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Social Justice & Moral Imperative for Diversity & Inclusion in Healthcare

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The concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) examines the relationships between an organization and society. CSR strategy ensures growth leads to positive economic impact by responsible corporate citizenship. It merges business and societal interests in a partnership between financial and non-financial stakeholders. Efficient operations (cost & waste reduction, productivity, growth, innovation) are aligned with operating ethically and responsibly; with integrity, transparency and accountability. Sustainability requires a strategy to achieve and balance the 3 P's of the "triple bottom line" *Profit* (operating innovatively and efficiently via a competitive advantage to create financial success), *People* (positively impact and support society, culture, community, diversity, inclusion, engagement and retention) and *Planet* (mindful stewardship of scarce resources).

Commitment to CSR builds a positive image, strengthens credibility, promotes trust, and enhances brand reputation and brand awareness. When successful, those policies will help meet present needs by positively impacting the bottom line without compromising tomorrow's long-term goals or the needs of future generations (Werbach 2009). Modern businesses are expected to look beyond the traditional metrics and motivators of financial performance, market share and shareholder profit (Manwani, 2017). According to Porter (2011), **running** a successful business is not a zero-sum proposition; simultaneously earning a profit, stimulating economic development and solving society's problems are not mutually exclusive. While he believes *most* of human nature is *not* selfless and that there is *no* incentive in creating things *just* for societal good, he suggests capitalism creates incentive which can increase social benefit *and* profit. Woods (2018) agrees; socially responsible businesses bring creative, innovative strategies and capital to solve social problems. Being socially responsible can have *both* positive societal impact *and* create profit and shareholder return.

"Old-school" business thinking was to utilize strategic management to seize opportunities for competitive advantage. In essence, a variation on the classic idiom "the fox is guarding the hen house and will do and say whatever it takes to stay there" saw corporations exploiting employees and customers in the interest of their bottom line while remaining indifferent to the environment, resources or their local communities. Altruism was on the agenda *only* when it benefited shareholders (Lantos 2002). This is no longer the case. To maintain competitive advantage, a business must consider the social impact of its operations. Why? For one reason, customers have the power to buy products or choose services provided by companies or organizations that advance sustainability and CSR initiatives. In today's business environment, focusing only on profit without CSR will stand out as an outlier (Manwani, 2017).

Diversity and inclusion efforts also present an organization with a unique opportunity to "do the right thing." Diversifying the workforce and giving everyone an equitable opportunity to advance is "the right and fair thing to do." This philosophy is but a great starting point and initial motivator to optimize sustainability.

In many regions of the US, URMM physicians provide a disproportionate amount care to underserved populations. Creating a physician workforce that matches the changing US population by diversifying the workforce can play a pivotal role in addressing health care disparities (Marrast, 2014). Street (2007) demonstrated that minority physicians are more likely to understand the issues regarding disparities impacting the care and outcomes of minority patients. In addition, trusting relationships improve outcomes and quality (Dell'Aversana, 2017). Leveraging the diverse backgrounds, experiences and skills of your team and promoting a culture of inclusion creates more effective ways to promote equity, identify and eliminate disparities and provide culturally competent care (Lightfoote, 2016). As organizations become better at addressing the needs of diverse patients, they will also attract more patients.

Successfully driving sustainable growth creates value for both patients and employees. As Werbach (2009) pointed out, engagement in business sustainability improves employee wellness, morale, productivity and motivation. A similar desirable outcome results when diverse employees feel fully included; with a high sense of engagement and belongingness. A successful business plan that embraces a positive societal role via a CSR strategy that includes broad diversity and true inclusion portends benefits for all stakeholders (business, customers, employees and communities). In health care, this helps an organization reach new patients as well as recruit, retain and develop great and happy employees.

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