



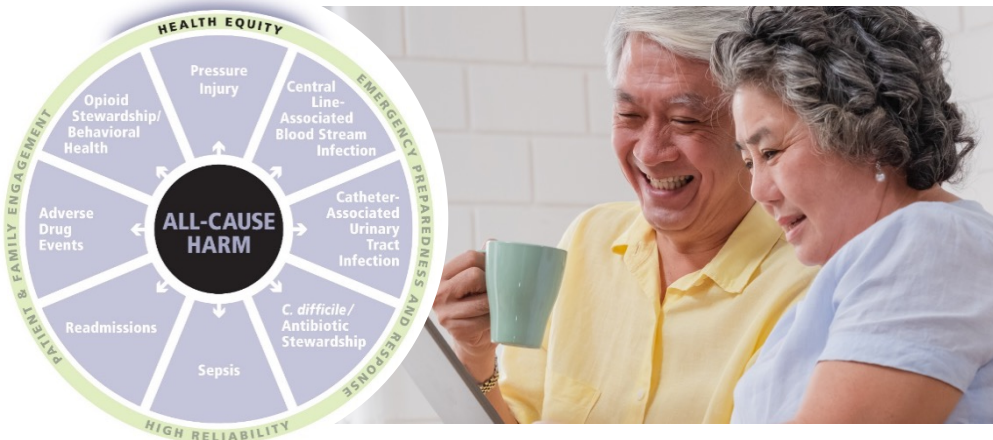
- Healthcentric Advisors ■ Qlarant
- Kentucky Hospital Association
- Q3 Health Innovation Partners
- Superior Health Quality Alliance

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HEALTH EQUITY HIGHLIGHTS

December 2021



Important Upcoming Health Equity Events

- The CMS Innovation Center invites you to listen to a special roundtable discussion on how CMS can execute on its strategic objective to Advance Health Equity. Please [register here](#) to participate.

This roundtable is scheduled for Wednesday, December 8, 2021 from 1:30-3:00pm ET and is in follow-up to the release of the CMS Innovation Center's recently published white paper [Driving Health System Transformation - A Strategy for the CMS Innovation Center's Second Decade](#). The roundtable will be an opportunity to hear from thought leaders in the areas of health equity and health care about their perspectives on:

1. Approaches or interventions the CMS Innovation Center prioritize when building models to eliminate health inequities
 2. How can the CMS Innovation Center support collection of self-reported demographic and social needs data? What are successful approaches for such collection?
 3. The most significant obstacles for safety net providers who want to participate in a CMS Innovation Center or another value-based, accountable care model, and recommendations for how the CMS Innovation Center help these providers overcome these obstacles?
- The CMS Office of Minority Health (OMH) reports that one barrier to consistent collection of patient social determinants (SDOH) data is a lack of knowledge about Z codes, the special group of codes provided in ICD-10-CM to document social determinants of health. Of the 33.1 million fee-for-service beneficiaries enrolled in Medicare in 2019, only 1.59% had claims with Z codes (Mukset et al., 2021). Healthcare organizations can play an important role in advancing the collection of SDOH data. Learn more about "Optimal Z Code Utilization & Reimbursement Opportunities" by clicking [here](#) to listen to the recording and access the slide deck.

National Handwashing Awareness Week (Dec. 1 – 7)

Learn about CDC's handwashing campaign, [Life is Better with Clean Hands](#), and download free materials in English and Spanish to remind people about the importance of handwashing.

National Influenza Vaccination Week (Dec. 5-11)

People from [racial and ethnic minority groups experience higher rates of severe flu illness](#). Find resources [here](#) to promote the importance of continuing flu vaccination through the holiday season and beyond.

Best Practice Sharing - Bronson Healthcare Embraces Equitable Person and Family Engagement (PFE) by Being Inclusive of its LGBTQ+ Community

On June 28th, the [IPRO HQIC](#) held a Learning and Action Network (LAN) event to help its 270 hospitals engage patient and family advisors that reflect their diverse communities as a strategy to improve health equity. Abby Leonard, RN, MSN, Patient Safety and Quality Coordinator at [Bronson Healthcare](#) in southwest Michigan (a member of the Michigan Health and Hospital Association, MHA), presented their recent work to collect sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) data to be more inclusive of – and responsive to – its LGBTQ+ patient population. Bronson utilized trusted sources to review their current practices and identify best practice recommendations. Key tools that guide the work at Bronson include the MHA [Health Equity Guide](#), [Health Equity Organizational Assessment](#) and the [Health Equality Index](#) (HEI).

Equitable PFE means that hospitals:

- Consider the needs, perspectives, interests, values, and beliefs of all patients and families, including those from disparate populations
- Modify PFE best practices to ensure engagement with all patients and families
- Implement actions that reflect what matters to all patients

In 2020, Bronson Healthcare participated in the Human Rights Campaign’s HEI survey. The goal of participation was to establish a baseline for improvement and utilize the robust library of resources to guide organizational LGBTQ+ equity efforts. The HEI is a national LGBTQ+ benchmarking tool that evaluates healthcare facilities’ policies and practices related to the equity and inclusion of their LGBTQ+ patients, visitors, and employees. It incorporates requirements from the Centers for Medicaid & Medicare Services (CMS) and The Joint Commission to provide a publicly visible rating based on provision of care to LGBTQ+ patients and equitable employment practices for LGBTQ+ employees.

Using resources from the Health Equality Index, Bronson undertook several initiatives to prepare and educate patients, families, hospital leaders and staff, and the community including:

- Conducting organizational and leadership-level assessments to identify opportunities to improve LGBTQ+ representation and engagement, its care for LGBTQ+ patients and increase equitable employment practices
- Creating and implementing communication plans for internal and external partners to have consistent messaging about “why” Bronson is undertaking this effort
- Implementing system-wide training tools for staff to collect data and be prepared to engage in uncomfortable conversations

Bronson Healthcare piloted SOGI data collection in its Diabetes and Endocrinology Center and Maternal-Fetal Medicine practice before rolling out new SOGI data collection procedures in Ambulatory Care in June 2021. Abby and her team at Bronson will continue to expand their pilot programs into more departments and locations, with the goal of deploying the new SOGI data collection processes across the system’s entire continuum of care by 2022. Learn more about Bronson Healthcare’s efforts to improve health equity [here](#).

This pilot has shown that with robust communication and genuine leadership engagement – at all levels of the organization – collection of SOGI data is both feasible within the larger complex sociocultural narrative and empowers patients and staff with the tools to document and share this information in a way that supports customer service and clinical decision making.

-Abby Leonard



For more health equity news: [CLICK HERE](#)