

Identifying Opportunities to Support a Diverse Pipeline of Rising Medicaid Leaders

TAKEAWAYS

- Staff in leadership roles with varying experiences and identities add critical insights to Medicaid policymaking, program design, and implementation.
- To understand how to support a diverse pipeline of Medicaid leaders, the Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS) conducted a national analysis, including interviews and a survey of state agency staff at all levels.
- The analysis found that Medicaid staff value a multifaceted approach to leadership development that includes training and skill building, individualized development supports, and organizational cultural and operational strategies.
- The report, which stratifies respondents' perspectives by aspects of lived experiences, identities, and staff role, can help inform Medicaid agencies seeking to support a diverse pipeline of rising leaders.

LEARN MORE

To read the full report, visit:
www.chcs.org/rising-leaders.

Individuals enrolled in Medicaid and the staff who serve them benefit from a robust and diverse pipeline of rising leaders. Leaders with varying experiences and identities add critical insights to policymaking, program design, and implementation. A national analysis conducted by the Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS) examined the types of training provided by Medicaid agencies and the professional development resources that staff seek with a focus on supporting a diverse leadership staffing pipeline. Following are highlighted findings:

Training and Skill-Building Strategies

Training and skill-building strategies for Medicaid agency staff addressed in the survey include internal development trainings or workshops; supports to attend external trainings or workshops; skill-building or growth assignments; cross-team connections; and affinity-based leadership training opportunities.

- **Availability of training is critical.** Most Medicaid agencies surveyed provide internal development trainings or workshops for all staff. Supports to attend external trainings, skill-building or growth assignments, and cross-team connections, however, are frequently available only to some staff, and affinity-based leadership training opportunities are often not provided.
- **Training is highly valued.** These training and skill-building strategies are viewed as highly important to support a pipeline of rising Medicaid leaders with diverse experiences and/or identities. However, the lack of widespread availability of these opportunities may present barriers to the advancement of leaders within the pipeline.

Individual Development Planning Strategies

Personalized development planning supports addressed in the survey include annual development planning; mentorship; shadowing positions and meetings; and navigating Medicaid leadership growth.

- **Annual development planning supports individual growth.** Annual development planning supports are the most common individual development strategy widely available to Medicaid staff responding to the survey, though less than half indicated that these opportunities were widely available.
- **Mentorship and shadowing opportunities can be formalized.** Most respondents indicated that support navigating Medicaid leadership growth is available to some staff, while mentorship was noted as most often available on an informal basis, and shadowing opportunities were identified as largely unavailable.

Cultural and Operational Strategies and Practices

Cultural and operational strategies and practices include connections to senior leadership; peer-to-peer relationships; defined pathways to promotion; and transparency of development activities.

- **Transparency is important for growth.** Connections to leadership and transparency of development activities are the cultural and operational strategies and practices rated most widely available to Medicaid agency staff.
- **Pathways to promotion can be made clearer.** Peer-to-peer relationships (e.g., peer mentorships, unstructured staff meetings/events) were most frequently noted to be available only to some staff, and a high percentage of respondents indicated they do not know the availability of defined pathways to promotion.
- **A defined pathway to promotion is critical to supporting a diverse pipeline of leaders.** Survey respondents perceived that defined pathways to promotion and transparency of development activities are very important to supporting a pipeline of Medicaid leaders with diverse experiences and/or identities.

Insights to Support a Diverse Pipeline of Leaders

The report presents respondents' perspectives stratified by key aspects of lived experiences, identities, and role. Medicaid agencies can use the findings to inform plans for supporting a diverse pipeline of rising leaders. For example:

- **Black, Indigenous, and people of color respondents** rated annual development planning as a highly valuable opportunity for growth.
- **People with lived experience with Medicaid or another publicly funded program** highly valued having supports to attend external trainings and workshops.
- **Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual, and other sexual/gender identities** rated skill building and growth assignments highly.
- **People who identified as having a disability** rated most strategies notably different than other groups. In particular, this group highly valued mentorships.

Understanding Key Challenges and Measuring Success

Individuals with various identities and experiences rate the value of various development strategies differently — there is no one-size-fits-all. Understanding who is more likely to value specific strategies can help Medicaid agencies direct limited resources toward those who may benefit most.

Additionally, measuring the success of the development of a leadership pipeline can help ensure efforts are effective. Nascent efforts to measure the success of leadership development strategies in Medicaid agencies may include:

- **Linking success to the achievement of internal strategic goals or a broader agency vision.** For example, measures of enrollee engagement could reflect an agencies' successes in developing a leadership pipeline that is more representative of people served.
- **Using internal measures of staff experience, such as staff engagement.** This measure can help agencies understand the extent to which staff feel valued and that they belong. An internal staff survey could include questions related to internal culture or specific metrics related to the leadership pipeline.

The report also identifies opportunities to increase availability of highly valued strategies and strategically support leadership development.



ABOUT THE CENTER FOR HEALTH CARE STRATEGIES

The Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS) is a policy design and implementation partner devoted to improving outcomes for people enrolled in Medicaid. CHCS supports partners across sectors and disciplines to make more effective, efficient, and equitable care possible for millions of people across the nation. For more information, visit www.chcs.org.