

WELCOMING PROVIDER CHECKLIST

THE ALBERT
SCHWEITZER
FELLOWSHIP

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OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

This checklist is created as a guide for individuals working in a healthcare setting to evaluate ways their institution can become more welcoming. This checklist was created as part of a collaborative and interprofessional learning project through the Chicago Chapter of the Albert Schweitzer Fellowship.

Instead of focusing on one specific area of diversity, such as becoming “immigrant-welcoming” or “LGBTQ-welcoming,” we strived to create a document that encompasses all aspects of the diversity of our patients, utilizing an intersectional lens. Therefore, this document is divided, to our best efforts, into 5 overarching categories: **(1) Considerations for Physical Space, (2) Training & Capacity Building, (3) Institutional Documents, Policies, & Procedures, (4) Resources & Referrals, and (5) Accountability.** Under these headings, you will find numerous checkpoints that encompass various aspects of diversity and inclusion—not only for patients and visitors, but also for staff and providers. The checklist ends with a resource section, which includes guides, toolkits, reports, and good examples of healthcare system initiatives.

Our hope is for this to be a living and breathing document, and that all healthcare institutions and providers commit to the lifelong journey of cultural humility and empowerment.

For additions or proposed edits to this document, you may contact Padraic Stanley, LCSW at Padraic_St Stanley@rush.edu. For more information on the Chicago Area Schweitzer Fellowship Program, visit <http://www.hmprg.org/programs/chicago-area-schweitzer-fellows-program/>

CONSIDERATIONS FOR PHYSICAL SPACE

- Does your institution have specific policies/processes to provide “welcoming environments”?
 - Signage displaying diverse populations/individuals
 - Patient Bill of Rights
 - Staff wearing “You are safe here” buttons or something similar
 - Diverse and multilingual staff and personnel – especially at front desk
 - Know Your Rights Poster
 - Gender-neutral restrooms
 - Non-discrimination policy posted publicly
 - An “All Are Welcome” sign or other welcoming display
- Does your institution have accessible infrastructure for people with disabilities?
- Does your institution also have ADA accommodations?
 - i.e. Ramps, Elevators, Wide doorways, Push door-opening buttons, Wide exam rooms
- Does your institution have appropriate medical equipment for people with disabilities?
 - i.e. height-adjustable exam tables, wheelchair accessible weight scales
- Does your institution have signs stating availability of interpretation services available, listed in numerous languages?
- Do providers and staff use names and introductions when speaking to one another and to patients?
- Does staff prioritize use of neutral spaces for gathering, staying away from religious affiliations and political places?
- Does your institution have specific policies/processes to provide “secure environments”?
 - Sign-in immediately at the main entrance of the facility waiting area, front desk, and exam rooms should have signs explicitly stating that the specific areas are private or reserved for only clients, families, and visitors
 - Signage indicating what forms of identification (basic/no SSN) are required
 - signage indicating confidentiality policy & protocol
 - all staff, patients, and visitors to the facility should have appropriate badges identifying they have been welcomed at an entryway
 - Identifying safe spaces for families that are undocumented
 - Updating security personnel on safety & non-discriminatory policies
- Does your institution have specific processes to make sure clients are able to understand the institution’s welcoming messages?
 - Signs are conveyed in multiple languages
 - Language is at basic level of understanding
 - Text should avoid catch-all languages (i.e. “sanctuary”, “haven”, or “safe-space”), rather they should use clear and concise language
- Are certified interpreters available?

- Are there videos with captioning and assistive listening devices available to convey information?
- Are there staff available and willing to assist patients with filling out intake forms, evaluations, or other documents?
- Is text available in large print & braille?
- Are all forms available in multiple languages (Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, Polish, Gujarati, French)?
- Are there staff available and willing to assist patients with filling out intake forms, evaluations, or other documents?

TRAINING & CAPACITY BUILDING

- Do all staff and key contractors receive initial in-depth training on cultural humility and therapeutic communication?
 - Staff should avoid perception of intrusion by explaining why they need specific information in order to provide effective care.
 - Staff should use inclusive and gender-neutral language.
 - Staff should have open-communication and ask patients to clarify any language unfamiliar to them.
 - Staff should ask patients how they prefer to be addressed in terms of preferred name and gender pronoun.
 - Staff should recognize personal biases and privileges in order to avoid making assumptions about patients' past, present, or future behaviors.
 - Avoid making heteronormative assumptions & gendering diagnoses
 - i.e. ask about relationship status rather than marital status
 - Ask about partners instead of "boyfriend", "girlfriend", "husband", or "wife"
 - Ask about comprehensive past medical history, without making assumptions
 - i.e. man in the process of transitioning may still require PAP exam
 - Staff should be knowledgeable about health risk factors affecting marginalized groups
 - i.e. mental health issues, substance abuse, violence, etc.
 - Staff should practice "Person-First" language to modify prejudice, referring to the practice of naming the person first and the disability or identifier second "Patient experiencing homelessness" or "patient with cerebral palsy"
 - Staff has been trained to recognize and avoid ageism and ageist comments
 - Instructions for accessing facilities (parking, navigating the buildings, etc.) is clear and communicated to patients in a timely and accessible manner
- Do all staff and key contractors receive regular refresher trainings on cultural humility and therapeutic communication?

- Are trainees made to feel safe expressing their own perspectives and beliefs without consequences?
- Does staff training cover the basics of immigration law, the intersection of health care and immigration, and a review of “Know Your Rights” (KYR) information pertinent for patients and providers?
- If the institution has a policy for ICE and Police Presence (see next section), does the institution train staff on the appropriate response or code in such situations?
- Does the institution have training focused on confidentiality and patient privacy rights (i.e. HIPAA) and the extent of those protections?

INSTITUTIONAL DOCUMENTS, POLICIES, & PROCEDURES

- Does your institution have a code of conduct sensitive to diverse and vulnerable populations?
- Does your institution have a policy that they will not interact with police or immigration officials unless mandated by a valid warrant? *If yes, consider if your institution maintains the following points...*
 - Designated staff that have been trained to handle police or ICE agent presence
 - Training should include what kind of warrants are valid, what steps to take when warrants are valid, and what steps to take when warrants aren’t valid
- Does your institution have standard operating procedures sensitive to diverse and vulnerable populations?
- Does your institution accept alternative forms of ID?
 - i.e. consular IDs, foreign passports, Municipal IDs
- Does your institution provide healthcare regardless of insurance status?
- Does your institution provide healthcare regardless of immigration status?
- Does your institution provide healthcare regardless of ability to pay?
- Does your institution have a charity care program or financial assistance program?
 - Does this program require legal immigration status or citizenship?
 - Is the application available in multiple languages?
 - Are there financial counselors to walk patients through the process of completing this application?
 - Are those financial counselors trained to be sensitive to race, class, disability, gender diversity, language, and immigration status?
 - Are there efforts of the institution to promote the policy throughout the community?
 - If patients have their application for charity care/financial assistance denied, is there an appeal process?
 - If patients have their application process denied, is there further referrals or care coordination?

- Does your institution have a standard dress code that does not discriminate based on gender identity, gender expression, gender norms, class, weight, or age?
- Does your institution have up-to-date protocol for the care of sexual assault victims?
 - Are patients admitted for sexual assault informed of their rights via the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)?
 - i.e. access to rape kit regardless of insurance status and freedom to opt out of any step

RESOURCES & REFERRALS

- Does your institution provide and maintain updated information and resources that can be provided to patients in the following areas?
 - Health Care
 - Primary Health Care
 - Mental Health Services
 - Housing
 - Employment
 - Support Groups
 - Community Centers
 - Faith-Based Institutions
 - Legal Issues
 - Public Benefits
 - Veteran Benefits
 - Utility and Rent Assistance
- Does your institution have preferred referral sources for legal issues, including immigration defense and support, benefits, disability advocacy, and other legal issues?
- Does your institution have an immigration lawyer employed for staff, student, and patient issues?
- Does your institution have a medical-legal partnership (MLP) with a legal aid institution?
- Does your institution provide assistance with applications for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)?
- Does your institution host registration days for Chicago Municipal IDs?
- Does your institution have Sexual Assault Nurse Experts Available on-site?

ACCOUNTABILITY

- Are trainings listed in “Training and Capacity Building” measured and evaluated by concrete objectives and data collection?
- Does your institution participate in the Human Rights Campaign Health Equity Index?

- Is your institution a member of the Illinois Alliance for Welcoming Healthcare?
- Does your institution take steps to hire people of color and minorities in all levels of employment?
- Does your institution take steps to hire people of color and minorities in management?
- Does your institution take steps to hire people of color and minorities in leadership?
- Does your institution collect feedback from patients and community through...
 - Satisfaction Surveys
 - Focus Groups
 - Community Advisory Boards
- Does your institution have a community-based advisory board?
 - Does that board reflect the diverse population served?
- Does your institution have a point of contact for patients-community to submit complaints, feedback, comments, resources, etc?
- Does your institution partner with relevant community-based institutions for projects?
- Is there a formalized process for staff to report other staff or instances in which they see other staff being un-welcoming?
- For staff who act or conduct themselves in un-welcoming ways, are there any consequences?
 - Are there any methods in place for behavior change?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & EXAMPLES

Documents Available from the Illinois Alliance for Welcoming Healthcare

<https://www.icirr.org/our-work/details/8/healthcare-access>

California Primary Care Association Health Plus Advocates Guidelines for Health Sanctuary Policies

https://www.cpcacpa.org/CPCA/CPCA/Health_Center_Resources/IMMIGRANT_RESOURCES/CPCA/HEALTH_CENTER_RESOURCES/Immigration_Resources.aspx?hkey=2bf73d19-8d61-4cf4-b92e-f2b5db2424e4

GMLA: Guidelines for Care of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Patients

http://www.glma.org/_data/n_0001/resources/live/GLMA%20guidelines%202006%20FINAL.pdf

Health Affairs: Eliminating Health And Health Care Disparities Among The Growing

Population Of People With Disabilities

<https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hlthaff.2011.0613>

CDC Health Disparities & Inequities Report (CHDIR)

<https://www.cdc.gov/minorityhealth/chdireport.html>

Example Intake Form from GLMA

http://www.glma.org/_data/n_0001/resources/live/GLMA%20guidelines%202006%20FINAL.pdf

Example Intake form from Rainbow Welcome Program

<https://www.rainbowwelcome.org/uploads/pdfs/sample-new-patient-intake-form.pdf>

Tools for Patients with Low Health Literacy

<https://www.ahrq.gov/professionals/quality-patient-safety/quality-resources/tools/literacy-toolkit/healthlittoolkit2-tool17d.html>

UNHCR Safe Space Checklist

<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/45896>

ORAM Safe Space Checklist

<http://oramrefugee.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Safe-Space-Checklist-English.pdf>

AACN Welcoming Environment Checklist

<https://www.aacn.org/docs/EventPlanning/WB0034/lgbtq-checklist-for-creating-a-welcoming-environment-final.pdf>

University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) Resources for Academic Advisors

<https://dream.uic.edu/resources-for-academic-advisors/>

Age-Friendly Health System

<http://www.ihl.org/Engage/Initiatives/Age-Friendly-Health-Systems/Pages/default.aspx>

Loyola University Chicago Undocumented Student & Academic Advisory Resources

<https://www.luc.edu/diversity/resources/undocumentedstudentresources/sharethedreamundocumentedstudentallytraining/>

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