

# DIVERSITY AND CULTURAL COMPETENCE

## Diversity

When we talk about diversity, we talk about differences between people. We are all different, but view some things more differently than others. For example, a brother and sister have a lot of the same memories and because they have been raised together, have many identical opinions and beliefs about things. That makes them similar. However, one is man, the other a woman and in that regard they are very different. This difference has given them different experiences throughout their lives and these different experiences have helped shape them differently. They are different, feel different, and believe to be different.

## Cultural Competence

As our patient population is becoming more diverse, it is becoming more important to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services that lead to improved outcomes, efficiency, and satisfaction.

Healthcare organizations are encouraged to ensure that patients receive understandable and respectful care that is compatible with their cultural health beliefs, practices, and preferred language. The objective is to ensure that all persons entering the healthcare system, regardless of race, ethnicity or other diversity aspects, receive fair, and quality treatment.

Some of the factors that influence our differences are: age, religion, language, weight, color, height, technical vs. non-technical, white collar, blue collar, education, divorce, single, married, non-smoker, smoker, non-Michigander, sexual preference. Diversity is not defined only by race or gender. It extends to all biological and acquired differences (culture).

This includes offering and providing language assistance services, both verbal and written, through patient-related materials, and posted signage, as well as providing culturally competent care.

Some things to consider:

- Views about health and healthcare
- Family and community relationships
- Language and communication styles
- Ties to another country or part of the U.S.
- Food preferences
- Religion
- Views about death