

February 28, 2023



Hi Team –

It's hard to believe, but tomorrow is already March 1 – and with the Cincinnati forecast calling for 73 degrees, it's another encouraging sign that the promise of Spring and new beginnings are right around the corner! And the same can be said here at TriHealth, as we usher in a Spring season filled with exciting new steps forward on our Journey to Get Healthcare Right for those WE serve and those WHO serve! Here are this week's latest highlights...

### Getting Healthcare Right

#### **Bold Plan Launches to Address Acute Care RN Staffing Challenges**

At its core, Getting Healthcare Right is all about delivering the **right care** in the **right place** to produce the **right clinical outcomes** for the **right cost** – and a key driver for doing just that is **getting staffing right**. Since the onset of COVID, hospitals and healthcare providers across the nation, including those in Greater Cincinnati, have been severely impacted by an exodus of healthcare professionals and other staff choosing to leave the healthcare workforce. This is especially evident across our industry in hospital acute care “24/7” nursing settings where, over the past three years, nurses have left the bedside in record numbers to retire or transfer to ambulatory or outpatient environments. And this has resulted in an historic acute care nursing shortage that has required healthcare systems, including TriHealth, to turn to costly staffing agencies to meet acute care nursing needs, and at the same time, to ask our existing employed acute care RNs to “step up” to fill the void where they can. So, even though TriHealth has lower vacancy and turnover rates than other local and national health systems, it is no surprise that “staffing” remains a challenge for TriHealth and was identified by team members in our November Engagement Survey as the #1 improvement priority.



Recognizing the urgency of this challenge, TriHealth has planned for, and is now launching, a bold plan to:

- **Reduce by 75% our reliance on staffing agency RNs by September 1, 2023.**
- **Redouble our efforts to both recruit new employed acute care RNs and retain and grow our current acute care “24/7” nursing team.**

To do so, we are proactively taking the following bold steps based on team member feedback and industry-best practices:

1. **Competitive Acute Care RN Compensation** – New financial incentives will reward nurses dedicated to acute care “24/7” nursing, as well as those whose experience and loyalty as TriHealth acute care nurses have grown over the years.
2. **Pay Grade Adjustment for Procedural/Perioperative Nurses** – Pay grade differentiation will now reflect the unique responsibilities of nurses working in hospital-based procedural and perioperative areas with on-call expectations.
3. **Care Model Redesign** – This will help alleviate the administrative burden on nurses’ day-to-day responsibilities in inpatient areas and Emergency Departments, giving them more time to focus on patients and care at the bedside.
4. **Internal Agency Team** – We will be creating a unique staffing model that offers special compensation and scheduling flexibility for those RNs willing to go wherever our needs arise within the TriHealth system – similar to outside agency nurses!

5. **Flex RN Scheduling** – “Gig work” (shift-to-shift assignments) and nine-month schedule opportunities are being developed for PRNs/RNs who need and/or want significant flexibility in their life.

These creative solutions have been developed with significant input from our own nurses and nursing leadership. So, we are confident that this multi-faceted approach to strengthening acute care “24/7” staffing will result in improved retention, greater staffing flexibility, reduced vacancies, and a more attractive and rewarding work and practice environment. And these are among the most important things we can do to help ensure we have highly engaged nurses within these settings who feel valued and embrace the TriHealth Way, SERVE values, and our Always Behaviors – all of which continue to set TriHealth apart as THE sought-after health system in our region.

Impacted team members will learn more this week about the specific details of these changes and what they mean to them. We’ll also share regular updates with all team members through Weekly Updates and Town Halls about our progress with this bold plan as we successfully manage through, just the latest, in a long string of pandemic-caused challenges.

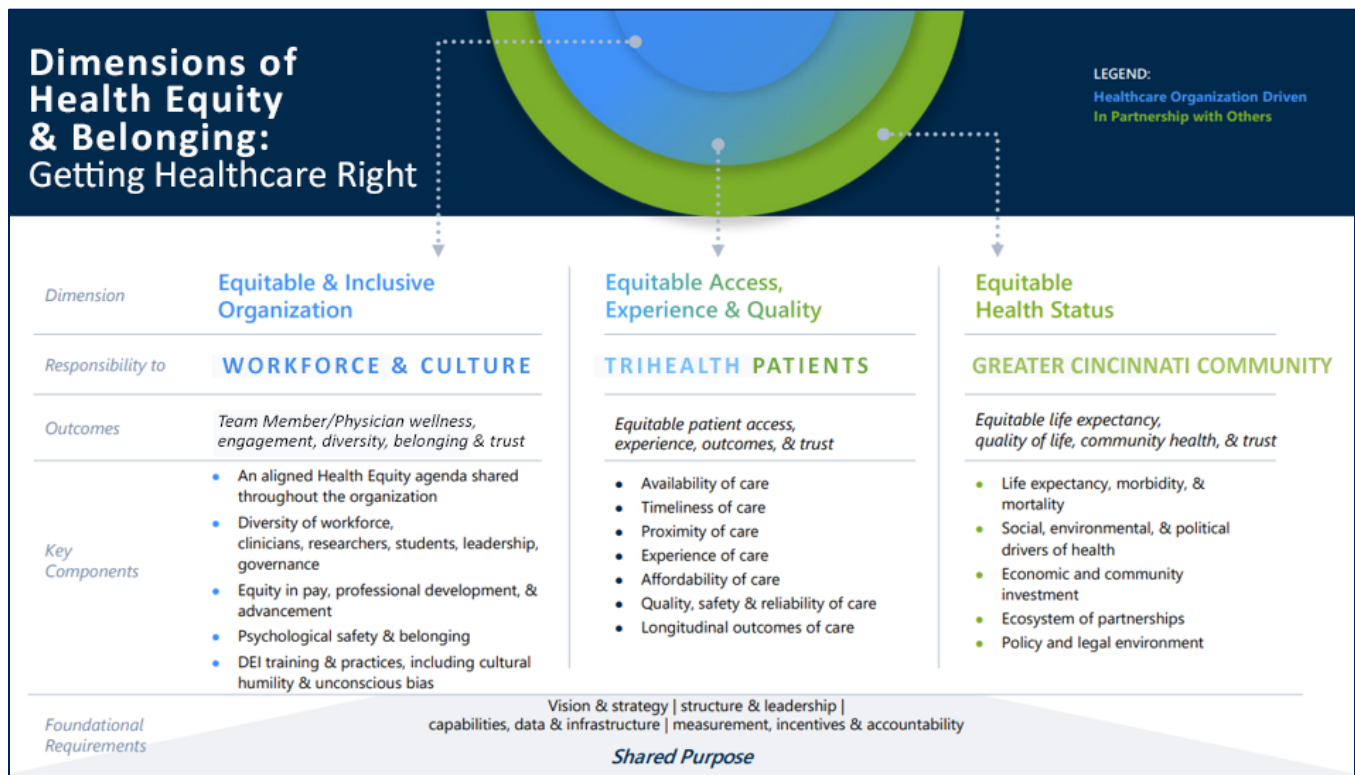
### ***Advancing Health Equity & Belonging: Our Path Forward***

While Black History Month officially ends today, our work to foster greater Diversity, Equity (*including and especially Health Equity*), Inclusion and Belonging (DEI+B) not only continues but is accelerating here at TriHealth and within the communities we serve! Eliminating health disparities and achieving health equity are central to Getting Healthcare Right because it is the only way we can truly ensure that **everyone** we serve has equal access to the right care in the right place at the right time to achieve the right health outcomes. And doing so is critical for achieving our ultimate goal of **always** delivering on the Triple Aim of **better care, better health, and better value** for **ALL** of our growing regional patient population!

Through the leadership of our DEI+B team, we have made important strides in recent years to better understand and address health disparities. For example, in 2020, we launched our REAL (**R**ace, **E**thnicity **A**nd **L**anguage) initiative, which was a formal system-wide effort to capture this important demographic information from all of our patients during registration. The REAL data has provided insights that will guide our efforts to improve health equity for our existing patient population of more than 500,000 patients... *and our work is just getting started!* Health disparities exist throughout our community and here at TriHealth. These disparities must be addressed head-on *and from every angle* to truly Get Healthcare Right for **ALL** those we serve. So, with the invaluable support of our sponsor, bi3, we are taking our health equity work to the next level by building on our REAL initiative with new insights, and here’s how...

Over the past six months, our DEI+B team and system senior leadership have evaluated national health equity best practices and consulted with industry experts and thought leaders to determine how best to organize and resource our work to address, and ultimately eliminate, health disparities – both within TriHealth and throughout the larger community we serve. And last year, we appointed **Tira Williams**, RN to the newly created system role of Director of Health Disparities to address disparities within our population health infrastructure. Building on these foundational efforts, I am pleased to announce that two weeks ago, in partnership with [bi3](#) and the [Just Health Collective](#) (a national thought leader on health equity), we began work to establish a formal **Health Equity Roadmap or “playbook.”** The framework for our work ahead is summarized below and will include shared purpose, measurable objectives, vision, priorities, resources, and performance improvement priorities and plans:





Look for regular progress reports on our “playbook” and our Health Equity & Belonging work in my future Weekly Updates and during our monthly Team Member Town Halls.

### TriHealth Welcomes Michelle Happer, New Director of DEI+B



Speaking of accelerating our DEI+B work, I’m pleased to announce that **Michelle Happer** has joined TriHealth as our new Director of Diversity, Equity Inclusion + Belonging. Michelle has more than 13 years of healthcare, education, and community relations experience with mission-driven healthcare organizations in Florida and Virginia. Most recently, she served as Director of Diversity for Lee Health in southwest Florida, where she was responsible for leading diversity, patient care civil rights, and language services. Michelle will work alongside Tashawna Otabil, TriHealth Chief Diversity Officer, in leading our DEI+B team to further strengthen TriHealth’s culture of inclusion and belonging in support of our work to Get Healthcare Right for ALL those we serve.

### TriHealth Named Among “America’s Greatest Workplaces for Women” by Newsweek Magazine

Building a great culture while investing in the growth, development, and career advancement of our team members is among our system’s most important priorities. So, we were thrilled to learn last week that TriHealth was recognized by Newsweek in its 2023 ranking of [America’s Greatest Workplaces for Women](#).

The ranking was determined based on Newsweek’s objective research, as well as the results of a survey of more than 37,000 U.S. female employees who evaluated their employers based on criteria ranging from compensation and benefits to work-life balance to proactive management of a diverse workforce, and much more. Nearly 250,000 healthcare and non-healthcare companies were reviewed and TriHealth was recognized as among the top 600 workplaces for women!! Not bad, as that puts TriHealth in the **top 1% of all U.S. companies evaluated!!!** This is yet another affirming external proof point that TriHealth’s investments in our greatest asset – *our people* – are paying off!

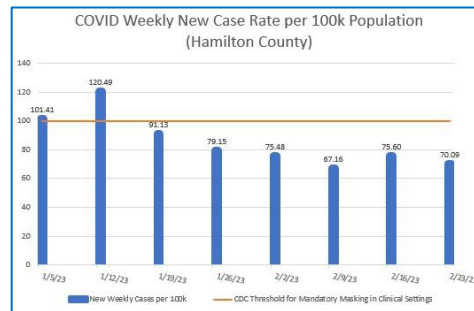


### February Team Member Town Hall Recording Available on Bridge

If you missed last week's February Team Member Town Hall, you can view the full recording [here](#) on Bridge. And don't forget, we're always interested in your input to help shape future Town Hall agendas. So, if you have thoughts about hot topics or timely news you want covered, or you have questions you want answered, please email them to [TownHall@trihealth.com](mailto:TownHall@trihealth.com) and we'll be sure to put them on the agenda!

## COVID Update

Once again, new COVID case rates across the county and here at TriHealth have remained low and stable for another week (see sidebar graphics for details). With the encouraging steady decline of COVID transmission in our region and across the nation, it is clear that as forecasted, we are now in the endemic state of the virus, similar to the flu. As a result, the federal government announced plans to **officially end the COVID public health state of emergency on May 11**. This means the provisions previously put in place to help us care for patients during the pandemic, such as the three-day waiver for skilled nursing facilities, pre-authorization policies, and other internal COVID-related policies and practices will be lifted later this Spring. In the coming weeks, our leaders and physician leaders will use CDC guidance to establish revised policies around masking, patient visits, and more based on this change. Additionally, I will likely pivot from weekly to "as needed" COVID updates – *and hopefully, they won't be needed!!!* Pertinent COVID news and information will continue to be available on Bridge.



### COVID-19 Weekly Update

- 15 COVID-positive patients in TriHealth hospitals with 0 on a ventilator in ICU.
- 8.6% COVID positivity rate in the region, with 11.3% positivity rate for symptomatic patients tested at TriHealth over past two weeks. Target positivity rate is under 5%!
- Hamilton County Weekly Case Rate: 70.09 per 100,000 population
- Community Levels: ALL counties at "Low"

Thank you for all you do *each and every day* to help us lead the way in Getting Healthcare Right! Our collective efforts as ONE Team, TriHealth STRONG are making a very real and positive difference in our culture and the health and wellbeing of the growing community we serve!