



Dear Sir,

The concept of cultural competence within an organization is one that is currently gaining more and more attention. As your organization is comprised of nearly 90 percent of the licensed hospices in your state, it follows that both the staff and the clientele will reflect a large cross-section of American society. Recognizing the important role that culture plays in communication and interaction will allow the organization to enhance its reach and effectiveness. By integrating an understanding of varying beliefs, values, and attitudes into the workplace, an environment is created that fosters healthy business development.

The 2000 census ascertained that approximately 17.4 percent of the U.S. labor force was comprised of individuals born outside of the country. More than 30 million Americans speak a language other than English, and more than 20 percent of the entire population has one or more foreign-born parent. Each of these individuals is engaged in a typical life that requires employment, education, health care, and even end-of-life care.

An awareness of cultural diversity specifically leads to an improvement in services rendered in all types of organizations, but being attentive to an individual's cultural needs can have an especially tremendous positive effect during hospice care. Just as hospice recognizes patients' desire to spend their last days at home, it also recognizes that these patients wish to die with dignity. Considered regard for patients' cultural beliefs is an important method for ensuring the respect and dignity required.

In addition to offering an added degree of respect for patients, heightened cultural awareness has the ability to improve employee-employer relations at your organization, as well. Even organizations that recognize the importance of diversity among the workforce are not always "culturally competent." Cultural competence goes beyond tolerance and acceptance of people with various skin tones and includes true understanding of differences in beliefs, values, and attitudes that can affect the workplace.

Issues such as attitudes toward authority figures, concepts of time, understanding of personal space, and even accents and dialects often lead to conflicts in interpersonal communication. An organization that is competent about these differences offers a respectful environment in which employees are satisfied and loyal. Lower employee turnover is often cited as one of the benefits of cultural competence, although these data are still being collected in various studies.

One of the most-discussed fiscal benefits of cultural competence is a decrease in organizational liability. It is now being shown that organizations with a strong interest in competence – not just a diverse-looking staff – are creating an atmosphere in which a number of legal issues can be avoided altogether. For example, while a lack of access to foreign-language translators has led to lawsuits for health-care organizations in the past, those with the proper training in how to obtain appropriate resources can avoid such a pitfall. In addition to decreasing the organization's liability, the overall service to clients is significantly improved. It is a win-win situation.

Cultural competency assessment and training at your organization can have the following outcomes:

- Lower employee turnover. Employees who feel appreciated are more loyal to their organizations. Lower turnover means more experienced employees and financial savings in regards to new-employee training.
- Better quality of care. Patients who choose your organization will receive the most respectful, appropriate care for their individual needs.
- Decreased threat of liability-related lawsuits. Cultural competency means that patients' needs are met not just because of legal issues, but because it is a matter of course for the organization. This proactive approach puts your organization at less risk for lawsuits.
- Greater patient/family satisfaction. As your organization gains a reputation for respecting and observing cultural differences, patients' families will show their gratitude by referring the organization to other members of the community. There is no higher measure of satisfaction than a client's referral.
- Marketability of the certification. Once you have been assessed, trained, and certified through our company, you are free to use that certification for your own purposes. Not only does this mean that you can apply the knowledge you have gained to improve your quality of care, but you can also use it to promote your image. Some ideas to further use your certification for increased visibility include:
 - Announcing your certification on all promotional materials, including ads, brochures, and your website.
 - Creating a press release to inform the community of your certification and any subsequent new changes (many newspapers jump at the chance to focus on this "feel-good" side of health-care).
 - Contacting local diversity organizations. Many community diversity organizations provide referrals to their own network of companies for those organizations with a proven commitment to diversity.

Our company looks forward to being your partner as your organization moves forward with cultural competence assessments and trainings. Our thorough understanding of the issues regarding culture in the workplace and beyond will assist as you make these important strides for your employees, your clients, and your business. Please feel free to review the proposal we provided and to contact us with any further questions or to initiate a plan for assessments and trainings.

Sincerely,