



September 16, 2021

Road Map for Action Bulletin 4: A Deep Dive Into Strategy Two

Happy Thursday, Mount Sinai Community—

Today, we are excited to spotlight the second *Road Map for Action* strategy:

Unify and integrate clinical practices. Advocate for payment and regulatory mechanisms that would allow for the full integration and unification of clinical practices regardless of insurance status.

Last week, we discussed the term “structural racism” and how seemingly disparate elements of discrimination and bias can coalesce into larger societal inequities. This is true in many aspects of life, from housing, to education, to lifetime earnings—and even to medicine. Unifying and integrating clinical practices means analyzing and breaking down those barriers so all patients have access to, and receive, the care that will maximize their health in the same settings, from the same providers.

This goal is critical to our transformation into an anti-racist institution, but we have our work cut out for us. As many members of the Mount Sinai family know, the sad reality is that the American health care system is divided by patients’ insurance status—with providers receiving higher payments from private insurance companies than public programs like Medicaid.

What we might not always think about, however, is the fact that insurance is closely linked to economic status, which itself is connected to race and ethnicity, precisely because of structural racism. We cannot accept this reality. We must recognize it, name it, call it out as wrong, and do everything in our power to fix it. **Jeremy Boal, MD, Executive Vice President and Chief Clinical Officer of the Mount Sinai Health System and President of Mount Sinai Beth Israel and Downtown**, has experience in this.



In the early 1990s when Jeremy was an internal medicine resident at Mount Sinai, he was struck by how difficult it was for some of his patients in East and Central Harlem to access care. These patients weren't receiving the follow-up care they needed, and Jeremy still remembers how powerless he felt, despite his years of training, to make a meaningful difference in their lives.

"I went to medical school, I did all of this work, and here my patients were in need," he recalled thinking more than two decades ago, "and I was failing them."

In response, Jeremy and colleagues started doing home visits for patients who had missed follow-up appointments. It was a crash course in structural racism. Patients weren't missing appointments because they didn't care about their health, but because of larger societal issues—language barriers, unstable housing, poverty—all of which connect to race and ethnicity.

Out of that experience, Jeremy, along with David Muller, MD, co-founded the **Mount Sinai Visiting Doctors Program**, which brings compassionate care directly to patients' homes, regardless of their ability to pay. In the last 25 years, it has served thousands of New Yorkers.

This is the ideal of integrated care that Strategy Two is designed to achieve across the Health System: equal access to all care settings for everyone, regardless of insurance status or background, so they can receive the care that will maximize their health.

The work to unify and integrate care will be two-fold, Jeremy says: an "incredible sense of urgency" to change what we can internally at Mount Sinai, and a "determination to play the long game" and advocate for changes to the way health care is paid for, structured, and regulated overall. Many of those external structures create limits on what we can achieve on our own.

Our efforts are already underway, with many of our ambulatory practices, cancer and cardiac services, and the organ transplant program already unified. And there is much more work to be done.

Through these efforts, we can further the work to provide equity in care, in payments, and in outcomes for all of our patients—and we look forward to the progress that the Strategy Two working group will make in the short, intermediate, and long term.

If you'd like to learn more about the Road Map for Action and these efforts at Mount Sinai, please join us at an upcoming event listed below or in the Diversity and Inclusion events calendar listed:

Chats for Change: Anti-Racist Work, Competing Priorities for Students

Sponsored by the Department of Medical Education, this Chats for Change will discuss how student engagement in anti-racist work is critical to cultivating a community that is anti-racist in practice. Join on **Tuesday, September 21, from noon to 1 pm** to discuss student engagement from the last year, barriers to further engagement, and strategies to get more students involved. For more information and to register, click [here](#).

Latinx Heritage Month: A Conversation With Leaders—Sponsored by the Corporate Services Center Diversity Council and Heritage of Latino Alliance Employee Resource Group in celebration of Latinx Heritage Month, these conversations feature leaders from around the Health System sharing their career journeys with employees. For more information email diversity@m Mountsinai.org.

- Join on **Monday, October 4, at 11 am** to hear from Carlos Macea, Chief Supply Chain Officer. [Register here](#).
- Join on **Wednesday, October 6, at 12:30 pm** to hear from Kelley Gonzalez, Training Instructor, Information Technology. [Register here](#).

All the best,
Angela and Shawn

[Road Map for Action Website](#)
