



Embedding DEI into APIC's DNA:

An interview with the APIC Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force

In 2021, The APIC Board of Directors formed the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Task Force. According to APIC's CEO, Devin Jopp, the DEI Task Force was formed to create a roadmap for how to embed DEI into the DNA of our organization and to also keep an ongoing focus on these critical efforts. *Prevention Strategist* spoke to Bria Graham-Glover and Karoline Sperling, co-chairs of the DEI Task Force. Bria and Karoline were selected to lead the task force based on their non-nursing backgrounds, experience in the field for over a decade, and passion for change as we look to the future of both the infection prevention workforce and volunteer opportunities within APIC.



Karoline Sperling



Bria Graham-Glover

Who are the members of the DEI Task Force?

Other members of the task force represent a melting pot of infection prevention from race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, as well as education, years in the field, practice setting, and CIC status.

What are the goals/mission of the DEI Task Force?

The mission of this task force is to:

1. Examine how to best structure APIC's DEI efforts across our volunteer structure;
 2. Provide recommendations to the APIC Board of Directors on a roadmap forward; and
 3. Assist in implementing an organization-wide DEI program.
- This group may also work on workforce development and the development of IPs. We see ourselves connecting with and impacting all of APIC's stakeholders as we advance this important work.

What characteristics make a great candidate for the DEI Task Force?

Anyone with an open mind who is committed to change would be an ideal candidate. The topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion tend to be uncomfortable. We need people who are willing to embrace the discomfort. Those that can actively listen and seek to understand by

asking questions are some qualities that can bring a rich perspective to the task force. The next call for volunteers will begin in fall 2022.

What is the biggest obstacle that the DEI Task Force faces right now?


Knowing where to start! The topic of DEI can mean a lot of different things to people personally, professionally, and even as an APIC member. While we tend to think of the obvious—race, gender—what does DEI look like as an infection preventionist? You can see the various attributes we tried to include in creating the task force that go beyond those initial DEI lenses. We are in the process of finding a DEI expert to help us start our journey on the right foot and create that roadmap moving forward.

You mentioned the stakeholders earlier. Can you talk a little more about how chapters fit into this?

Chapters are a critical component of the APIC experience. More than 75% of members are part of at least one chapter, and many choose to spend their volunteer time working with the local group. It's critical that this DEI work is implemented across the chapter network.

For example, APIC Chapter 29 of Greater Baltimore has a Board-level position called the Diversity Chair that specifically focuses on DEI within the local chapter. The chapter has used this position to partner with a local university to bring exposure to the field of infection prevention. To date, the chapter has placed six students in infection prevention internships around the state of Maryland. Some of these interns have gone on to pursue additional education with intentions to build careers as infection preventionists. We want to enhance and extend activities like this across the chapter network.

Is there anything you'd like to share that hasn't been asked?

We have seen the broad reach of infection prevention during these last two years of the pandemic and know our members want to be represented, included, and volunteer within APIC. We look forward to being part of the change to create and foster an inclusive environment that supports APIC's new vision of a safer world through the prevention of infection. 

Special thanks to Sara Miller, senior director of membership, for her help in organizing the interview.

DEI TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Co-Chair, Bria Graham-Glover, MPH, CIC, FAPIC
 Co-Chair, Karoline Sperling, MPH, MLS (ASCP)CM, CIC, FAPIC
 David Avalos, MSN, RN, CIC
 Jackie Hop, DNP, MBA, RN, CPN, CIC
 Michelle King, MT, MPH, CIC
 Colleen McQuaide, MA, LPC, CIC
 Uzoamaka D. Obiekwe, MPH, MLS, CIC
 Nahashon (Nash) Ogutu, RN, BSN
 Victoria Owoyele, MPH
 Anne Reeths, MS, RN, CIC, FAPIC
 Shanetta Williams, MSN, RN, CIC, FAPIC