

# Diversity Equity Inclusion

2023 Annual Report



WISDOM FOR YOUR LIFE

**Our Mission** | To serve through healing, education and discovery



# Introduction



The University of Tennessee Medical Center is proud to release our 2023 DEI Annual Report. Over the last twelve months, the medical center has been intentional about ensuring we implement policies, programs, and resources that continue to promote a greater sense of belonging for those that we serve throughout the region. More specifically, we have placed a greater focus on our diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts by hiring a new Director for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Furthermore, we are continuing our efforts to emphasize community partnerships, strengthen our language interpreter resources, and expand our outreach regarding workforce development. With these efforts in mind, we hope to continuously align our efforts with the medical center's mission of serving through healing, education, and discovery.

To provide effective and intentional health care services in an ever-changing community, we must place an emphasis on the diverse community members that we serve daily. I am proud to celebrate our programs, resources, and partnerships over the last twelve months, as we aim to create a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment for all stakeholders. Our hope is to serve as a beacon to those from all walks of life - and we cannot accomplish those efforts without intentionally focusing on training our leadership, enhancing our hiring and recruitment practices, creating opportunities for youth-based experiential learning, increasing our community partnerships, and diminishing the equity gap within our region.

Thanks to the efforts of our DEI Team, we continue to create avenues to inclusive excellence - and our 2023 DEI Report highlights the efforts that we continue to make. In addition, we appreciate our team members, colleagues, Board of Directors, and community partners who continue to support our effort to promote both the moral and business imperatives of diversity, equity, and inclusion-based efforts. Please help us as we celebrate our accomplishments - and we hope that you will consider joining us, as we maintain a medical center that promotes the health and well-being of both our employees and patients.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keith Gray', written over a faint, light-colored oval shape.

Keith Gray, MD, MBA, FACS, President, CEO

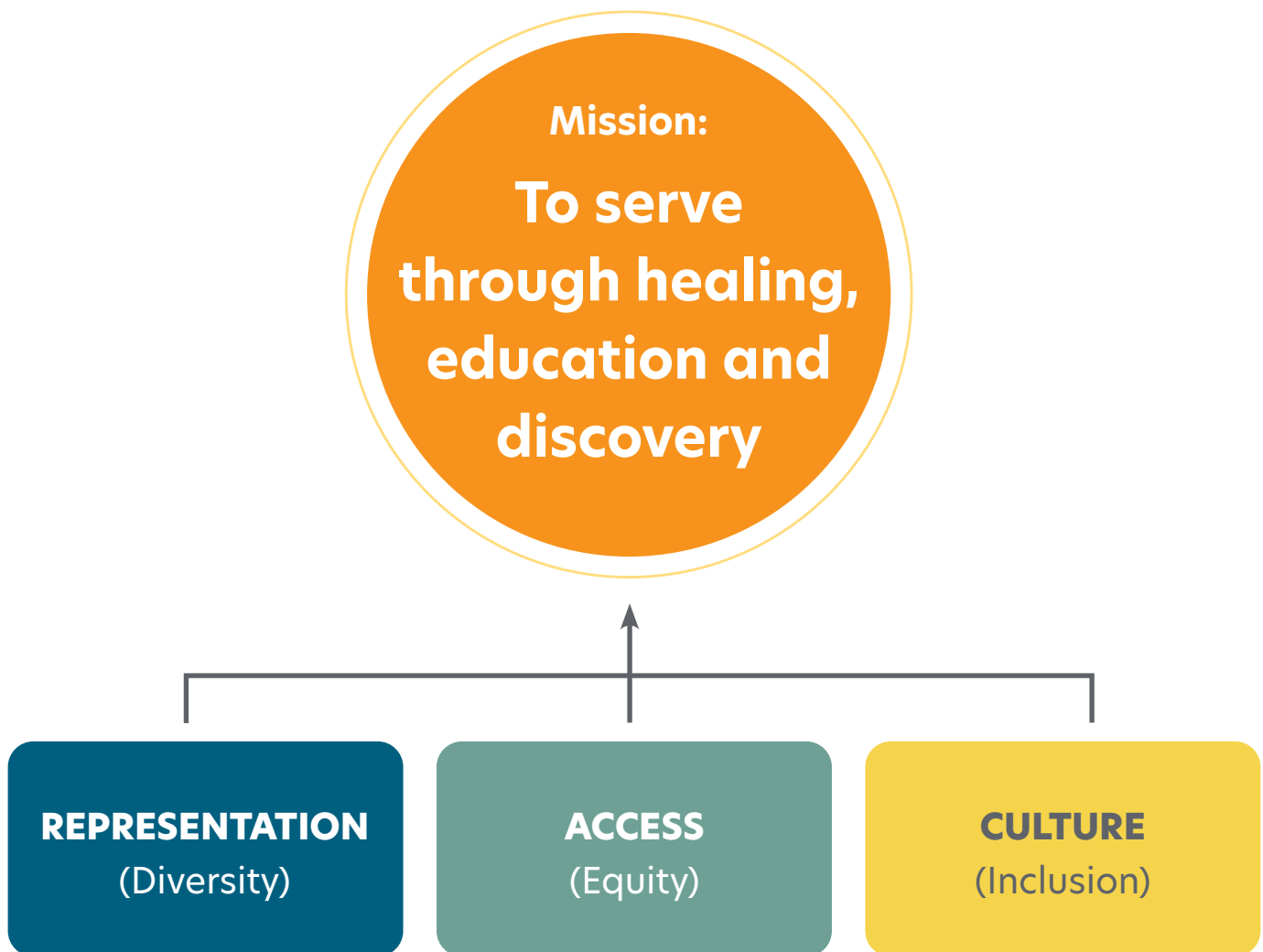
# Our Commitment

We are committed to the view that diversity, equity and inclusion are not only morally right, but business imperatives for our organization. They are values embraced by our people, whether they are entering the workplace or accessing our health system.

Our DEI framework is founded on 3 pillars:

**REPRESENTATION, ACCESS** and **CULTURE**, with objectives designed to reach our workforce, patients and community.

**These pillars are synonyms for diversity, equity and inclusion.**



# Representation Pillar (Diversity)

## Representation Goal

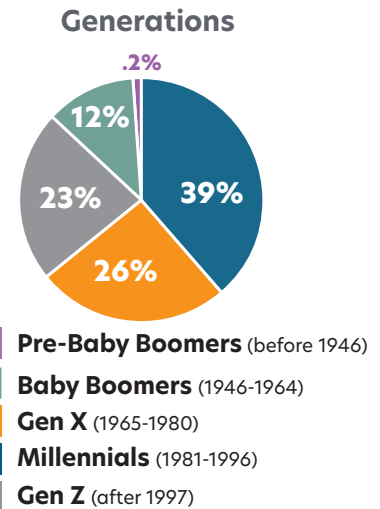
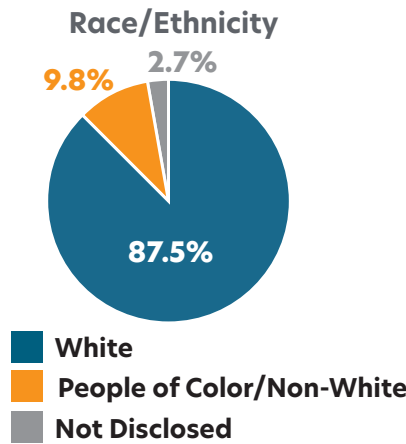
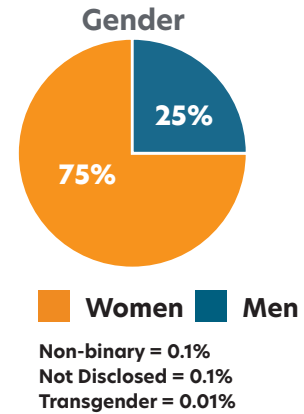
Create & retain a workforce that REPRESENTS the patients and families we care for.

### Advantages of Increased Representation in Health Care

-  Increased Comfort Levels
-  Boosted Creativity
-  Enhanced Understanding
-  More Innovation
-  Increased Trust
-  Higher Retention
-  Improved Communication
-  Reduced Health Disparities
-  Increased Engagement

Source: <https://www.usa.edu/blog/diversity-in-healthcare>

## 2023 Workforce Demographics



N = 7,438 Team Members. Snapshot workforce data from various data pulled in December 2023 (UHS, UPA Physicians, GSM Faculty/Staff/Residents, Crothall Vendor and Morrison's Vendor)

Race/Ethnicity	2020 Census*	Knox Co. Census	Q3 2023 Patients**	2023 UTMC TM
2 or more races	2.1%	2.3%	1.7%	1.6%
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Hispanic/Latino	4.8%	4.6%	2.0%	1.8%
Black/African American	6.2%	8.9%	5.6%	4.0%
Asian	2.3%	2.4%	0.4%	1.2%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.5%	0.4%	0.1%	0.2%
White	79.3%	82%	89.1%	87.5%
Unknown/Blank/Undisclosed	0%	0%	2.8%	2.8%
Females	51.1%	51.4%	60.2%	75%

\* 2020 Census Data from UTMC 21 County Service Area.

\*\* Q3 2023 Patients represents both In-Patient and Out-Patient for Q3.

## Medical Center Patient/Community Comparisons

Our goal is to have a workforce that reflects the community we serve. We are not striving for a perfect match, but rather more representation of the demographics around us so that we can better meet our patients' needs. Pipeline programs will help us close the gaps.

## Pipeline Programs



### Medical Interpreter Practicum

The University of Tennessee Medical Center is currently partnering with Centro Hispano De East TN to support their Medical Interpreter Practicum. The initiative was launched in 2022 with a focus on diminishing health equity gaps due to language barriers. The pilot program matriculated ten individuals and supported them through their training and certification programs. This enabled the Knoxville metro area's Latino population to gain greater access to Spanish/English interpreting in health care settings, empowering the community in health-related decision-making.

It also opened a new post-secondary career path for Latino students in the area by leveraging their bilingualism and elevating their economic earning potential. At the end of the pilot, Centro Hispano secured additional funding from area sponsors to train two additional interpreting cohorts within our health care systems.

# Representation Pillar (Diversity)



## The 865 Academies

The University of Tennessee Medical Center aims to diversify the health care workforce by providing opportunities for experiential learning, education, and exposure to high school students throughout Knox County. To accomplish this goal, UT Medical Center partnered with Knox County Schools to implement their new 865 Academies, a career-themed initiative that allows students to participate in authentic, work-based learning. Through this initiative, teachers and students will work closely with professionals in their field of interest and create stronger connections between classroom knowledge and workplace success.



In August of 2023, the medical center hosted its first Teacher Externship Program for over 25 teachers from Karns and Hardin Valley High Schools. During their day-long visit, teachers learned about hospital operations, research endeavors, career opportunities, and ways to connect high school students to volunteer, internship, and externship experiences. The medical center will host its first group of high school students in the Spring of 2024, with the goal of hosting additional high school students during the 2024-2025 academic year. Future initiatives will include internship experiences and shadowing opportunities.



## Project Search

The University of Tennessee Medical Center pairs with Autism Breakthrough to offer a unique internship for adults with disabilities to the medical center. The initiative, entitled Project SEARCH, provides skills training and workplace internships for individuals with disabilities, particularly young people transitioning from high school to adult life. Each year, nine interns are selected to join Project SEARCH. The interns have three, 10-week rotations in areas of their interest and strength. The program includes training sessions, classroom education and hands-on work experience. Project SEARCH also teaches

professional skills and etiquette, such as learning to communicate better with patients, team members and visitors. Most importantly, the interns learn independence. The program provides students with both a job coach and a mentor. Many of the interns become self-reliant by the end of the program. In October of 2023, the medical center celebrated a decade of collaboration, and recognized our 10th cohort of graduates. Graduation allows interns to reflect on how they matured, and it is also a time where the medical center team expresses its gratitude and appreciation for the interns. Interns gain much more than professional experience and communication skills from Project SEARCH. They gain knowledge about themselves, develop friendships and a chance to become involved in the community. Furthermore, many of the interns go on to successfully secure full-time employment opportunities within the medical center.



## Chi Eta Phi Sorority Scholarship Support

In 2022, The University of Tennessee Medical Center became a sponsor for Chi Eta Phi, Incorporated, a nonprofit, professional service organization for registered professional nurses and student nurses, representing many cultures



Photo courtesy of Chi Eta Phi

and diverse ethnic backgrounds. Since its inception in 1975, the local Chapter (Upsilon Chi) has provided over \$100,000 in nursing scholarships to students and sponsored numerous community health fairs to promote health and education. Upsilon Chi's goal is to increase the nursing workforce and eliminate health disparities. In December of 2023, The University of Tennessee Medical Center provided \$10,000 in scholarships to support their academic and professional endeavors, with recipients coming from East Tennessee State University, Tennessee Wesleyan University, Roane State University, Walters State Community College, and South College. Through these scholarships, the medical center hopes to continue our goal of diversifying the nursing workforce, and eliminating barriers associated with education.

# Access Pillar (Equity)



## Our Partnerships Keep Growing

The University of Tennessee Medical Center has developed a more intentional emphasis on partnership development since the COVID-19 pandemic. The medical center understands that strategic community partnerships are indispensable in eliminating health disparities. Learning from community and faith-based organizations has been a fundamental part of our health equity journey. We are grateful to our partners, including, among others, New Directions Health Care Solutions, the Community Action Committee (CAC), Emerald Youth Foundation, the Knox County Health Department (KCHD), the Knoxville Area Urban League (KAUL), Chi Eta Phi Sorority Inc., Centro Hispano, the Catholic Diocese, and Kim Health Center.

A long-standing partnership with the American Heart Association (AHA) provided hands-only cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training to community members from 33

zip codes within our 21-county service area. The participants also received fresh fruits and vegetables from Second Harvest during the event.

## Giving Back to Our Community

The University of Tennessee Medical Center aims to serve as a catalyst within our local community through partnerships and collaborative programs. The volunteer spirit is consistent and always present, and our team members want to give back as well. In 2023, UT Medical Center and many other local non-profits and businesses joined the Knoxville Area Urban League (KAUL) in their Shoes for School event on August 5th at Caswell Park.



## Learning About Our Service Area Through Our Community Health Equity Portraits Initiative

Building trust is a foundational part of our journey to achieving health equity and to building a culture of health. Building trust requires a deep understanding of communities' needs, the historical struggles, and the current systemic barriers that keep neighborhoods from achieving their greatest potential. Some of those barriers are related to access to health care, which, in





many cases, go beyond the physical presence of a health care provider. In 2023, UT Medical Center engaged ThreeCubed to develop the Community Health Equity Portraits Initiative for all 21 counties included in our service area. In addition to the portraits, ThreeCubed developed a vast community database that will be shared and later administered by United Way. This data repository will grant community members access to local data to better understand their community's assets, strengths, and areas of opportunity.



## **The Cancer Institute Strengthened Its Underserved Outreach Initiatives and Increased Access to Screening to Minority Women in 2023**

The Cancer Institute, at The University of Tennessee Medical Center, increased its community partnerships by collaborating with the Knox Area Urban League, St. Mary's Legacy Clinic's Mobile Unit, the Knoxville Diocese Hispanic Ministry, the Oak Ridge Free Medical Clinic and others to help reach more of the underserved population in our region.

To promote education and awareness, two new cancer awareness celebrations were added in 2023. For National Black Family Cancer Awareness Week, they promoted education on better ways to collect family health history and ways to reduce health care disparities through cancer clinical trials. They also promoted education regarding health disparities and cancer screenings. During National Hispanic Cancer Awareness Day (NHCAD), they promoted awareness, cancer screening, and education for cancer prevention. In addition, they partnered with Knoxville Diocese Hispanic Ministry and Centro Hispano to help promote, schedule and assist with registration at events focused on the Latino/Hispanic community.



Physicians from the Cancer Institute were also very active in the community. Urologists from University Urology, PC, and Urology & Urologic Surgery supported efforts to increase access to prostate cancer screening in low-income communities, and Dr. Christine Lauro, Radiation Oncologist, was the guest speaker at the Edgewood Chapel AME Zion Church's "Pink Sunday" event focused on Breast Cancer prevention.

# Culture Pillar (Inclusion)

## Employee Resource Groups

### Veterans Engaging for Team Member Support (VETS)



Purpose: VETS provides a network of support and fosters a military/veteran-friendly environment for our team members, creating opportunities to network and access resource services. VETS also provides support to the medical center employees that serve in the military and their family members during a service member's deployment. This group helps newly transitioned veterans acclimate into the workforce and engages in activities that highlight the medical center as a military-friendly campus.



In 2023, VETS joined the local East Tennessee Military Affairs Council (ETMAC), a non-profit organization that was founded in 1990 to recognize, encourage, support and advocate for, and on behalf of, military activities in East Tennessee. The organization provides a forum to share volunteers, information and ideas, challenges and solutions, and to assist in fundraising activities. In April, VETS hosted Nathan Weinbaum from Veteran Affairs. Weinbaum provided members with insightful information regarding the PACT Act, which now expands VA health care and benefits for veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange and other toxic substances. VETS members also attended the annual ETMAC Veterans Day Awards Luncheon. In addition, VETS proudly hosted UT Medical Center's 2023 Veterans Day Breakfast and invited all veterans at the hospital to come and hear words of encouragement from US House of Representative Member Tim Burchett.



# Employee Resource Groups

## People Respecting Identity & Sexuality in Medicine (PRISM)

Purpose: This group supports the medical center as an affirming place of care for our LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and others) community. PRISM members also provide support and allyship to LGBTQ+ team members to help with career development, retention, and engagement activities. PRISM began 2023 with 102 members and has goals to increase PRISM membership and

engagement. PRISM membership increased 19% to 121 members and continues to build a foundation for its membership. Social and educational events helped increase awareness to members for LGBTQ+ affirming care. The PRISM educational event, "Care For the LGBTQ+ Patient" by Dr. Anthony Wilson, experienced record attendance with 93 in person and 26 virtual attendees. During Knoxville Pride Fest, PRISM members supported the medical center's Human Resources team to showcase employment opportunities.



Dr. Anthony Wilson, PRISM Lunch and Learn



Jonathan Sharpe - PRISM Social

## Women Physicians & Scientists Leaders in Academic Medicine (WPSLAM)

Purpose: Women Physicians & Scientists Leaders in Academic Medicine engages with the physicians and scientists within our academic medical center by addressing gender equity through focused recruitment, mentoring, networking and engagement opportunities. Through programming, professional development, and social gatherings, they are creating a supportive and welcoming space to ensure that women from all walks of life have the resources, connections and confidence to succeed.



Kimberly B. Fortner, MD



Rocio A. Huet, MD



Jillian M. Lloyd, MD, MPH

# Culture Pillar (Inclusion)

## Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Council

Formed in 2016, The University of Tennessee Medical Center's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council aims to coordinate, integrate and promote an inclusive environment, which is diverse and culturally competent to better serve our patients, families, team members and our community. The DEI Council provides leadership and encourages collaboration among all team members to acknowledge, value, respect and embrace the strengths and differences represented throughout the medical center both on and off campus. Through their efforts, members are utilizing their skills to create a supportive space for the thousands of part-time and full-time team members, along with the thousands of guests and visitors that visit the medical center locations daily. Throughout 2023, the DEI Council has focused on numerous initiatives, building our employee resource groups, supporting our Project SEARCH initiative, highlighting employees across the hospital through our cultural awareness recognitions, and identifying opportunities for youth engagement and talent/workforce development through programs like the 865 Academies initiative.



**Craig Pickett Jr., PhD**  
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion



**John (Cal) Davis**  
Marketing & Communications



**Desiree Jones**  
Graduate School of Medicine



**Jillian Lloyd, MD, MPH**  
Surgical Oncology



**Brad Hood**  
Pastoral Care



**Jake Edwards, MD**  
Trauma Surgery



**Rocio A. Huet, MD**  
Internal Medicine



**John Jeffries**  
IT



**Yasser Ayerdis**  
Human Resources

Not pictured:

**Lisa A. Duncan**  
Pre-Admin Testing



**Carmen Soto**  
Food Services

**Becki Morrison**  
Women & Infants



**Amy Perkins**  
Volunteer/Guest Services

**Sydney Stewart**  
MS Student - DEI Chair

# Community Health Equity Council

2023 was a very productive year for the Community Health Equity (CHE) Council. The CHE Council embraced data analysis to better understand our patient population and its health. The Council led the development of the Minority Populations Report and Priority Areas Report. The CHE Council also identified ways to reduce and/or close gaps in access to care, particularly for the uninsured population. This



initiative, funded through The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) grant, connects uninsured patients to community resources and increases access to health care opportunities. These funds supported the medical center in hiring two bilingual Case Managers for the Emergency Department.

**Jennifer Fritz**

Emergency & Trauma Center

**Dexter Mims**

Pastoral Care

**Justin Wolfe**

Quality Improvement

**Jacob Edwards**

Division of Trauma Surgery/Critical Care-Department of Surgery

**Paige Huggler**

Brain & Spine Institute

**Megan Young**

Center for Women & Infants

**Mae King**

Cancer Institute

**Ashley Gutierrez-Santana**

Graduate School of Medicine

**Beth LaFontaine**

Center for Perioperative Services

**Shawna Stephen**

Graduate School of Medicine Resident

**Kelsey Grabeel**

Preston Medical Library

**Amy Gilbertson**

Case Management

**Callie Nicoll**

Cancer Institute Navigation Program

**Josh Lamb**

Substance Use Program

**Celia Ouwerkerk**

Heart Lung Vascular Institute (HLVI)

**Bailey Krause**

Nursing - Daisy Health Equity Award Recipient

**Teresa Palmer**

Palliative Care

**Keekey McKissick**

Orthopaedic Institute

**Nicole Simmons**

Nursing Leadership

**Julia Caudill**

Advanced Practice Provider

**Liliana Burbano**

Community Health Equity

# DEI Champions



## DAISY Award for Nurses Advancing Health Equity

The DAISY Award is a recognition of licensed nurses, registered nurses, nursing faculty or nursing students, who provide excellent care to patients and their families. Bailey Krause is the first DAISY Award for Nurses Advancing Health Equity recipient. She was recognized for providing outstanding care for a non-English speaking family in the NICU who lost one of their babies after an emergency C-section. Bailey supported the family in their grief and identified that the NICU needed a Bereavement Book in Spanish and other supportive materials. Bailey completely recreated the book for this family. She exemplified compassion and provided unparalleled care to a family that was confused and heartbroken. Bailey reminded us that health equity is an integral part of patient-oriented care. By connecting with our patients and their families, we can begin to understand where they most need help and identify ways to offer support. Creating empathy and personal care is a key component of health equity for all our patients.



## Knoxville MLK Commemorative Commission Diversity Champion Award

Each year the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Commission Celebrates "King Week" in mid-January. In recognition of the life and legacy of Dr. King, the Knoxville Commission hosts numerous programs and activities each year to highlight community engagement and inclusionary excellence, including inspirational worship opportunities, educational sessions and their annual MLK Awards Luncheon. To honor their 41st year of implementation, the Commission invited hundreds of guests to the University of Tennessee to celebrate some of the city's leading figures that continuously strive to promote a greater sense of belonging and equity. Reverend Benjamin Lewis, Chaplain within the medical center's Pastoral Care, was honored with the Commission's Diversity Champion Award. Lewis was recognized for his continuous efforts to promote a safe, welcoming, and inclusive experience for the thousands of employees, patients and visitors that visit the medical center daily.

# DEI Team



**Kathy W. Boyd**  
**Senior Vice President and Chief Philanthropy and Equity Officer**

KBoyd@utmck.edu      865-305-6611 (office)

Kathy joined The University of Tennessee Medical Center and The University of Tennessee Graduate School of Medicine in January 2015. She has 33 years of experience in the health care industry. Reporting directly to the President and CEO and a member of the executive leadership team, Kathy is responsible for the medical center and Graduate School of Medicine's philanthropic initiatives and provides executive leadership on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Community Health Equity, Volunteer and Visitor Services and The Gift Shoppe.



**Craig Pickett Jr., PhD**  
**Director for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

cspickett@utmck.edu      865-305-9108 (office)

Craig serves as the Director for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. In his role, he works to promote inclusionary practices regarding workforce recruitment and talent development. He currently facilitates training opportunities for leaders and departments, oversees our 865 Academies partnership with Knox County Schools, provides inclusive strategies for workplace recruitment, manages the DEI Council, and develops opportunities for staff engagement through our Employee Resource Groups (ERGs). He hopes to create pathways for employment for those from all walks of life and strives to develop structures and initiatives that promote a greater sense of belonging, transparency, and authenticity throughout the medical center. Craig graduated from Davidson College with a bachelor's degree in political science and earned his master's degree in Higher Education from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. He recently graduated from the University of Tennessee with his PhD in higher education administration.



**Liliana Burbano**  
**Director, Community Health Equity**

LBurbano@utmck.edu      865-305-5589 (office)

Liliana is a Colombia native and a public health practitioner with more than a decade of experience in the Knoxville area. For more than 11 years, she worked for the Knox County Health Department (KCHD) in many different capacities. Most recently, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Liliana served as the lead for minority outreach initiatives at KCHD. Liliana collaborates with organizations and leaders to identify social determinants of health, and develops impactful resources, initiatives, and community-based collaborations to eliminate barriers that impact health equity throughout the counties that we serve. Furthermore, she coordinates the Community Health Equity Council and facilitates training opportunities for stakeholders. She graduated from the Xavierian University in Bogotá, Colombia, with a bachelor's degree in social communication with an emphasis in education and earned a master's degree in sociology from the Ibero-Americana University in Mexico.



---

WISDOM FOR YOUR LIFE

CONNECT WITH US



[UTMedicalCenter.org](https://UTMedicalCenter.org)

Scan to learn  
more about our  
DEI efforts.

