

For Immediate Release
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St. Bernard Hospital Marks Illinois' Inaugural Health Equity Action Day

The day focused on concrete action to advance health equity

Demonstrating a strong commitment to advancing health equity, leaders and staff at St. Bernard participated in Illinois' Inaugural Health Equity Action Day on June 18. The event, organized by the Illinois Health and Hospital Association (IHA), was scheduled to coincide with Juneteenth, which commemorates the end of slavery in the U.S.

"Many hospitals and healthcare institutions are working individually to address deep and profound issues of health inequity," said Charles Holland, President and CEO, St. Bernard Hospital. "Now that this day of action has been set aside, I am excited to see how our collective power and ideas can be leveraged to better understand and address longstanding healthcare challenges."

Health Equity Action Day began with virtual programming to celebrate the work that has already occurred at hospitals and health systems to eliminate health disparities and improve health outcomes for all Illinoisans. Keynote speaker Michelle Silverthorn, founder of Inclusion Nation, spoke about increasing inclusion, interrupting bias and improving diversity for good during her session, "Authentic Diversity."

Building upon the theme of Health Equity Day, St. Bernard employees and board leaders were encouraged to view and read materials that emphasized the importance of tackling health equity.

During a panel discussion with hospital leaders, Dr. Allison Arwady, Commissioner, Chicago Department of Public Health, served as a panelist and Dr. Ngozi Ezike, Director, Illinois Department of Public Health, delivered remarks.

"We are proud of the work Illinois hospitals have undertaken to advance health equity," said IHA President and CEO A.J. Wilhelmi. "COVID-19 was a wakeup call for many Americans on the health disparities facing disadvantaged communities. Yet, for many years, Illinois hospitals and health systems have pioneered efforts to ensure vulnerable communities can access the healthcare they need."

Wilhelmi added: "Health Equity Action Day highlighted the progress hospitals have already made, acknowledged how we—as a hospital community—have redoubled our commitment to health equity and provided a path forward with individual hospitals identifying concrete actions they can take to deliver needed change."

The second half of Health Equity Action Day offered an opportunity for hospital leaders and staff to discuss health disparities and work on an organization-wide initiative to effect change. In addition, IHA launched the new statewide “Racial Equity in Healthcare Progress Report,” an assessment tool for hospitals to measure their progress on health equity metrics. The progress report will allow for collaboration among hospital leaders in their ongoing work to advance health equity.

“St. Bernard will continue to be on the front lines of addressing healthcare inequities, said Diahann Sinclair, Vice President of Organizational and Community Development at St. Bernard Hospital. “We continue to advance this important work with a view toward building healthier and equitable communities for all.”

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About St. Bernard Hospital

St. Bernard Hospital has served the Englewood community and Chicago's South Side since 1904. The hospital has 174 licensed beds and offers primary and specialty care, behavioral health services, dental care, imaging and rehabilitation among its services. Our mission calls us to care for the sick and promote the health of the residents in the community while witnessing the Christian values of respect, dignity, caring and compassion for all persons.

About IHA

The Illinois Health and Hospital Association, with offices in Chicago, Naperville, Springfield and Washington, D.C., advocates for Illinois' more than 200 hospitals and nearly 40 health systems as they serve their patients and communities. IHA members provide a broad range of services—not just within their walls, but across the continuum of healthcare and in their communities. Reflecting the diversity of the state, IHA members consist of nonprofit, investor-owned and public hospitals in the following categories: community, safety net, rural, critical access, specialty and teaching hospitals, including academic medical centers. For more information, see www.team-iha.org. Like IHA on Facebook. Follow IHA on Twitter.