

# Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging at Mayo

[VIDEO TRANSCRIPT – September 14, 2023]

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*Anne Dabrow Woods:* You know, we look at things like diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging and there's so important to, serving our communities. And we've seen all this renewed interest in that. And what we also see is that some health care organizations are really struggling with that within the confines of their four walls.

So I know Mayo's done a lot of work around diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging. How are you pushing those ideas and those thoughts throughout all your organizations, to your 76,000 employees? How are you doing that and how do you make it happen and stick?

*JoEllen Frain:* I wish we would have more, but I think with every organization, we're working towards it. A couple key things that we've had in place for several years that I think we're now seeing it kind of get to the point where we're seeing the generated kind of intent that's coming with them. Right? One is our employee resource groups and I think a lot of organizations have these, they're referred to as affinity groups or other things.

But we've been very, very intentional in terms of our support as well as leadership engagement and sponsorship of these employee resources, resource groups. So groups of employees can come together in-person, virtually around a shared kind of affinity. I think that becomes critical because they become avenues in which we understand concerns and be able to have a more robust conversation about things that we're contemplating as an organization by involving their voices early and often.

And so that has become a really important thing for us as we are challenged with a number of different things on the health equity front within our community practices, within our workforce challenges, it's really important that we listen, we understand, and we leverage their voices to help us solve those tough problems. So I would say that's one of the number one things that we've done and seen great success.

But I would underscore that it can't be for the benefit of the organization. The organization needs to have a purposeful and meaningful leadership support to further the belonging of those groups. And so while we naturally receive benefit from having that, we see an increase in belonging. We see an increase in how we show up as an organization by having these engaged resource groups.

I think the second thing that we've looked at is really a passionate, purposeful kind of work towards the health equity space and in health care, we're all facing health equity issues. But I think that allows us to really reflect upon some of the barriers that become as you start to address health equity. Oftentimes it's that my health care provider doesn't look like the community that I live in.

And so that has helped us to really understand, to be purposeful about. We need to drive diversity within our workforce, which will at its end help us reduce health inequities and understand that we become the place that we aspire to be, which is hope and healing for all of mankind. And if we don't have a workforce that reflects that, we won't be able to achieve that outcome.

And so it's with that kind of purpose and alignment to our own kind of values that allows us to go further, faster. What that looks like is going to be put in action. So last year we brought in a number of interns from our local community that had several challenges with introducing themselves into the Mayo Clinic environment and what we learned from this group of individuals who were very, very transparent with us in terms of the things that we could do better.

And hearing from the youth, which is "I never understood how health care worked, I was brought up to be fearful of going to the doctor, and everyone that I encounter within your walls doesn't look like me." And so how are we as an organization understanding what they're bringing forward and understanding how do we need to modify, how we engage with our community members to inspire people to go into health care?

How is it that we have a workforce that reflects the communities that we care for? And so through those interns, we have learned so much and have now transitioned them into Mayo Clinic employees. So it's a great success. But it comes with hard work, it comes with a purpose, and it's not just a box to check or another kind of task to add. It is for a purpose, and we all understand what that purpose is.

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