

17 Health Systems Announce Commitment to Reach at Least 10% of New Hires from Economically Disadvantaged Areas to Create Economic Opportunity

PRESS RELEASE

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In a bold move, 17 health systems announce a major commitment to hiring and training strategies to help address the economic and racial disparities that impact community health outcomes

Washington, D.C., May 10, 2023 – Seventeen health systems across the country, some of the largest employers in their areas, announce signing an “[Impact Workforce Commitment](#)” (IWC) to build healthy and equitable local economies through their hiring and workforce development programs and policies. The commitment, designed in partnership with a leadership group of [Healthcare Anchor Network](#) (HAN) member health systems and the [National Fund for Workforce Solutions](#), includes aligning hiring and workforce power with clinical and community efforts to provide opportunities for individuals who may have faced barriers to employment due to myriad factors. These factors include low income, lack of access to education and training, or other socio-economic challenges. The commitment aims to improve societal health and well-being by creating economic opportunities and addressing racial inequities in the communities the signatories serve.

“HAN supports access to family-supporting employment to foster economic security, improved health and well-being, and stable, thriving communities,” said David Zuckerman, President, Healthcare Anchor Network. “The commitment by the 17 health systems represents a significant step towards promoting equity and opportunity in the healthcare sector. By providing stable jobs, benefits, and career ladders for lower-income individuals, these health systems are not only making a positive impact on the lives of their employees but also the communities they serve.”

Employment and economic stability are critical social determinants of health. When people do not have adequate education or training to become employed at stable jobs with benefits and career ladders, they are less able to pay for basic needs, including housing, healthy food, medicine, and preventive healthcare. This negatively impacts their physical and mental health outcomes. In addition, some health systems are facing current and projected healthcare staffing shortages across various positions, including lower-paid workers.

To address these upstream issues, the signatories commit to establishing specific goals to increase hiring from economically disadvantaged communities through intentional pathways to quality jobs; invest in workforce development and career pathway programs; advance advocacy to accelerate workforce development policies at state and federal levels; support employees to achieve financial stability and build wealth; and eliminate bias in advancement. In addition, signatories commit to collecting and submitting data on their progress toward these goals to the Healthcare Anchor Network to ensure accountability and transparency.

The health systems adopting the Impact Workforce Commitment include Advocate Health, Baystate Health, Bon Secours Mercy Health, CHRISTUS Health, Cleveland Clinic, CommonSpirit Health, Dartmouth Health, Fairview Health Services, Froedtert Health, Hawaii Pacific Health, Intermountain Health, Providence, Rush University System for Health, The MetroHealth System, University Hospitals in Cleveland, the University of California, San Francisco, and University of Utah Health.

These institutions are members of the [Healthcare Anchor Network \(HAN\)](#), which supports health systems to accelerate learning and local implementation of economic inclusion strategies. The HAN hospitals and health systems together employ more than 2 million people, purchase over \$100 billion annually, and have \$200 billion in investment assets.

“The National Fund commends the healthcare systems that have signed the Impact Workforce Commitment for their forward-thinking leadership, and we appreciate HAN for forging this path for the broader healthcare industry. In this tight labor market, these systems have made a choice that is not only the right thing to do for their current and future employees, but also the right thing to do for business. Creating and designing good jobs, where people can thrive, is one of the biggest impacts any organization can have for the community around them,” stated Tom Strong, Director, Employer Activation, National Fund for Workforce Solutions.

The key provisions of the HAN Impact Workforce Commitment:

- Reaching at least 10% of new hires annually as “impact hires” (employees hired from economically disadvantaged areas who connect to the organization through intentional pathways into jobs that require less than a bachelor’s degree) by the conclusion of the commitment in 2027. This goal will be accomplished by building and expanding partnerships, programs, and initiatives with community organizations and education providers. Additionally, signatories will edit job descriptions to remove inflated and unnecessary education and experience qualifications.
- Increasing the number of employees who are promoted from positions that require less than a bachelor’s degree into higher skilled, higher wage roles by 2027 through direct investment in workforce development. These investments could include apprenticeships, other earn-and-learn programs, tuition advancement, and other initiatives and internal policy changes. About 9.7 million individuals currently work in critical, lower-wage healthcare occupations (e.g., medical assistants, home health aides, nursing assistants, etc.).
- Conducting policy advocacy to accelerate workforce development investment in the public sector.
- Creating a dedicated financial support program for employees to address employee financial stability and advance equity in benefits utilization. In addition, signatories will implement strategies to help employees achieve long-term financial stability, such as 403(b) or 401(k) auto-enrollment and auto-escalation to build retirement savings.
- Ensuring fair and equitable leadership development and advancement at all health system levels through intentional training and development and by continuing to work towards staff at all levels being more reflective of communities.

Quotes from the hospitals and health systems making the Impact Workforce Commitment:

Advocate Health Co-CEOs Eugene A. Woods and Jim Skogsbergh:

Eugene A. Woods:

“As the health care industry faces unprecedented challenges, we believe it is critical to invest in building a more diverse and inclusive workforce that reflects the needs and experiences of the patients we serve. Through this coalition, we are proud to reaffirm our commitment to nurturing and developing talent while creating pathways of

opportunity that empower our communities. A stronger, more resilient workforce improves the quality of care we provide.”

Jim Skogsbergh:

“Diversity, equity, and inclusion are not just buzzwords, they are the foundation for a truly successful and thriving workforce. Embracing and valuing differences in all forms allows for a breadth of perspectives, ideas, and solutions that can only strengthen an organization and ultimately provide the best care possible for our communities. This pledge guides us in enabling our teammates and training the next generation of the healthcare workforce.”

Baystate Health President & CEO Mark Keroack, MD:

“We have learned about the importance of the Social Determinants of Health through our work with the Medicaid ACO. Addressing issues of housing insecurity, food insecurity, behavioral health support, legal services, and overall economic opportunity are critical to the success of our efforts to improve health in our community. To demonstrate our commitment to economic opportunity for all, we have signed the Health Anchor Network (HAN) “Impact Workforce Commitment” (IWC). This commitment aims to build healthy and equitable local economies through our hiring and workforce development programs that have measurable positive outcomes. To amplify the impact we have also launched a regional Anchor Collaborative in partnership with the Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts and several large local employers. Each of us has pledged to advancing social justice and economic opportunity in in our community through local diverse hiring and advancement.

Bon Secours Mercy Health CEO John M. Starcher, Jr.:

“Bon Secours Mercy Health is committed to equitable hiring across all levels of the organization. Our associates are at the heart of our important mission, and the Impact Workforce Commitment – our third HAN commitment – aligns well with our passion for helping our associates and communities grow. As a ministry, we’ve invested in a host of associate benefit programs including a partnership with Guild Education, which in many cases provides 100% tuition-free education for associates who want to achieve their professional goals and grow in their careers while working at Bon Secours Mercy Health.”

CHRISTUS Health President & CEO Ernie Sadau:

“At CHRISTUS Health, diversity and inclusion are foundational to our ability to provide care that is equitable for all. Our vision is to be a leader, a partner and an advocate in the creation of innovative health and wellness solutions that improve the lives of individuals and communities. We recognize that health and wellness are intrinsically tied to steady employment and stable income. By focusing on increasing opportunities for our historically marginalized populations, we build a diverse workforce that reflects our communities. CHRISTUS Health is already committed to increasing access to health resources and hiring from our Communities of Focus through partnerships with esteemed organizations like AmeriCorps, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Defense Department. The Impact Workforce Commitment reinforces our dedication to promote community health by creating economic opportunities for all. CHRISTUS Health is proud to join with other health systems in the Healthcare Anchor Network to bridge our workforce needs with the needs of our communities.”

Cleveland Clinic CEO and President and holder of the Morton L. Mandel CEO Chair Dr. Tom Mihaljevic:

“Employment is one of the most critical determinants of health that impacts a person’s quality of life. Our continued efforts to be intentional in hiring, training and promotion of diverse talent are key to creating opportunities that support the overall health of the communities we serve. This commitment reinforces our core value of inclusion, which we are proud to take actions each day to support.”

CommonSpirit Health SVP for Talent Acquisition Wanda Cole-Frieman:

“The Healthcare Anchor Network Inclusive Workforce Commitment is an opportunity for health systems to utilize our roles as major employers in our communities to promote equity across multiple fronts. CommonSpirit Health is proud to be a part of this work.”

Dartmouth Health CEO and President Joanne M. Conroy, MD:

“Individuals, families and communities thrive when people have access to stable incomes and healthcare benefits. Working in healthcare offers stability, opportunity for growth and the fulfillment that comes with providing care to members of our community. Dartmouth Health joins healthcare anchor organizations across the nation through the ‘Impact Hiring Commitment’ to review and improve our hiring practices, remove systemic barriers and to create programs that help people start and progress along meaningful career paths that offer longevity, portability, and satisfaction.”

Fairview Health Services President and CEO James Hereford:

“As an anchor institution in our community, focusing on local and diverse hiring is one way we are advancing health equity and investing in the social and economic wellbeing of the communities we serve. Signing the Impact Workforce Commitment underscores our organization’s continued commitment to address the social determinants of health by offering earn and learn opportunities to advance career pathways and helping people secure jobs that offer family-sustaining wages and benefits.”

Froedtert Health President and CEO Catherine A. Jacobson:

“The ‘Impact Workforce Commitment’ aligns with our responsibility as an employer, community member and corporate citizen to help create greater community and economic vitality and positively impact social determinants of health and health outcomes. That responsibility includes not only delivering exceptional care to everyone in the diverse communities we serve, but also providing employment opportunities that support career growth and financial stability.”

Hawai’i Pacific Health President and CEO Ray Vara:

“Our mission at Hawai’i Pacific Health is to create a healthier Hawai’i and that means, not only providing the best care possible for our patients, but also doing what we can to impact the health of our population beyond the walls of our medical centers and clinics. HPH has established innovative programs with local education and community partners that create a pipeline of highly trained health care workers to address our workforce needs, while also providing employment opportunities that offer an increased living wage for Hawai’i residents. We look forward to working together with our Healthcare Anchor Network national partners to expand our current efforts and help make a positive impact on the health and well-being of communities nationwide.”

Intermountain Health President and CEO Rob Allen:

"Our commitment to increase our impact hiring by 10 percent by 2027 aligns with our mission of *helping people live the healthiest lives possible*. Our intentional outreach to rural communities, as well as our many apprenticeship programs, are providing good jobs that play a key role in creating healthier communities in the geographies we serve.

Providence President and CEO Rod Hochman, MD:

“At Providence, we recognize long-standing inequities and systemic injustice led to health and economic disparities among communities that have been historically marginalized. Investing in workforce strategies that support the needs and growth of our diverse workforce is a business imperative and central to our core values of justice and dignity. Our pledge to the Health Anchor Network’s Impact Workforce Commitment will bolster our ongoing efforts to build a workforce that reflects the communities we serve and advance our progress towards creating equity for our caregivers, their families and the generations behind them.”

The MetroHealth System President and CEO Airica Steed, RN:

“At MetroHealth, we are steadfast in eradicating health care disparities and giving the individuals we serve the best chance at a happy, healthy life. Improving the health and wealth of our community go hand in hand, which is why our hiring practices and workforce development programs must be anchored by a commitment to equity and inclusion. Nobody should ever be denied opportunity because of the color of their skin, their ZIP code, the language they speak or any other demographic that has been used to make people feel less than. We are proud to join our colleagues from around the country in signing the Impact Workforce Commitment.”

Rush University System for Health senior vice president for community health equity for Rush University Medical Center and associate provost for community affairs for Rush University David A. Ansell, MD:

“RUSH has a deep and long-standing partnership with the community. For over five years, more than 15 percent of our employees have come from Chicago’s West Side. This is part of our Anchor Mission Strategy to improve health through economic vitality to 12 West Side communities via hiring, purchasing, volunteering and investing. With recruiting staff, we have a very intentional approach to hire locally and create pathways to family sustaining careers. We’ve partnered with West Side United and five other health systems. Oftentimes, these are bringing capital resources to communities that lead to jobs and wealth creation while addressing health and health care needs. This is an approach that really all health care systems can take to improve the conditions in neighborhoods that have had consistent disinvestment.”

University of Utah Health CEO Dan Lundergan:

“Academic institutions are anchors in their communities, and I believe they should work to find equitable and innovative solutions to workforce shortages. University of Utah Health is committed to working with the community to provide stability and advancement opportunities with the goal of improving overall health, well-being, and quality of life. Together with our community, we can find solutions that retain and support our current workforce, and reduce systemic barriers for historically marginalized populations to find pathways into health care careers.”

University Hospitals CEO and the Jane and Henry Meyer Chief Executive Officer Distinguished Chair Cliff A. Megerian, MD:

“During the most recent period measured, University Hospitals contributed more than \$10 billion to the regional economy, guided by a strong commitment to civic and social responsibility and its role as an anchor institution in Northeast Ohio. Just as the system has cured disease and innovated new standards of care over the decades, UH has also steadfastly worked to create economic opportunity and prosperity for our communities. We are proud to join with our health system colleagues and the Healthcare Anchor Network to promote initiatives that will advance health equity.”

UCSF Chief Human Resources Officer, Corey Jackson:

UCSF is committed to advancing excellence in staff recruitment and retention. For us, this means not only intentionally cultivating diversity at all levels within the organization but also removing barriers in the hiring process for members of our community to gain access to stable, well-paying jobs available at UCSF. The Impact Workforce Commitment is an extension of our commitment to investing in our greatest asset - our people. We look forward to collaborating with the Healthcare Anchor Network and colleagues at other health systems nationwide to promote good health by creating economic stability.

For more information on the HAN Impact Workforce Commitment, please visit the [website](#).

For more information about the National Fund and CareerSTAT, its network of healthcare and workforce leaders, [visit their website](#).

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