



Carisk Kaleidoscope

December 20, 2024 | V05 . Q01

DIVERSITY COUNCIL MISSION STATEMENT

There are over 330 million people in the United States of America and everyone is diverse in their own way. At Carisk, we celebrate everyone's uniqueness.

Carisk Partners will be leaders by continuing to embrace the differences of its team members to expand its competitive edge; while promoting a diverse and inclusive environment through our commitment to education both internally and externally. We will leverage our unique capacity as change agents to strengthen our relationships with our Carisk team members, and with the communities and business partners we all serve.

Carisk Partners is proud of the diversity of its company's members, irrespective of genetic information, race, color, religion, age, sex, range of abilities, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, or veteran's status.

We will strive to do well by doing good.



"I have always loved meeting new people from different backgrounds. It was always intriguing to me to hear someone else's "story". It is my strong belief that people and organizations make better decisions when they have diversity of thoughts. Each of us bring our life experiences into all we do. Everyone's life experiences generally created a perspective, whether consciously or unconsciously. Having a diverse workplace only strengthens the paths we choose to take."

–Joseph Berardo, Jr., Executive Chairman

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Welcome to Carisk Kaleidoscope's 2024 winter edition. The Council wishes every Carisk Family member and their loved ones a wonderful and safe holiday season with lots of laughter, great memories and amazing food.

2024 is ending on a high note as we welcome the 6th member to join us this year, Emillie De Castro.

David, has organized our 8th Annual "Hope for the Holidays" campaign which will last until Friday, January 3, at 5 PM. Once again, we have a great opportunity to make a difference in the lives of the vulnerable and less fortunate.

Diane, delivered Weight Loss Bias, and contributed towards Pioneers, and Resources.

Sunita, provided Breast Cancer Awareness.

Lori T., introduced us to World Prematurity Day and contributed towards Resources.



Xiomara, presented Welcome Alcove, Celebrating Carisk's Diversity, Special Days, International Days of Persons with Disabilities, and Words to Live By.

Please visit our Resource page for additional items.

Thank you CK planning committee (Diane, Lori H., Sunita and Xiomara), and all Council members for all of your collaborations which include our thoughtful discussions, ideas and participation in our Council meetings. See you in 2025.

Anabel 

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	1	Italian-American Heritage Month	13
Unity.....	2	Words to Live By	14
Members of the Diversity Council.....	3	Men’s Health Awareness Month	15
Welcome Alcove.....	4	World Prematurity Day	16
The Talk	5	Diversity Poster.....	17
Benefits and Challenges of the Multigenerational Workforce	7	International Day of Persons with Disabilities.....	18
AI Brings Opportunities And Risks To Workplace DEI Efforts	7	Special Days	19
How Does Weight Bias and Stigma Affect Patients With Obesity?	9	Pioneers!	21
Positivity Poster	10	Happy Holidays.....	22
Breast Cancer Awareness Month.....	11	Resources.....	23

UNITY

If the blood we have is the same within
Why discriminate based on the tone of skin?
So what if we are different in the texture of face
It does not deny we are members of the human race

We are all certainly unique in our own special way
But we are all still human at the end of the day
We are the same and are smaller parts of one
The same race that lives under the same sun

We should work together and give all an equal chance
Trust and love each other to make our heart dance
Only then can our race stand strong for an eternity
The obvious secret is none other than the power of unity

Daya Nandan



MEMBERS OF THE DIVERSITY COUNCIL



LEADER OF THE DIVERSITY COUNCIL

Anabel Rawlins, FOUNDER

Provider Relations Specialist
Miami, FL

"We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their color."

– Maya Angelou



Xiomara Alonso

Vice President of People and Culture
Miami, FL

True diversity is about meeting people where they are. Creating an atmosphere where everyone feels welcomed and valued to contribute openly, honestly, and respectfully.



Jen Andrews

Executive Assistant
Remote

"The beauty of the world lies in the diversity of its people."

–Unknown



Nubia Aparicio

Human Resources Executive Administrator
Remote

"Diversity is being invited to the party. Inclusion is being asked to dance."

–Verna Myers



Sally Balioni, FOUNDER

Senior Vice President of Sales, Amplified Intelligence
Wall, NJ

"You cannot change what you are, only what you do."



Natasha Charleston

Behavioral Health Specialist
Miami, FL

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that."

– The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



Emillie De Castro

Executive Assistant
Miami, FL

"Diversity is not about how we differ. Diversity is about embracing one another's uniqueness."

– Ola Joseph



Brian DeNichilo

Junior Data Scientist
Florham Park, NJ

"No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite."

–Nelson Mandela



Shannon Ehrola

Director, Brand Creative
Wall, NJ

"The beauty of the world lies in the diversity of its people."

–Unknown



Peter Halas

Surgical Implant Management
Wall, NJ

Diversity and inclusion were issues I never focused on because they were part of my every day life through sports and interactions with people of every race/religion/creed etc. Now, as the proud parent of a daughter with Down Syndrome diversity and inclusion are at the fore of everything we do trying to find places for everyone to be accepted and valued as they are.



Nikia Harris

Arbitration Coordinator
Florham Park, NJ

"Power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love."

–Martin Luther King Jr.



Lori Height, FOUNDER

Senior Executive Assistant, Sales and Finance
Wall, NJ

Promoting a community of acceptance and belonging



Anne Lepre

Sales Executive
Wall, NJ

"In diversity there is beauty and there is strength"

–Maya Angelou



Sunita Mathur, FOUNDER

Claim File Coordinator
Florham Park, NJ

"Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and the test of our civilization."

–Mahatma Gandhi



Diane Nicolo, FOUNDER

Vice President of Administration
Remote

"Every person is a new door to a different world"



Michael Rydman, FOUNDER

Senior Vice President, Sales
Benicia, California

"All men are created equal"

–Thomas Jefferson, 1776



Allen Spokane, FOUNDER

Chief Technology Officer/Chief Information Security Officer
Florham Park, NJ

"Nobody Wins Unless Everybody Wins"

– Bruce Springsteen



Lori Terraciano

Staff Accountant
Florham Park, NJ

"We all live with the objective of being happy; our lives are all different and yet the same."

–Anne Frank



David Vittoria, FOUNDER

Chief Behavioral Health Officer
Miami, FL

"Our diversity is the one thing we all have in common."

WELCOME ALCOVE

Congratulations on becoming a part of Carisk Partners! We welcome our fifty-eight new team members who joined us in Q3, 2024 and wish all of you a successful journey.



- **HeadsUp Team**-We're thrilled to have you join our growing family! Our teams share a common mission and values in our service to others, so we know you will be a natural addition to the rich tapestry of backgrounds and experiences that makes our culture unique. We look forward to you sharing your voice, learning from you, and helping to further shape the future of our inclusive workplace. Together, we can continue building an environment where everyone feels valued and heard.
- **Sally Cash**-is coming aboard as a Regional Sales Executive for Payment Integrity, reporting to Wendy Goddard, VP of Sales. Sally will be working closely with the Sales, Clinical and the Transactional Operations teams to lead successful business relationships and delivery of services to meet our client's expectations. She will be identifying and growing opportunities within existing client partner networks and leading new ones within her Midwest territory.
- **Anthony Castano**-is joining us as a Systems Analyst reporting to Humberto Moya, Senior VP, Information Technology. Anthony will be working closely with all of our teams in a systems support role. He will be helping with our network systems and users while simultaneously collecting data, observing workflows and monitoring system activity to identify vulnerabilities and opportunities for improvement.
- **Anna Cofrancesco**-is the newest Call Center Agent, reporting to Kelly DeNichilo. Previously, Anna has worked in the capacity of customer service and guest support in fast paced environments, while ensuring positive guest experiences. Anna will be working with internal and external stakeholders, i.e., patients, claims adjusters, radiology facilities, referring providers, etc. to provide concierge service and deliver superior service.
- **David Ferguson**-has joined Carisk as Director of Provider Network Strategy, reporting to Elizabeth Jennings, Senior VP, Provider Network. Dave will be working closely with Liz on the Carisk and Heads Up integration. He will be focusing on the expansion of Carisk's behavioral health network and driving the strategy behind contracts with regional and national providers with the goal of creating a competitive and stable provider network.
- **Tracey Lyons**-is one of our newest Workers' Compensation Care Coordinators, reporting to Amanda Dennison, Manager, Clinical Operations. Tracey will be working closely with both the medical and behavioral health clinical teams to assess and analyze our patient's medical, behavioral and/or vocational status to ensure Carisk's patient-centered, strengths based biopsychosocial approach.
- **Silpa Nair**-is coming aboard as Director of Provider Network Management, reporting to Elizabeth Jennings, Senior VP, Provider Network. Silpa will help oversee the future direction and development of Carisk's provider networks for both our Outcomes and Imaging divisions, with the goal of creating a competitive and stable provider network. She will also be spearheading special projects and initiatives, as well as updating internal workflows/processes where needed.
- **Jacqueline "Cyd" Spurlock**-has also joined us as the latest Workers' Compensation Care Coordinator, reporting to Kevin Glennon, Manager, Clinical Operations. Cyd will be working closely with the medical and behavioral health clinical teams to assess and analyze our patient's medical, behavioral and/or vocational status to ensure Carisk's patient-centered, strengths based on biopsychosocial approach.

HeadsUp Team, Sally, Anthony, Anna, Dave, Tracey, Silpa, and Jacqueline once again, WELCOME ABOARD from the entire Carisk Family! 



THE TALK

Featuring topics on Diversity, Equality and Inclusion which trigger thought and conversation

Why Abandoning Diversity Efforts Will Hurt Your Bottom Line

Julie Kratz, Contributor for Forbes | Julie Kratz promotes allyship in the workplace.

Updated Nov 6, 2024, 05:06pm EST

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives have become a hot-button topic in politics and at work. While some organizations are doubling down on their commitment to creating inclusive workplaces, others are quietly (or not so quietly) abandoning these efforts. But stepping away from DEI can have significant, and often overlooked, consequences for your business.



While there is an obvious moral argument for DEI, there is also a lasting impact on a company's profitability, innovation and long-term success. Diversity is a fact. The [workforce will be majority non-white and women by 2030](#). Inclusion is the path to leveraging the full range of talent of a diverse workforce. Equity is about fixing systems to meet historically marginalized people (women, people of color, those with disabilities, LGBTQ+ folks) where they are at with tools and resources to improve their chances of success.

A Case Study on Staying Committed to DEI

For example, [Amazon](#), is seizing the opportunity to double down on its DEI commitments as a competitive advantage, even in a turbulent DEI market, even in the face of complaints they have faced from employees. According to the [Seattle Times](#), "more than two years after launching an audit to study racial equity in its warehouses, Amazon quietly released the results last month, revealing workers' concerns over inequities, despite

programs the company already has in place.”

Its recent equity audit found:

- 69% of its 1.5 million U.S. workers are BIPOC (Black, Indigenous or People of Color).
- Its 13 employee-led affinity groups are key to helping employees feel like they are included and belong.
- Men accounted for 73% of senior leaders in the U.S., down from 77% in 2020.
- 63% of the senior leadership team are white, down from 70% in 2020.

Amazon is facing the reality that the world is becoming more diverse. While its front lines may be majority non-white, like most organizations, it becomes more white at leadership levels. Amazon recognizes that this is a problem because leadership isn't reflecting the communities, employees and potential customers it hopes to serve. To not diversify leadership and practice DEI is to risk being irrelevant. Amazon, like many global industry leaders, recognizes the long-term value of DEI and is willing to forgo short-term temptations to shy away from its commitment.

Other industries are also taking this opportunity to pivot to inclusion as a competitive advantage. [E.L.F. Beauty](#) and [Microsoft](#) have made recent statements about their long-term commitment to DEI in the face of adversity.

How Quitting Hurt The Bottom Line


The latest [pushback](#) has centered on the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) and its index that many Fortune 500 companies participate in. In response to recent departures from the HRC index, they find that [72% of LGBTQ+ adults](#) say they would feel less accepted at companies that roll back DEI. Given that 7.6% of U.S. adults identify as LGBTQ+, and the community also has \$1.4 trillion in buying power, this is worrisome for companies that have divested in DEI. It is estimated that the cost of exclusion is over [\\$1 trillion](#) on the economy.

Exclusion, whether intentional or unintentional, stifles innovation by limiting the diversity of perspectives and experiences contributing to the creative process. Studies find that decision-making rates are [87% better](#) on diverse led teams. Psychological safety, the ability to feel mentally safe at work, is also the number one predictor of team performance according to [Project Aristotle](#). To forgo DEI is to decrease your chances of being innovative, and hinder your ability to make the best decisions and improve your team's performance.

McKinsey & Company's annual DEI report finds profitability rates are 39% higher with diverse leadership. In addition, companies that prioritize diversity and inclusion are twelve times more likely to engage and retain employees, 8.4 times more likely to inspire a sense of belonging and are 8.5 times more likely to satisfy and retain customers. These business results should get the attention of leadership. Quitting on DEI will most certainly hurt the bottom line.

Given the rapidly changing marketplace that is only becoming more diverse, divesting from DEI will hurt the bottom line. Being fickle about DEI is a business risk. Data shows that staying the course on DEI is a competitive advantage.

Please visit this link for a short video: <https://csnews.com/video-dei-fiction-vs-fact>

“The industry is growing, not shrinking. The key shift in the last two years has been companies doing the work but not talking as publicly about the work. And that's a good thing. Companies should be doing the work because it's important, not to get public recognition.” Julie Kratz, Forbes Contributor 


BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF THE MULTIGENERATIONAL WORKFORCE

The modern workplace is witnessing a significant shift as multigenerational workforces have become the new normal. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, more Americans than ever before are now working past the age of 55, putting businesses in the unique position of being able to leverage the strengths of several generations within one company. While managing a diverse workforce with generational differences can come with its challenges, the advantages of a multigenerational workforce far outweigh any complexities and can lead to increased team morale and a positive company culture. In this article, we will be discussing how you can manage a multigenerational workforce.



Key Takeaways

1. The generations that **make up the multigenerational workforce**.
2. How to **manage a multigenerational workforce**.
3. **Challenges** of having a multigenerational workforce.
4. **Benefits** of having a multigenerational workforce.

Please visit this link for the entire article: [The Multigenerational Workforce](#) 

AI BRINGS OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS TO WORKPLACE DEI EFFORTS

[Editors' Pick](#) | [Rebekah Bastian](#) | Forbes Contributor | Rebekah Bastian writes about workplace culture, equity and belonging

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has the potential to revolutionize almost every industry. It also poses significant [risks](#) to society and humanity, which is why it is crucial to have robust guidance and resources from both public and private sectors to ensure its positive impact. Along those lines, the Biden-Harris administration recently released a [fact sheet](#) about their efforts to safeguard people's rights and safety while maximizing the benefits of this groundbreaking technology.

One area where AI can either bolster or undermine progress is in corporate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives. I spoke with several experts to explore the potential positive and negative outcomes of AI on DEI efforts, as well as how to ensure that AI is helping, rather than harming, those efforts.



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Positive Potential

There are several ways in which AI can be used to further workplace DEI efforts. These include improvements to hiring and performance management processes, bias detection in content, and identifying patterns of discrimination.

“AI can be leveraged at almost every point in the recruiting process, from onboarding to pipeline management to employee experience and engagement,” shared Ariel Lopez, founder and CEO of [Knac](#).

“AI algorithms can flag biases and improve hiring, performance management, and compensation policies helping to ensure equal opportunities for employee growth,” added Shawn Ramirez, VP of data science at [Glue](#). “AI recruiting tools can help companies balance the pool of candidates by improving the inclusivity of language used in job descriptions, and by sourcing candidates from underrepresented groups. AI for employee engagement can help a company surface when underrepresented groups feel disengaged, unearth root causes, and launch targeted interventions and support programs to improve retention and advancement among a diverse range of employees.”

Sarah Allali, CEO of [Floode](#), explained, “AI models can play a crucial role in promoting diversity and equity at all stages of the employee journey. By replacing quantitative questionnaires with more nuanced analysis of employees’ qualitative feedback, companies can gain a deeper understanding of their employees and identify patterns of discrimination. Also, a properly trained AI can understand individuals in a deeper and more comprehensive way than managers. AI can precisely comprehend the context and problems of each person, and take into account specific parameters to make decisions and create consensus that surpasses the limitations of managers.”

In addition to AI tools that can help companies boost DEI efforts, there are many stories from employees who have been able to leverage AI to [improve their work communications](#). This can be particularly impactful for employees that are working in their non-native language, and neurodivergent employees that have barriers to communication. This increased ability to communicate effectively can lead to a greater sense of [belonging](#) in the workplace.

Negative Potential

While AI can help promote DEI, there are risks involved if it is not properly designed and implemented. AI has the potential to perpetuate existing biases, and is only as good as the data that it is trained on.

“Existing patterns of bias and discrimination that lurk in the workplace also lurk in data. Without DEI-conscious development, AI will pick up these patterns and return outputs that can perpetuate and even exacerbate biases,” shared Ramirez. “AI systems should be carefully developed, monitored, and tested for fairness, explainability and inclusivity to mitigate these risks.”

Shirin Nikaein, co-founder and CEO of [Upful.ai](#), added, “It’s important to understand what data was used to train the AI and if the creators considered how bias in the data could impact the outcomes. When you use AI to have full control and make decisions, not just augment or help a manual process, and when folks don’t fully understand how the AI is making that decision, it can perpetuate and amplify bias.”

It’s also important to recognise that AI cannot replace trained DEI practitioners – it can only be used to intentionally scale their expertise.

Latesha Byrd, CEO of [Perfeqta](#), cautioned, “DEI is based on human experiences, which means companies cannot let the convenience of AI override the human element when making decisions about equity.”

Risk Mitigation

To ensure that AI is helping rather than harming DEI efforts, companies should regularly audit algorithms to ensure they are free from discriminatory elements and take measures to secure and protect the data collected and used for AI systems. Companies should also have a trained human in the loop to review AI outputs and intervene when necessary.

“To ensure responsible and ethical AI innovation that supports DEI efforts, companies must adopt safeguards such as diverse and representative data sets, regular audits, transparent AI systems and clear ethical guidelines,” shared Nikita Gupta, co-founder of [careerflow.ai](#).

Alejandro Martinez Agenjo, CEO and co-founder of [Erudit](#), noted the importance of both public and private AI

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guardrails. “As policymakers work on developing rules around AI, it’s important for people-first organizations to come together and create their guidelines, to ensure ethical and equitable use of the technology,”

One of the initiatives that the Biden-Harris administration announced involves \$140 million in R&D funding to launch seven new National AI Research Institutes.

Christina Blacken, founder and CEO of [The New Quo](#), saw the potential in that funding. “One of the biggest problems with Generative AI is that it’s an extreme scale AI. Extreme scale AI models are expensive to train and only so many companies can do so without outside funding. This concentrates power into the hands of a few companies, which leads to higher levels of bias and risk. This new R&D fund could potentially mitigate the financial problem of properly training generative AI, allowing smaller companies with higher levels of cultural competency to also be involved in vetting and shaping these tools, so that instead of promoting bias, the tools reduce bias.”

As with many cutting-edge innovations, it’s not the technology that is good or bad. The potential for AI to impact corporate DEI efforts in positive or negative ways comes down to how it is developed, used and monitored. The opportunity to create a more equitable and diverse workforce through the use of AI is there, and it’s up to everyone working on or with that technology to mitigate the potential risks and to leverage it for greater good. 🔄



HOW DOES WEIGHT BIAS AND STIGMA AFFECT PATIENTS WITH OBESITY?



Obesity stigma is a major issue in our society. This type of stigma has negative effects on the victims and we need to eradicate it. In order to do that, we need to be able to understand what weight bias is and why this type of discrimination is unacceptable.

What is Weight Bias?

Weight bias is negative attitudes, beliefs, judgments, stereotypes, and discriminatory acts aimed at individuals simply because of their weight. It can be overt or subtle and occur in any setting, including employment, healthcare, education, mass media and relationships with family and friends. It also takes many forms – verbal, written, media, online and more. Weight bias is dehumanizing and damaging: it can cause adverse physical and psychological health outcomes and promotes a social norm that marginalizes people.

If you have been a victim of obesity stigma and bias, you are not alone.

Please visit this link for the entire article:

[Weight Bias and Stigma](#) 🔄



POSITIVITY POSTER

Today you could be standing
next to someone who is trying
their best not to fall apart.
So whatever you do today,
do it with kindness in your heart



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BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

October 2024

Early puberty may contribute to increase in breast cancer among younger women

Doctors aren't clear why there's been an increase in diagnoses of a specific type of tumor, but hormones are likely a key driver.

More younger women are getting breast cancer, and doctors are scrambling to understand why.

Rates of breast cancer in women under 50 have increased more than 15% in the last two decades, a rise that is almost entirely driven by an increase in estrogen receptor-positive breast cancer (ER+), a tumor subtype that needs the hormone estrogen to grow and spread.

[Estrogen receptor-positive breast cancer](#) is the most common type among all age groups. Because this specific type of breast cancer is almost exclusively causing the spike in younger women, some doctors suspect the trend is related to more people in the U.S. getting their periods earlier and having their [first baby later](#).



"Women are being exposed to more estrogen over their lifespans," said Dr. Alexandra Thomas, a medical oncologist at Duke Health. "That's probably a big piece of it, but we don't know why we're seeing earlier periods."

Numerous factors are likely behind the increase — including obesity, alcohol consumption, genetics and some hormonal birth control — but the role early puberty plays in a woman's breast cancer risk is gaining attention. The age of puberty for girls has been falling for decades, especially among Black and Asian Americans.

"This work is still in the early stage," said Dr. Adetunji Toriola, a molecular epidemiologist at Washington University's Siteman Cancer Center. "But we do know from some of our previous work and the work of others that we know certain factors that may be responsible. We know that these reproductive factors can relate to breast cancers."

Earlier menstruation, later motherhood

It's long been known that starting puberty significantly early is linked to greater risk of developing breast cancer, although there's little research yet about its influence on age at diagnosis.

A [study](#) published earlier this year in JAMA Network Open found that women born from 1950 to 1969 were, on average, 12.5 when they had their first period. Less than 9% had menarche — the scientific term for a girl's first menstrual period — before age 11, which is considered early. Just 0.6% of these women had their first period before age 9, or very early.

Girls born from 2000 to 2005 got their first period, on average, just before they turned 12, half a year earlier than those born 40 to 50 years prior. Rates of early and very early menarche also increased, jumping to 15.5% and 1.4%, respectively.

"If you begin your period before 11, you're at higher risk for breast cancer, and now the average age [of menarche] just keeps decreasing," said Dr. Eleonora Teplinsky, head of breast and gynecologic medical oncology at Valley Health System in New Jersey.

Studies have suggested that for every year younger a girl is when she gets her period, her lifetime breast cancer [risk increases](#) by about 5%. Developing breasts early also increases breast cancer risk. A [study](#) of nearly 50,000 women found that girls who developed breasts before age 10 had a 23% higher risk of developing breast cancer in their lives compared to those who began to develop breasts at age 12 or 13.

When a woman starts menstruating, her ovaries release estrogen and progesterone. Both can play a role in increasing a woman's risk for [hormone-sensitive subtypes of breast cancer](#), which usually grow more slowly and are easier to treat. About 75% of breast cancers are sensitive to at least one hormone, usually progesterone or estrogen, according to the [American Cancer Society](#).

At the same time, [women are having children later in life](#), or choosing not to have children.

While having a baby may temporarily increase a woman's breast cancer risk, it slightly lowers long-term risk, said Dr. Ann Partridge, co-founder and director of the Program for Young Adults with Breast Cancer at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.

Although a woman stops her menstrual cycle while pregnant, "it's not just how many cycles a person has been exposed to, but it's also about the timing of pregnancy, which is not related to estrogen," Partridge said.

Instead, it may have something to do with changes that occur in the breast postpartum, when a woman's mammary glands go back to a pre-pregnancy state. This elevated risk is [higher among women](#) who have babies later in life.

"Women who have children before age 30 have a decreased risk of developing breast cancer long term," Partridge said. "We don't know why, but the older you are when you have your first pregnancy, the higher-risk you are in the short term."

Partridge added that it's unclear why, but it may have to do with younger bodies typically being better at quelling inflammatory responses and repairing damaged DNA.

What's known about breast cancer in younger women

Doctors are still scratching the surface in researching why breast cancer is becoming more prevalent at a younger age.

"Women are either not having children or having children later in life. They're not breastfeeding as much, which does increase breast cancer risk. But that's not all of it," said Teplinsky. "We know that obesity and sedentary lifestyles contribute, but why all of a sudden are we seeing this increased risk?"

Teplinsky said more research is needed into the link between environmental toxins — such as chemicals known as [endocrine disruptors](#) — and breast cancer.


A [study](#) published earlier this year in the journal *Frontiers in Toxicology* found that nearly 200 chemicals linked to breast cancer are used in food packaging, including cardboard. Some recent studies have suggested [using estrogen-only birth control can slightly raise a woman's risk of breast cancer](#).

Obesity could be another driver of younger diagnosis of breast cancer, but the association is complicated. Obesity is believed to be one of several factors that together can [trigger earlier puberty](#). It can also raise the risk of breast cancer by [as much as 30%](#), but research suggests this is only in postmenopausal women, especially if a woman also has difficulty regulating blood sugar levels.

That would indicate that obesity likely isn't much of a factor in the rising rates of breast cancer among younger women, said Toriola, of Washington University.

Toriola said most of the research being done on lifestyle factors and breast cancer is conducted on women in all age groups, which makes it difficult to tease out specific factors for younger women.

He added that more clinics should adopt risk-predictive models, such as the [Tyrer-Cuzick risk assessment](#), that take into account more than just a woman's personal and family breast cancer history and mutations, and include other factors such as early puberty.

"They're a holistic overview of a woman's risk of developing breast cancer," Toriola said. "They take into consideration all the risk factors and would be a better indication of what actions and screening a woman would need to take." 



ITALIAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

Alexander Graham Bell Did Not Invent The Telephone



Generations of children in the United States were raised to revere Alexander Graham Bell as the inventor of the telephone. We learned about how his work with the deaf led to interest about the artificial transmission of sound, and how he filed the first patent for the telephone in 1876. But while Bell may have been the first to patent the telephone, he was not the first to have invented it.



That honor goes to a little-known Italian immigrant named Antonio Meucci.

After moving from Italy to Staten Island in 1850, Meucci began to experiment with the electromagnetic transmission of sound. In 1856, he succeeded in building a functioning telephone which he described in his notes:

It consists of a vibrating diaphragm and an electrified magnet with a spiral wire that wraps around it. The vibrating diaphragm alters the current of the magnet. These alterations of current, transmitted to the other end of the wire, create analogous vibrations of the receiving diaphragm and reproduce the word. (translated)


Meucci developed over 30 different types of telephones, but began running into financial problems. Unable to secure funding for his invention, it was not until 1871 that he finally applied for protection of his idea. In one of history's most bitter lessons, his caveat omitted any mention that the variable

electrical conduction in the transmission wires was to be converted to sound—the key point of the telephone. Meucci's poor command of English may have been the prime factor in his inability to secure a patent with his poorly-written caveat. To make matters worse, the Western Union affiliate laboratory he had been working with lost the functioning models of his invention. Five years later, Alexander Graham Bell successfully filed his patent for the telephone, and was credited with its invention.

Meucci tried to challenge Bell's claim, but failed in court. He died nearly penniless and unknown to history until 2002, when the US Congress [officially recognized](#) him as the true inventor of the telephone. 🌐



WORDS TO LIVE BY



“ONE OF THE DEEP SECRETS OF LIFE
IS THAT
ALL THAT IS REALLY WORTH DOING
IS WHAT WE DO FOR OTHERS.”

LEWIS CARROLL

MOVEMBER



MEN'S HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Men's Health Awareness Month, also known as Movember, aims to raise awareness and reduce stigma around men's health issues.

A Personal Account From Vanessa Welch

Movember is a time that resonates deeply with me and carries a message that's more important than ever. In August 2020, I lost my husband, Alan Welch, to melanoma - 11 months after his diagnosis. His passing was a reminder of just how fragile life can be, and of the vital importance of caring for ourselves — physically and mentally. Movember isn't just about growing moustaches; it's about changing how we talk about health, especially men's health, in every sense. Did you know that globally, 70% of premature deaths in men are preventable? And, men are far less likely to seek help, whether for a persistent cough or a mental health struggle. Too often, we put our health on the back burner, pushing through stress and ignoring the signs. Let's make a commitment — to ourselves and each other — to look after our health. Book that appointment, check in with a friend, or even just take a moment to rest and recharge. Whether it's physical or mental, taking care of our well-being is the most important work we can do. Let's start conversations that can truly make a difference. Here's to Movember: to awareness, action, and living well for those we love.



Vanessa and Alan Welch

"It's better to be the oldest one in the gym than the youngest one in a nursing home." – Robert Lufkin, MD-Medical School Professor (UCLA & USC) and New York Times bestselling author

WORLD PREMATURETY DAY

November 17

Preterm birth is when a baby is born too early, before 37 weeks of pregnancy have been completed.

Race and socio-economic factors, as well as certain health factors, including mental health, seem to be related to a higher incidence of preterm birth.

Per data from the CDC provided on November 8, 2024, the preterm birth rate declined 1% from 2021 to 2022, to 10.4%, following an increase of 4% from 2020 to 2021. However, racial and ethnic differences in preterm birth rates remain. In 2022, preterm birth among Black women (14.6%) was about 50% higher than White (9.4%) or Hispanic women (10.1%).

Many times, we do not know what causes women to deliver their babies early. Several factors may increase the likelihood that a woman could deliver early. Below are groups with higher rates of preterm birth.

Demographic or social characteristics

- Teens.
- Women who become pregnant over age 35.
- Black women.*
- Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander women.*
- American Indian or Alaska Native women.*
- Women with lower incomes.
- Women experiencing stress.

Pregnancy and medical conditions

- Women who have had a prior preterm birth.
- Women with an infection.
- Women carrying more than 1 baby (twins, triplets, or more).
- Women with high blood pressure conditions during pregnancy.

Behavioral characteristics

- Women who use tobacco.
- Women who use drugs.

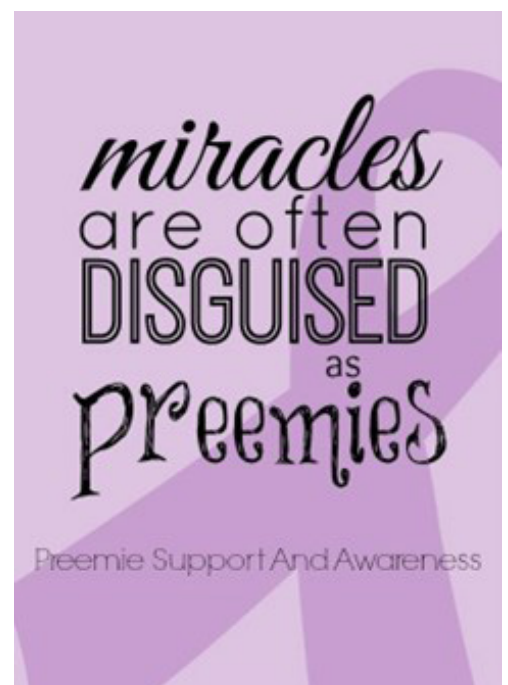
*Race is used to describe and categorize groups of people by physical characteristics such as skin color or lineage. It is not a biological driver of differences in preterm birth.

Talk with your doctor about signs of preterm labor and what to do.

Please visit the following links to learn more: [Premature Births in the US](#)

Smallest NICU Baby - The Story of Baby Jo” on YouTube

https://youtu.be/s9VI2OpXG1I?si=UHuBpmClc_tX3DsD 



DIVERSITY POSTER



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

December 3, 2024

By: SHRM Foundation

It's estimated that **12.2% of U.S. adults have a mobility disability**. Of this number, an estimated **5.5 million Americans use wheelchairs** (encompassing manual wheelchairs, power wheelchairs, and scooters). Yet, a 2022 report found that the 10 largest U.S. airlines lost, damaged, or destroyed **1.62% of wheelchairs and scooters**, or approximately **1,008 wheelchairs each month**. This damage not only causes harm to wheelchair users' dignity and independence, but also curtails their workforce participation and productivity.




Damage of personal durable medical equipment by commercial airlines poses a significant threat to the sustainability of business travel for professionals with disabilities. In 2023, **11,527 wheelchairs and scooters were damaged or destroyed by commercial airlines**, a number thought to be **significantly underrepresentative** due to the administrative onus of filing a claim that is placed upon the wheelchair user. Each instance of damage represents a significant threat to a traveler's independence, dignity, mobility, and independence. Travelers who use wheelchairs also face threats to their physical safety when flying commercially.

Airline and airport staff are tasked with providing hands-on assistance to passengers as they board, deplane, and navigate the airport. Non-ambulatory wheelchair users are required to transfer into a designated "aisle chair" in order to board and deplane the aircraft. This is done with the assistance of airline staff or contract workers and involves anywhere from minor to significant direct physical contact, depending upon the individual's needs. In numerous occasions, this onerous, invasive practice has led to travelers being dropped or injured. **In 2019, paralyzed veteran Charles Brown spent three months in the hospital with a fractured tailbone after airline contractors dropped him onto the jetway.**

Another barrier to accessible air travel is the lack of accessible restrooms on most commercial planes. As of 2019, only **4.5% of the top eight U.S. airlines' single-aisle aircraft** had an accessible restroom. In July 2023, U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg **announced a new rule** requiring new single-aisle planes with at least 125 seats to have accessible lavatories. The requirement for at least one accessible lavatory will apply to planes ordered 10 years or delivered 12 years after the rule takes effect this fall, except for future models of planes, which will have to comply within one year. However, there is no requirement that current planes be retrofitted, nor that smaller regional planes with fewer than 125 seats comply.

The inaccessibility of air travel is impacting disabled consumers' choices. A 2024 **survey by The Century Foundation** found that about 70% of travelers with disabilities "passed up on airline travel in the previous years due to accessibility concerns." Reasons included concerns about the handling of their wheelchairs, the inability to access a restroom on the aircraft, and the perceived incompetence of airline staff and contract workers. For business travelers with mobility disabilities, the decision to forgo flying is not always straightforward.

The Bureau of Transportation Statistics estimates that **26% of business trips span 250 miles or more**. Constraints of time, distance, and convenience lead many people to prefer air travel. Alternative modes such as car or rail are often impractical or even impossible in a fast-paced, global economy. 



"People with disabilities will not be able to effectively compete for jobs, vacation with their families, or seek needed medical care until safe and dignified air travel is guaranteed for all passengers with disabilities."
—Heather Ansley, Chief Policy Officer, Paralyzed Veterans of America

SPECIAL DAYS

SPOTLIGHT is for HFTH !!!



Proud to be a Carisk Partner



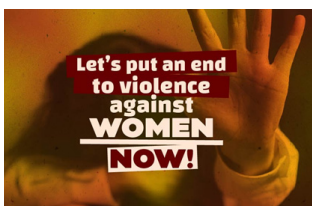
November 11—January 3—Hope for the Holidays Campaign gives us an opportunity to share our good fortune with those experiencing challenges during this holiday season. Our donations will support these dedicated organizations provide much needed assistance to the individuals they are committed to help throughout 2025.



October 10—World Mental Health Day—This day seeks to raise awareness about mental illness. This day aims to educate the population and mobilize efforts in support of mental health. Mental health includes a person's emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It has become increasingly important in recent decades as an estimated 350 million people worldwide suffer from depression.

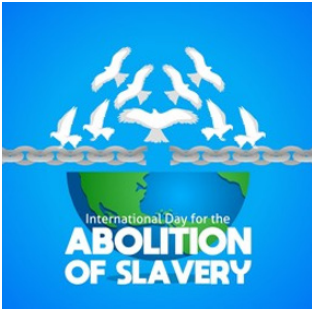


November 16—International Tolerance Day—The International Day of Tolerance seeks to promote tolerance, respect, appreciation and cooperation amongst the world's different cultures. Tolerance refers to the recognition and acceptance of looks, opinions, beliefs and practices that differ from one's own. Tolerance is considered the backbone of human rights and fundamental freedoms as people are naturally different. Tolerance allows mixed communities to thrive and ensures that all humans are equally important.



November 25—International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women Every 10 minutes a woman is killed somewhere in the world. This day seeks to raise awareness about violence against women. It aims to eliminate violence by removing stigma and encouraging women to speak out against abusers. The day defines violence against women as any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm to women. The goal of this day is to achieve equality, development, and peace. It aims toward the fulfillment of women and girls' human rights.


SPECIAL DAYS CONTINUED

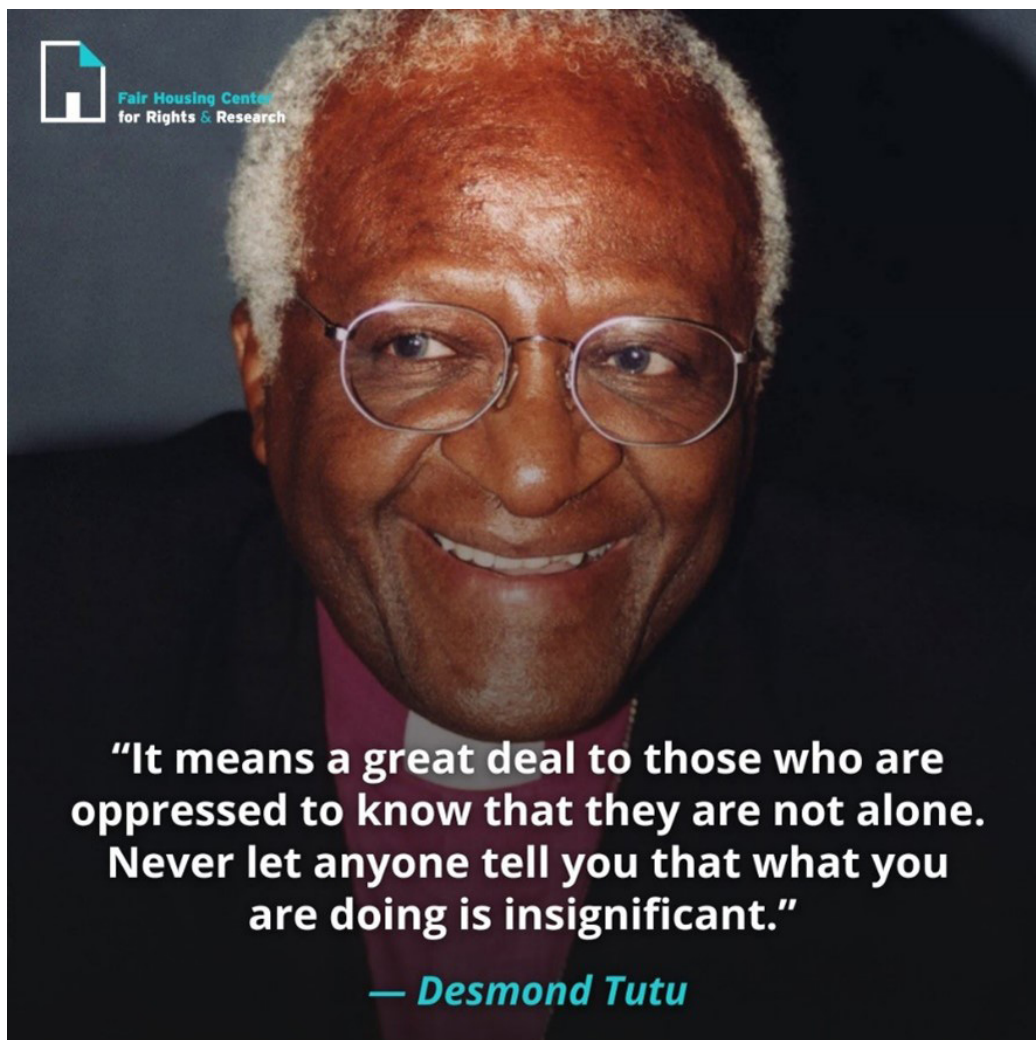


December 2—International Day for the Abolishment of Slavery—The International Day for the Abolition of Slavery aims to end slavery in the world. Contemporary forms of slavery include sexual exploitation, forced marriage, trafficking of persons and recruitment of children for armed conflict. The International Labor Organization estimates that there are 21 million people enslaved in the world, a business that generates around 150 billion US dollars in illegal profits every year.

IT'S HUMAN RIGHTS DAY!



December 10—Human Rights Day—Human Rights Day commemorates the day on which the United Nations issued the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948. This document serves as an outline of the fundamental human rights that are to be universally protected. It was drafted by representatives from all regions of the world. 



PIONEERS!



Cheryl Browne, First Black Woman to Compete in [Miss America Contest](#)



Ellison Onizuka, First Asian-American in [Space](#)



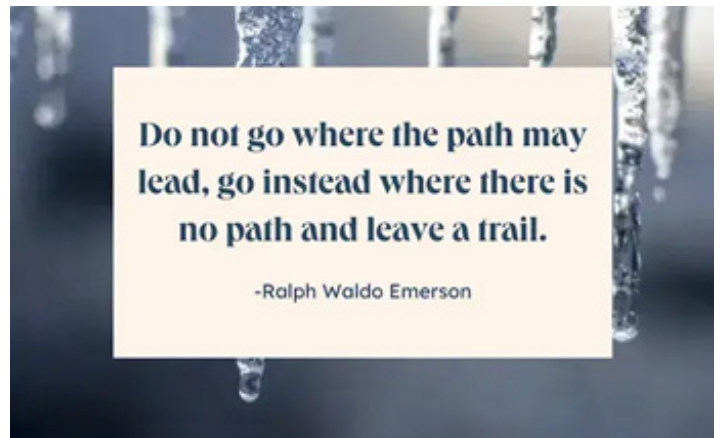
Claudio Bruno Castellón Lévano, PhD, Invented the [Neonatal Artificial Bubble](#)



Judith Som, Oldest Woman to Complete the NYC [Marathon](#)



[Met Gala 2025](#), Names all Black Men Co-Chairs for First Time in History



HAPPY HOLIDAYS



**“May this beautiful holiday season fill your heart with love,
your home with joy, and your life with laughter.”** 🍷

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RESOURCES



DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

[Is DEI Backlash Real or Manufactured?](#)

[DEI Isn't Dead](#)

[Here's Why the Chief Diversity Officer of Microsoft is Taking Notes from Smaller Companies](#)

[Microsoft and DEI](#)

[Beyond Bias-DEI Must Drive AI Implementation in the Workplace](#)

MULTIGENERATIONAL WORKFORCE

[Power Of Collaboration In The Workplace- Know It All Here](#)

[25 Best Ways To Achieve Work-Life Balance and Its Benefits](#)

[What are Communication Strategies & 10 Ways to Establish Them](#)

ITALIAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

[Antonio Meucci Invented the Telephone](#)

[Historians and Italian-Americans Won Their Battle](#)

WEIGHT LOSS BIAS

[Combating Weight Bias](#)

WORLD PREMATURETY DAY

[Famous Preemies](#)

[Maternal and Infant Health](#)

**“Reading furnishes the mind only
with materials of knowledge;
it is thinking that makes what
we read ours.” –John Locke** 📖

