

Inclusion at Community First Health Plans, Inc.

Community First Health Plans, Inc. (Community First) provides fair and equal access to care for Members in our service delivery area, to be leaders in recognizing and eliminating social barriers, and to champion diversity within the Community First workplace that reflects the populations we serve.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “In the United States, Blacks, Hispanics, American Indians/Alaska Natives, Asians, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders (NHOPIs) bear a disproportionate burden of disease, injury, premature death, and disability.” This disproportionate burden can lead to lower socioeconomic status and quality of life, and shorter life expectancy.

Q: How does Community First define inclusion for our Members?

A: Inclusion refers to how others show that individuals are valued as respected members of the group, team, organization, or community. At Community First, inclusion is intentionally designed and actively incorporated into our processes and practices. Ongoing engagement with our individual Members ensures opportunities and pathways for access to, and participation in, all aspects of a Member’s care, especially decision-making.

Q: What are the benefits of inclusion for staff and Members?

A: Inclusion benefits the entire Community First organization, from governing leadership, to staff, to enrolled community members. For staff, inclusion creates a sense of comfort and belonging, reflecting the larger community, thus increasing engagement, fostering creativity, and enhancing satisfaction. When we, in turn, create an atmosphere of inclusion for our Members, we are building a safe environment in which Members feel valued, respected, and empowered. We always strive to tailor inclusive care to each Member’s health care needs, no matter their socioeconomic, racial, or cultural background, gender identity, or abilities.

Q: How can Community First employees promote inclusion in their respective departments?

A: Community First promotes the health and well-being of all Members, regardless of their identity, background, ability, and social barriers. This starts with our staff understanding the importance of inclusion in our company culture, and as outlined in our policies, NCQA accreditation documents, and care coordination practices. We convey these principles to our Members and each other by using respectful and appropriate language, listening actively, asking for consent, and avoiding assumptions and stereotypes. Using the right words can help establish trusting relationships. Making sure Members feel safe and included also means keeping an open mind about different behaviors, identities, and expressions.

Using inclusive language in health care can help reduce stigma, address non-medical drivers of health (NMDOH), and improve health outcomes. Please use the following resources for more information on inclusive language.

[Northwest Family Guide – Inclusive Language](#)
[Guide Advisory Board – Incorporating Inclusive Language](#)