



**August 3, 2023**

**A Follow Up on Accountability and Quality Management With LeWanza Harris, MD, MPH, MBA, MS**

Happy Thursday, Mount Sinai Community –

Just over a month ago, we spoke with **Jill M. Goldstein, RN, MA, MS, Deputy Chief Nursing Officer and Vice President of Nursing at Mount Sinai Queens**, about [the role quality management plays in accountability and why this is critical to our Road Map work](#).



Today, we're taking a closer look at these efforts with **LeWanza Harris, MD, MPH, MBA, MS, Vice President, Quality and Regulatory Affairs for Mount Sinai Health System**, who leads the anti-racist quality improvement strategy at Mount Sinai. She told us about implementing equity-focused change on a large scale, specific anti-racist efforts at Mount Sinai, and why collaboration is crucial to success in quality improvement.

**Q: What are your roles and responsibilities at Mount Sinai Health System, and how do they tie into Mount Sinai's anti-racist efforts?**

As a physician-leader, I provide strategic oversight for all quality functions across the Mount Sinai Health System. In my time here, I've been driving systemwide improvements in quality, safety, and regulatory affairs, and leading several successful initiatives in readmission reductions, regulatory compliance, equity in health care, and controlled substance management.

Most recently, my team and I have been focused on integrating a health equity focus

into all levels of quality management.

**Q: What quality improvement programs existed before you got to Mount Sinai? How have you refined them to be more focused on equity?**

Mount Sinai has long been focused on quality improvement efforts to enhance systems and processes, and ensure the best outcomes and safest care for our patients. When we began working with the Office for Diversity and Inclusion (ODI), we noticed that some departments and service lines were more advanced in their efforts to incorporate health equity into their work.

Since then, I have been partnering with leaders to guide the systemwide process to reinforce quality improvement through an equity lens. To do so, we use quality indicators such as patient readmissions to track how we are improving care and ensure we are making progress in an equitable way. Coupled with an understanding of the [social drivers that impact patients'](#) health, this data empowers clinicians to consistently provide the right care at the right time for every patient—every time.

**Q: How are you able to successfully implement quality improvement at such a large institution?**

At a highly integrated academic medical center like Mount Sinai, we rely on several strategies to achieve successful quality improvements across the entire system:

1. Understanding the current state, processes, systems, and culture of the Health System before developing a solution.
2. Ensuring leadership is fully bought in, ready to adapt in real time, and willing to build structures that keep everyone accountable.
3. Communicating a clear vision, goals, and direction to align interests and priorities across various sites within the Health System.
4. Involving stakeholders who are content experts at the onset of the strategic planning process.

**Q: Can you tell us about some of the specific infrastructures and systems you use for quality improvement and how they advance anti-racism?**

ODI [has been laying the foundation by making sure we are collecting the right data](#), establishing best practices, providing education and guidance, and developing tools to assist staff and providers on their anti-racism journey.

In 2022, the Department of Quality and Regulatory Affairs collaborated with key stakeholders to leverage this work and find ways to seamlessly incorporate diversity and equity into all Health System practices.



## Advancing Equity in Quality Toolkit

Together, we developed a [toolkit](#) (on the intranet) that serves as a foundational resource to advance equity in quality improvement by equipping frontline staff and providers with a better understanding of the language of health equity. The framework includes a “Capacity Building Guide” and a “Guide for Obtaining and Interpreting Patient Demographic and Equity Data” to help staff approach the issue of disparities in health outcomes from a route of humble inquiry, seeking to understand and address such challenges with targeted interventions.

**Q: How do you interact with folks like Jill M. Goldstein, RN, MA, MS, Deputy Chief Nursing Officer and Vice President of Nursing at Mount Sinai Queens, to achieve your goals?**

Partners like Jill Goldstein are critical to the success of any improvement initiative because, when you want to create change, it is essential that you defer to those with expertise. Given that nursing staff are the largest workforce at most health systems, working with Jill to advance equity in quality and direct our quality improvement goals has been critical. We are also partnering with similar stakeholders across Mount Sinai to expand our outreach and learn from and lean into the respective expertise of other teams to achieve our patient care goals.

We are grateful to LeWanza for her dedication to advancing equity in health care through quality improvement initiatives and for sharing her expertise with us.

To suggest a topic, highlight a coworker, or provide feedback on the Bulletins, send us an email at [RoadMap@mountsinai.org](mailto:RoadMap@mountsinai.org).

All the best,

Shawn and Angela

## Join Us for an Upcoming Event

### **Chats for Change: Racism in Medicine and Medical Education: A Personal and Professional Imperative**

Chats for Change is a production of the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai's Racism and Bias Initiative. On Tuesday, August 8 from noon-1 pm, join facilitators David Muller, MD, and Yvette Calderon, MD, to discuss how to reconcile what's inside the medical education "bubble" with events happening outside that bubble. Register on [Zoom](#).

### **Join us this year for the 54th Annual African American Day Parade!**

This year the parade, taking place on Sunday, September 17, will honor those who have contributed to African American Culture with the theme "Celebrating African American Culture." Don't miss out on this incredible celebration of Black culture, heritage, and unity. Mark your calendars for a day filled with joy, pride, and unforgettable memories! Register [here](#) to Save the Date!

[Road Map for Action](#)

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