WHAT IS MOSAIC?

By: Amanda Kelvey, DO MPH

A mosaic pattern is a beautiful large picture that comes to life by the unification of small individual pieces. HealthFirst’s mission is to provide high quality healthcare to everyone in our diverse community. See where I am going with this? Our newest assembled diversity equity and inclusion committee, now known as MOSAIC, has been established here at HealthFirst to integrate the unique aspects of our community into an inclusive environment. While the members of this committee are happy to educate, spread awareness, and listen to your voices, the ideals and goals of our committee will not be limited to our group and will ideally flourish throughout our health center and into the community we serve. Please check out our mission and purpose below and we look forward to moving forward with all of you!

Mission: TO LEARN, RESPECT, AND CELEBRATE OUR DIFFERENCES TO SHAPE A WELCOMING HEALTHCARE COMMUNITY

Purpose: To eliminate bias and create a workplace that is supportive and inclusive of all. To embrace change and encourage innovation. To support our local community and make an impact
MONTHLY HAPPENINGS

by Jamie Ekstrom RD, LDN

Happy November! Let’s dive in...

• November happens to be Native American Heritage Month, or American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/NA) Heritage month. Using the term Native American or American Indian is up to personal preference, not sure which to use? Just ask! Originally, the month was observed as just a day by Dr. Arthur C. Parker, a Seneca Indian, and then, in 1990, was finally given a month’s recognition. November is a great time to learn more about Native American cultures, contributions, and history. According to the 2012 Census, there were 5.2 million American Indians and Alaska Natives living in the U.S, and, based on the 2010 Federal Census, there are still about 37,000 Native Americans living in Massachusetts.

• Trans Awareness Week, from November 13-19th, along with Trans Day of Remembrance (TDOR), on November 20th, both also fall in November. TDOR "seeks to highlight the losses we face due to anti-transgender bigotry and violence," describes TDOR founder and transgender advocate, Gwendolyn Ann Smith. According to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 1.4 million U.S. adults identify as Transgender.

NATIVE AMERICAN HEALTH DISPARITIES

by Jamie Ekstrom RD, LDN

• COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted AI/NA populations. These communities are already at a greater risk for developing chronic health conditions like heart disease and diabetes. This is likely due to inequitable employment and education opportunity, income inequities, and lack of access to proper health care.

• However, there have been initiatives to address these disparities. For example, The Native Diabetes Wellness Program seeks to “honor a balance between cultural practices and western science in Indian Country to promote health and help prevent type 2 diabetes among [AI/AN] who are at risk.” Additionally, The Traditional Foods Project, that ran from 2008-2014, was an initiative, including 17 Tribal Programs that “worked to restore access to local, traditional foods and physical activity to promote health.” Although the project is over, the objectives and tools are still utilized today. To learn more about these initiatives, visit https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/ndwp/index.html.
HOW TO BE A TRANS ALLY

By Amanda Kelvey, DO MPH

So you want to be an ally? Well, while it is not a label we can give ourselves, the good news is that it is definitely something we can work towards. It is a journey that entails asking questions, unlearning ideas about gender that we take for granted as natural, and being open to diverse concepts. The following is a not exhaustive list of tips that can be used as we moved toward becoming better allies.

1. **Respect pronouns** - When you're not sure which pronouns someone uses, just ask! If you make a mistake just correct it and move on.

2. **Don't assume you can tell if someone is transgender** - People will not be “visibly trans”. You should assume that there may be transgender people at any gathering or in any space.

3. **Use gender neutral language** - Set an inclusive tone by using phrases like “Hi friends” and “Welcome folks”. When we assume gender, we exclude people.

4. **Be patient** - It may take time for someone to figure out what is true for them. Be respectful and use whichever name and pronoun requested.

5. **Don't tolerate disrespect** - Call out any hurtful language, remarks, or jokes, no matter who says them.

6. **Keep it appropriate** - Don't ask about genitals, surgical status, or sex lives. If you wouldn't ask a cisgender person, don't ask a trans person either!

7. **Listen to trans and gender diverse voices** - The best way to learn is to listen to transgender people speaking for themselves. They are the experts of their own lives so let’s give them space to speak. Every person has a unique experience and it is important to know one narrative doesn’t fit all.

8. **Know your limits** - Admit when you don’t know something, and seek out appropriate resources to learn more. For more information check out: https://www.glaad.org/transgender/allies and the recommended enrichment section of our newsletter

We can make society a better place for all people (trans or not) and it is time to use our voices and our actions to move toward being better allies. There is no better time than the present!

Until next time,

Your DEI Committee Members

A special thanks to Fanny Tchorz and Danielle Renzo for sharing some of these resources with us!