. Additionally, employees may request to opt out of a patient's care delivery team when faced with imminent danger such as racist or discriminatory language.

To demonstrate their commitment to providing equitable care, RWJUH rolled out two initiatives to ensure its patient population receives proper care.

Impact

To create a safe and inclusive environment, RWJUH implemented various policies with the goal of creating a culture of inclusivity and sensitivity. As an example, the hospital implemented a policy surrounding the refusal of care by a patient on the basis of race, age, gender, gender identity, disability and more.

The policy protects the

1. The Access Care Initiative focuses on increasing access to care to underserved populations while coordinating and facilitating follow-up appointments after discharge through collaborative efforts with local federally qualified health centers. This initiative connects patients with a primary care provider to address their medical needs and keep patients healthy in the community.

2. The Care Optimization Initiative consists of community-specific medical programs, with intentional outreach to the diverse residents living in their service areas. These programs strive to enhance care delivery and outcomes by assisting patients with making medical appointments, filling out forms, arranging transportation and addressing the social determinants of health within the community. The programs also emphasize the value of including language support services, adopting a mindset of cultural humility to treat others how they wish to be treated.

RWJUH's community health initiatives also include community health improvement plans, community health needs assessments as well as forming new community partnerships. Programs include community support groups, community health education special events, health and wellness programs and chronic disease awareness

programs. Additionally, there is a strong emphasis on diversity recruitment among physicians and health care professionals. Patients have shared their experiences at RWJUH, highlighting the sense of safety and comfort that nurses and physicians fostered into their daily work.

Future Goals

RWJUH is committed to improving health equity within their hospital and community. They are working towards reducing and eliminating health disparities among their diverse patients and communities and ensuring equitable access to care for all of their patients and employees. Additionally, they strive to deliver culturally sensitive care and services and are working towards increasing and leveraging a broader range

of competencies. In alignment with its system mission to make its communities healthier, RWJUH will continue to refine its approach by focusing on care access, community engagement, wellness and prevention through its comprehensive equity measures.

For more information and to follow Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital's equity efforts, visit their [website](#). Learn more about the AHA Equity of Care Awards [here](#).



Key community stakeholders gather at RWJUH's Health Equity Symposium to discuss health disparities, how to build healthier communities and key strategies that will result in equitable outcomes.