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Role Model | Keith Marion

Leaders in Diversity

Mary K. Pratt, Special to the Journal October 25, 2013



[Keith Marion](#) knows that not everyone in the world values diversity.

“I’m a black male and I’ve had doors slammed in my face,” he said. Although those doors weren’t physical, he said the feeling of being shut out of opportunities is real. And it can happen to anyone.

That’s why, he said, he’s grateful to be in a position to ensure that doesn’t happen to others. Marion is the inclusion programs manager at Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Inc., a Wellesley-based nonprofit health plan provider with revenue of \$2.7 billion in 2012.

“For me, this is an opportunity to open up doors, whether it’s for the employer or an employee or a vendor or a member,” Marion said. “It’s a way for me to help people realize their full potential.”

His outlook along with his efforts has earned him a Leaders in Diversity Role Model award.

Marion started in his position about 18 months ago, after working for two decades in finance and health care technology, e-business and business management at HPHC and elsewhere.

He moved from his position managing the organization’s internal website to the newly created position in HPHC’s Center for Inclusion Initiatives because he saw it as a career opportunity as well as a way to expand his work engaging employees across the organization.

He took up the position at a time when HPHC elevated diversity to a strategic initiative and a business imperative. His main areas of focus are creating and managing high-performing, cross-functional teams to support the corporate inclusion initiative; driving integration of inclusion into how HPHC conducts its daily business; catalyzing accountability at the leadership levels; and developing a collaborative environment around this initiative.

“For me, it’s not about operating on a level-playing field. It’s about creating an environment where everyone can play, where everyone is invited to the party, and everyone’s voice is heard,” Marion explained.

His contributions are helping advance the diversity and inclusion efforts among the 1,250 employees at HPHC. During his tenure, the organization received a perfect score of 100 from the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) for its annual Corporate Equality Index and named it a 2013 Best Place to Work based on advancement of best practices for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender employees. And his contributions to HPHC’s ad campaign targeting employee hiring and retention helped the company achieve a 7 percent increase in the diversity of its manager and executive personnel.

[Karen Young](#), who as director of Learning, Development & Inclusion at HPHC oversees Marion’s work, said his contributions are multifaceted. She cited his strategic and integrative thinking and professionalism among his contributions and praised him as independent, creative, positive, results-oriented and an effective communicator.

“Keith is an enthusiastic champion and role model, with an effective and engaging way to show and share his enthusiasm, knowledge and talents with his colleagues and business partners. He listens and then acts, engaging others in the solution,” she said. “He acts as a resource for colleagues, providing leadership and mentoring, a natural coach and contributor to the community.”