



“Diversity As Part Of The Business Case.”

A Case Study of Sparrow Hospital in Lansing, MI.

Sparrow Hospital

- ❖ Lansing, MI
- ❖ # of beds: - 733 licensed beds
- ❖ # of annual admissions: - 33,906
- ❖ # of annual emergency visits: - 139,812
- ❖ # of annual surgical procedures – 22429
- ❖ For-Profit:
- ❖ Part of the Sparrow Health System

As mid-Michigan's premier health care organization and the region's largest private employer, Sparrow Health System has two Lansing campuses, affiliate hospitals in St. Johns, Carson City and Ionia, dozens of satellite care centers, two health maintenance organizations (Physicians Health Plan of Mid-Michigan and the Sparrow Physicians Health Plan), and the Sparrow Health Science Pavilion and the popular Michigan Athletic Club.

Website address: www.sparrow.org

Problem:

Sparrow wanted to ensure all efforts were being made to create an environment that correlated and aligned with the communities that Sparrow serves. From the Board of Directors to the executive leadership team, diversity management would become the impetus that creates the right focus to achieve these results.

Background:

Sparrow Hospital, the flagship of the Sparrow Health System, was established in 1896, and is the regional center for cancer, trauma, pediatrics, orthopedics, neonatal intensive care and neurological care. The Sparrow Hospital emergency room is the only Level 1 Trauma Center in mid-Michigan. Sparrow's St. Lawrence campus serves as the regional center for dialysis, behavioral health, hospice and long-term acute care. In January 2008, Sparrow Health System opened a new, 10-story Sparrow Tower at its main Lansing campus. The \$160 million, 450,000 square-foot Sparrow Tower is the largest single expenditure that has ever been made in this region to expand and improve health care services, and demonstrates Sparrow Health System's commitment to the residents of mid-Michigan and its vision for bringing the latest technological advances to enhance the patient care experience.

Solution:

The VP of Human Resources positioned diversity as a business priority. To prove leadership in this area, Sparrow embarked on a national search to bring a subject-matter expert, with a proven track record on creating, establishing, and implementing diversity management, into the organization. In 2008, the Diversity Director helped to align diversity goals to organizational goals. The new director created a higher level of education to leaders regarding the management



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of diversity linked to others leaders being able to align and integrate diversity goals to division department, functional, and individual goals. Key activities included:

- “First Diversity Process Assessment” system-wide, which served as the impetus for the current diversity strategy;
- Revised the annual diversity plan into a three-year diversity strategy, which offered long-term solutions vs. quick fixes;
- Communicated goals and objectives consistently across internal stakeholders, including board members, leaders, and all Associates, and revised diversity training programs;
- Incorporated the concept of “inclusion” into all management conversation and processes;
- Repositioned diversity management from a diversity department key initiative to a strategic business priority;
- Created consistency to the diversity reporting tool

Results:

Sparrow began to create the right types of internal dialogues and assessments, with alignment across the organization, which allowed for a higher level of management decision making. All units are now on the same page and have consistently reported the same information for over a year in the same manner, which creates comparable data leading to meaningful conversations. Sparrow has a diversity strategy with plans for 2009-2012 that have been implemented, with real data and numbers to report. Diversity / Inclusion (D/I) data is now integrated into all leadership development forums. Sparrow updated their EEO Policy to include language that speaks to being an “open door” organization, and one that values diversity and inclusion, with regular updates to leadership and staff. Communication of D/I is now part of Sparrow’s internal communication process, including articles in the Sparrow News, and an updated Diversity/Inclusion Internet and Intranet sites.

Additionally, Sparrow participated in three external benchmark assessments, evaluated and monitored the use and appropriateness of the language services, and Diversity/Inclusion is now part of an internal marketing task force that evaluates and established guidelines for community sponsorships. “Inclusion Education” is a key element in the New Associate Orientation, and integrated into internal development programs.

A system-wide Diversity/ Inclusion program is led by the “Diversity and Inclusion Council”, which evaluates and makes recommendations regarding education and classroom coaching, and provides activities and events to support a more culturally competent workplace. Internal processes related to retention and transfer processes now includes updated exit interview processes, support for employee relations by providing consultation to legal, labor Associates relations teams, and the “Service Excellence Department”, which works closely with patients and patient advocates. Sparrow has also incorporated its first mentoring program. Each of these processes creates opportunities to learn about the employee experience and address trends or patterns of behavior. The company has also implemented a 30/90-day review process, where managers are expected to touch base with new employees within the first thirty days, and again at



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90 days, to ensure that expectations and accountability are part of an on-going dialogue between managers and employees. All leaders have, as part of their review metrics, “Representation” goals. Material acquisition staff now attends career fairs to create sourcing options related to finding quality candidates of color. Sparrow currently monitors its current workforce against available reports provided by census data, where comparison is aided by the consistent information provided across the system. The organization currently is at 13.65% minority representation, and the regional 8-county availability is 11.4%. Diversity is seen as an opportunity for Sparrow, not an issue.

Conclusion:

By aligning Diversity/Inclusion goals into its’ established organizational process from the top down, Sparrow Hospital has successfully internalized a system by which it will maintain a culturally competent internal environment, which accurately reflects the community that it serves.