



The pivotal role culture plays in healthcare

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Humility and patience are the keys to improving member engagement among diverse populations.

The US Census now projects that the country will become **majority minority by 2045**.

What does this mean for health plans? A lot, actually.

For decades, the healthcare system has taken a one-size-fits-all approach, never considering the disparate life experiences, differing cultures, values, beliefs, or needs of individuals. Important information, such as medical benefit details, is almost always written *in English for English speakers*. Then, as required, it's translated into other languages. However, the meaning is often lost in translation, and the message to members becomes, "Who you are doesn't matter."

The factors that go into making people who they are — their background, their culture, where they live, their social determinants of health (SDOH) — not only matter, but they also ultimately have a huge impact on how people engage with the healthcare system.

There's a better way to engage members and it starts with understanding who they are at a cultural level. When plans take the steps to understand the member, they can build trust, which allows them to navigate members to care at the right time and place. According to SameSky Health Founder and CEO Abner Mason, this takes two things: humility and patience.

“Oftentimes, we think that if messaging is clear to us, it will be clear to others,” says Mason. “It takes humility to realize that’s not always the case. Truly engaging individuals and communities can be a series of trial and error. This can take time, which is where the patience comes in. While health plans might be focused on closing gaps in care in a given timeframe, members don’t have the same priority; it takes effort to get them there. Once engaged, though, the results speak for themselves.”

Listen as Abner and Rudy Bozas of Tufts Health Plan, a Point32Health company, discuss the critical role culture plays in advancing health equity.