

Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital – Milton Health Equity Strategic Plan

Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital – Milton (BID Milton) is part of Beth Israel Lahey Health (BILH), a comprehensive, high-value system of healthcare located in Boston, eastern Massachusetts, and southern New Hampshire. The system, formed in 2019, is home to 14 hospitals, 23 ambulatory facilities, 4,700 physicians, 9,000 nurses, and serves more than 1.7 million patients. BILH is the second-largest health care system in the Commonwealth with 36,000 employees.

Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital-Milton is a 102 licensed bed community hospital, providing 24-hour Emergency Room Services (staffed by Harvard Medical Facility Physicians) and a broad array of inpatient and outpatient surgeries, diagnostic testing and other services and specialties to its community and beyond. With a Medical Staff of over 700 credentialed providers, in fiscal year 2023 the hospital had:

- Greater than 36,000 Emergency Department visits and 5700 inpatient discharges
- Approximately 5000 surgeries (in/outpatient combined) as well as over 6600 OP endoscopic procedures.
- In review of diagnostic testing/services for outpatients, the total equals approximately 169,000 (excluding laboratory services – which would add approximately 500,000 tests per year).

How BID Milton Defines Health Equity

BILH is committed to ensuring that no matter where patients begin or continue their health care journey, they receive the most equitable care and outcomes possible. BILH's approach to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) is unique in that health equity is at the center of all the work – across talent, patient care, community, and research and innovation. This foundational approach is both deliberate and essential; the only way to make meaningful progress in eradicating disparities in access, the care experience, and health outcomes across the health system is through a comprehensive set of strategies that integrate research and innovation, care delivery and support for care teams, and collaborative engagement with the surrounding communities.

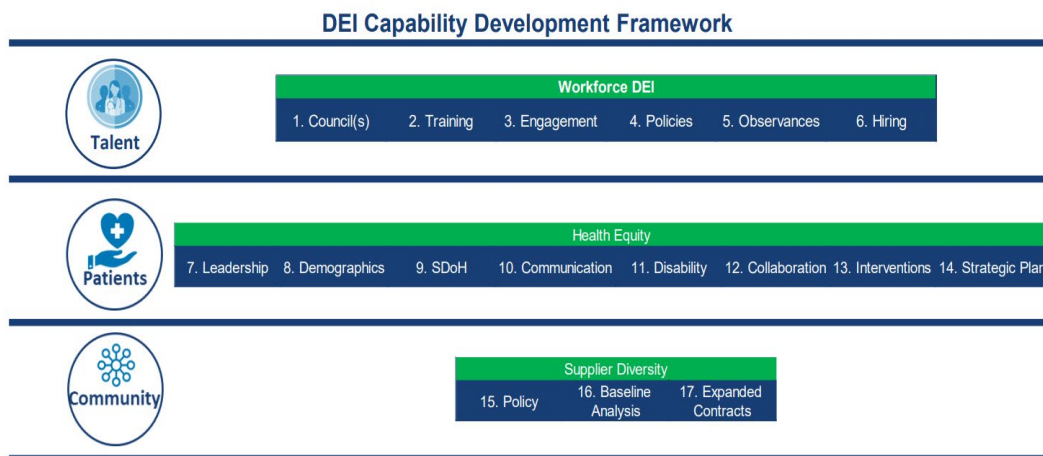
Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital-Milton aligns its definition of health equity with that of the larger BILH system.

Overview of BID Milton's Health Equity Goals Over the Next Four Years

BID Milton as a member of BILH shares the system goal to advance its DEI vision by transforming care delivery by dismantling barriers to equitable health outcomes and become the premier health system to attract, retain, and develop diverse talent. This vision is supported by three primary goals that will allow BILH/BID Milton to measure long-term progress.

- Talent: we aim to have a workforce that mirrors the increasing diversity in the communities that BILH serves, with a focus on representation in leadership and care delivery roles.
- Patients: we aim to eradicate disparities in health outcomes within our diverse population of patients.
- Community: we aim to expand investments in historically underrepresented communities to close socio-economic disparities that impact population health.

To operationalize these goals, BILH has developed a DEI Capability Development Toolkit that provides the framework for its hospitals and clinical units to implement DEI strategic initiatives. The Toolkit as outlined below includes six capabilities specific to the workforce, eight capabilities specific to health equity, which will be highlighted in this strategic plan, and three capabilities specific to supplier diversity.



In addition to aligning with BILH in regards to desired achievements, priority focus areas, and implementation of new revised current workflow processes, BID Milton based on the information below will be seeking to achieve the following in the next four years:

Community Health Focus:

Until the hospital repeats its Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) in 2025, BID Milton continues to work on improving community health for the identified priority cohorts; specifically, youth, individuals with disabilities, older adults, racially, ethnically and linguistically diverse as well as low resource populations. Our health equity priority areas include equitable access to care, social determinants of health, mental health and substance abuse as well complex and chronic conditions.

The issues that were identified in the BID- Milton CHNA are addressed in some way in the hospital's IS (Implementation Strategy Document) and are housing issues, food insecurity, transportation, economic insecurity, navigating Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) resources, build capacity of workforce, navigation of healthcare access barriers, information and resource sharing, diversify provider workforce, cost and insurance barriers, mental health, stress, anxiety, depression, isolation, mental health stigma, racism/ discrimination, culturally appropriate/competent health and community services, targeted outreach/engagement in DEI Issues, lack of education around diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), diversifying leadership, linguistic access/ barriers to community resources/services, treatment programs that include/address mental health and recurring substance use/misuse issues, substance use outreach/education/prevention, caregiver support, and alcohol use prevention/treatment.

Intervention goals (as described in the hospital's FY 2023 – 25 CHNA Implementation Strategy document); specific actions have been developed and implemented for each goal, as per the following list:

- Promote equitable care, health equity, health literacy, and cultural humility for patients, especially those who face **cultural and linguistic barriers**. By partnering with Interpreter Services and BID Milton's DEI Committee.
- Promote access to health care, health insurance, patient financial counselors, and needed medications for patients who are **uninsured or underinsured**.
- Provide and promote career support services and career mobility programs to hospital employees.
- Provide support for impactful programs and community initiatives that address issues associated with the social determinants of health.
- Support programs that stabilize or create access to affordable housing.
- Support education, systems, programs, and environmental changes to increase healthy eating and access to affordable, healthy foods.
- Increase mentorship, training, and employment opportunities to increase employment and earnings and increase financial security for youth, young adults, and adults residing in the communities.
- Support partnerships with regional transportation providers and community partners to enhance access to affordable and safe transportation.

- Participate in multisector community coalitions to convene stakeholders to identify and advocate for policy, systems, and environmental changes to address the social determinants of health.
- Support impactful programs that promote healthy development, support children, youth, and their families, and increase their resilience, coping, and prevention skills.
- Build the capacity of community members to understand the importance of mental health and substance use, and reduce negative stereotypes, bias, and stigma around mental illness and substance use disorders.
- Participate in multisector community coalitions to convene stakeholders to identify and advocate for policy, systems, and environmental changes to increase resiliency, reduce youth substance use, and prevent opioid overdoses and deaths.
- Provide access to high-quality and culturally and linguistically appropriate mental health and substance use services through screening, monitoring, counseling, navigation, and treatment.
- Address barriers to timely cancer and chronic disease screenings and follow-up care through culturally appropriate navigation and innovative programs.
- Provide preventative health information, services, and support for those at risk for complex and/ or chronic conditions and support evidence-based chronic disease treatment and self-management programs.
- Ensure older adults have access to coordinated healthcare, supportive services, and resources that support overall health and the ability to age in place.

BID Milton's Response to Regulatory/Accrediting/Payer, Quality Improvement Entity Requirements

BID Milton recognizes that the impetus for health equity and DEI work may in part be driven by external entity standards, conditions of participation, regulation, pay-for performance program and best practices including but not limited to:

- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid
- Mass Health
- Commercial Insurance payers
- The Joint Commission
- Leapfrog

Achieving compliance and optimal performance with identified strategies/practices is important to ensure not only promotion of BID Milton's Health Care Equity and DEI goals but will also demonstrate favorable reputational and reimbursement performance.

Member and Community Voices at BID Milton

BILH incorporates MassHealth member and community voices into its health equity strategic planning and implementation efforts through its various health equity related committees and workgroups, patient outreach efforts, patient focused groups, periodic patient experience surveys, community partner interviews, patient/family advisory feedback, and comprehensive patient and community health needs assessments.

As previously referenced, BID Milton in addition to highlighted BILH system goals is currently and plans in the future seeks to expand hospital members and community voices into its health strategic planning and implementation efforts, by (not all inclusive):

- Application of extensive community-based collaborative/partnerships, programs, and strategies as fully described in its CHNA.
- Responding to patient feedback via patient experience surveys and comments and/or those received and included in part of the hospital's grievance process.
- Involving community based and hospital care providers in forums/committees where such topics are discussed, e.g. PFAC, Health Care Quality Improvement, Community Benefits Advisory (CBAC), and DEI committees.
- Facilitating and responding to employee feedback via a number of methods including but not limited to, employee engagement and culture of safety surveys, health equity/DEI committee participation, and ongoing educational/training sessions opportunities, etc.
- Ongoing employee competency assessment processes and employee appraisal feedback.
- Performance Improvement opportunity planning, strategy implementation, and evaluation.
- Review of care practices and outcomes specific to Mass Health and Commercial payer publicly reported pay-for performance measures.

The hospital's 2022 CNHA is an integral part of BID Milton's population health and community engagement efforts. It supplies vital information that is applied to make sure that the services and programs that BID Milton provides are appropriately focused, delivered in ways that are responsive to those in its CBSA (Community Benefits Service Area) and address unmet community needs. This assessment, along with the associated prioritization and planning processes, also provides a critical opportunity for BID Milton to engage the community and strengthen the community partnerships that are essential to BID Milton's success now and in the future.

The assessment engaged more than 600 people from across the CBSA, including local public health officials, clinical and social service providers, community-based organizations, first responder (police, fire, ambulance officials), faith leaders, other government officials, and community residents. The process that was applied to conduct the CHNA and develop the

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associated Implementation Strategy (IS) exemplifies the spirit of collaboration and community engagement that is such a vital part of BID Milton's mission. Finally, this report allows BID Milton to meet its federal and Commonwealth community benefits requirements per the federal Internal Revenue Service, as part of the Affordable Care Act, the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office, and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.