



AmericanCollege of
HealthcareExecutives
for leaders who care®

LEADING THROUGH A LENS OF EQUITY

INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES ASSESSMENT TOOL

About this Work

Developed through the vision of ACHE's Board of Governors, the American College of Healthcare Executives' Inclusive Leadership Competencies Assessment Tool is offered as an instrument for healthcare leaders to assess and foster inclusive cultures and lead through a lens of equity. This tool was developed to advance equity in the workforce and the communities we serve. While many competency tools are developed based on a job analysis for a given role or field, we recognize that inclusive leadership is not easily defined in job descriptions for healthcare leaders across the spectrum. At the forefront of our thinking is that the work of advancing care to close gaps in disparities requires defined, intentional leadership that builds on both a general set of competencies (see ACHE's [Healthcare Executives Competencies Assessment Tool](#)) as well as a unique and nuanced set of competencies specific to creating an inclusive culture. Both sets of competencies work together to assess individual experience and leverage the insights and skills needed to serve complex patient populations, workforce, and others.

Grounded in ACHE's core values, [ACHE's Statement on Diversity](#) relies on a broad definition that recognizes and supports the multi-faceted nature of our patients, communities, and workforce. It is our intent and hope that this broad definition can then be applied to a variety of populations, geographies, and settings. In practice, the benefits of an inclusive culture enhance quality, safety, and workforce relations, while improving health.

The Inclusive Leadership Competencies Assessment Tool was created using an expert-led process and bolstered by current research evidence on what works to advance care for diverse populations. The first step was to conduct a literature review and benchmarking study to identify competencies in diversity, equity, and inclusion for leaders driving culture in their organizations. Thought leaders in healthcare, from board members to executive leaders, reviewed a draft of preliminary competencies. Their comments were translated and incorporated into draft competencies and presented to the Board of Governors and experts in healthcare diversity, equity, and inclusion. Their input led to final refinements, with the recognition that they will be revisited in the future given the dynamic nature of this work.

ACHE Statement on Diversity

As the professional membership society for healthcare leaders, the American College of Healthcare Executives encourages diversity within healthcare leadership, and it believes in the fair and equitable treatment of all people. Diversity, equity and inclusion are ethical and business imperatives that are a core part of ACHE's values. ACHE believes that diversity in its leaders, members and staff serves as a catalyst for a stronger workforce, improved decision-making and outcomes, and a competitive advantage. In addition, ACHE fosters an inclusive and equitable culture that recognizes the contributions and supports the advancement of all, regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, religion, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. An inclusive and belonging-forward environment can enhance the safety and quality of healthcare, improve relations between healthcare organizations and the community, and positively affect the health status of society. These priorities are reflected in ACHE's strategies, structure and initiatives.

How to Use This Tool

Individuals and teams can use this tool to identify areas of strength and development as well as to formulate a development plan. Some examples of how this tool can be used in various roles and settings are listed below.

Self-assessment. The tool identifies strengths and areas for development in ACHE's Inclusive Leadership Competencies. It can be used as a tool for self-reflection, personal growth, and career development.

Team or group development. This tool can help develop a team or group by aggregating the individual Inclusive Leadership Competencies Assessment Tool results and identifying patterns of strengths and weaknesses among the team or group.

Employee selection or job descriptions. This tool provides human resource practitioners and managers with key duties and responsibilities related to diversity, equity, and inclusion that they can incorporate into the job descriptions of a wide range of positions. However, this has not been validated as an employee selection tool and should not be used for that purpose.

Academic or professional development programs. This tool provides curriculum committees, chairpersons, and individual faculty with inclusive leadership competencies they can include in learning objectives and competency models in education and training programs.

Coaching programs: The tool can help coaches and coachees develop a coaching agenda tailored to its results.

This tool is self-scored, and there are no right or wrong answers. Use the results to make a development plan and complete the ACHE Inclusive Leadership Competencies Assessment Tool at desired intervals to measure growth over time. To assess expertise in the five domains of this tool, consider where you fall on the scale of knowledge and skills acquisition. The scale is provided below, with "I" statements to aid your reflection.

Emerging: Acquisition of foundational knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics related to inclusive leadership as relevant to your role as an individual contributor, manager, or leader.
"I am seeking out ways to increase my understanding of inclusive leadership at a high level."

Developing: Enhancement of demonstrated knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics related to inclusive leadership for your role as an individual contributor, manager, or leader.
"I am engaging in critical reflection along with additional opportunities to build on my existing knowledge."

Skilled: Proficiency in the demonstrated application of knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics related to inclusive leadership for your role as an individual contributor, manager, or leader.
"I am applying aspects of inclusive leadership in my everyday work and with my team(s), and educating others, formally or informally, on core concepts."

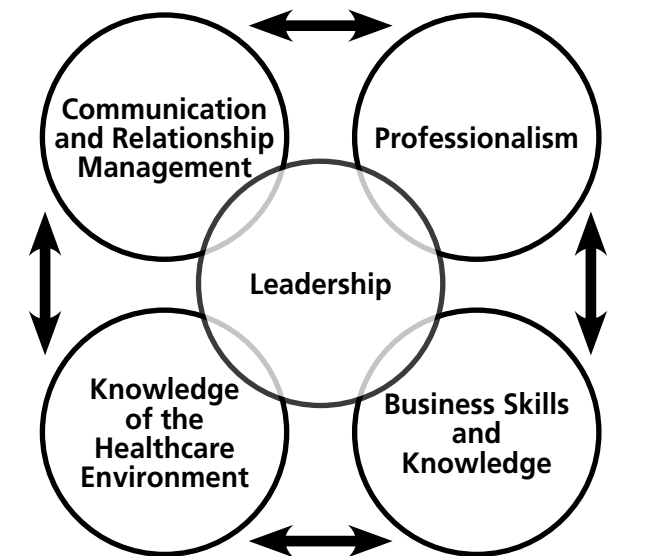
Accomplished: Recognition of high-level performance in the demonstrated application of knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics related to inclusive leadership for your role as an individual contributor, manager, or leader.
"I am serving as a role model for other leaders looking to enhance their knowledge and skills, and I have made a measurable impact on diversity, equity, and inclusion in my organization and for the patients we serve."

Champion: Proactive coaching, mentoring, and development of others to enhance their competence in inclusive leadership, promoting and advancing a culture and climate that drives DEI and outcomes while courageously addressing barriers and obstacles.
"I am transforming the field of healthcare through my inclusion efforts, setting standards for inclusive leadership and driving positive outcomes to improve equity."

For your convenience, a list of resources to aid to your advancement along the competency continuum is included at the end of this tool and numbered in each section of the assessment.

About This Tool

The ACHE Inclusive Leadership Competencies Assessment Tool comprises five critical domains: Communication and Relationship Management, Leadership, Professionalism, Knowledge of the Healthcare Environment, and Business Skills and Knowledge.



*derived from HLA Model

Adapted from the Healthcare Leadership Alliance Model

The competencies are aligned with the challenges and opportunities experienced by leaders today. The tool is reviewed and updated annually. The definitions for the domains are as follows:

Communication and Relationship Management. The ability to communicate clearly and concisely with internal and external customers, establish and maintain relationships, and facilitate constructive interactions with individuals and groups. This domain includes:

- Advance the Mission
- Lead Inclusively
- Challenge Inequity
- Collaborate Purposefully
- Foster Psychological Safety

Professionalism. The ability to align personal and organizational conduct with ethical and professional standards that include a responsibility to the patient and community, a service orientation, and a commitment to lifelong learning and improvement. This domain includes:

- Adopt Adaptability/Agility
- Drive Learning and Capability Development
- Nurture the Authentic Self
- Cultivate Self-Understanding and Accountability
- Promote Courageous Accountability for Impact/Results
- Harness Empathy

Knowledge of the Healthcare Environment.

The understanding of the healthcare system and the environment in which healthcare managers and providers function. This domain includes:

- Adopt Systems Thinking
- Leverage Data-Informed Decision-Making and Action
- Promote Universality

Business Skills and Knowledge. The ability to apply business principles, including systems thinking, to the healthcare environment. This domain includes:

- Foster Alignment
- Drive for Results
- Recognize the Link between Safety, Quality, and Equity
- Manage Risk Appropriately

The Leadership domain intersects with each of the other four and drives the ability of healthcare executives to lead inclusively. It includes the ability to inspire individual and organizational excellence, create a shared vision, and successfully manage change to attain the organization’s strategic ends and successful performance. Ultimately, the focus of this work is to advance care for patients and the general population.

Ideally, healthcare leaders should demonstrate competence in aspects of all five domains. As you work your way through the ACHE Inclusive Leadership Competencies Assessment Tool, it will provide valuable guidance in your lifelong professional education as you face the evolving challenges of management and leadership. It is available as a PDF file at [ache.org/LeadershipCompetencies](https://www.ache.org/LeadershipCompetencies) to be easily shared with other healthcare leaders.

Acknowledgments

The following groups contributed to the development of this tool:

The Better Together Healthcare Executive Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Collaborative. Members of the Collaborative, formed in 2016, include ACHE, which also represents the ACHE Asian Healthcare Leaders Community and ACHE’s LGBTQ+ Healthcare Leaders Community; the American Hospital Association’s Institute for Diversity and Health Equity; the National Association of Health Services Executives; the National Association of Latino Healthcare Executives; and the Association of University Programs in Health Administration.

COMPETENCY LEVEL

Emerging Developing Skilled Accomplished Champion

Communications and Relationship Management

Advance the Mission

Advances the mission for diversity, equity, and inclusion by identifying and acting upon opportunities to advocate for underserved/underrepresented populations and address identified disparities. Minimizes barriers to accessibility for patients, employees, and the community.

1	2	3	4	5
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Resources: 1, 5, 10, 11, 16, 28, 46, 54, 56, 57, 72

Lead Inclusively

Adapts person- and task-focused leadership behaviors necessary for effectiveness in a particular context of diversity, promoting experiences of inclusion and belonging by:

Proactively seeking out the opinions of others.	1	2	3	4	5
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Collaborating across diverse teams to promote belonging.	1	2	3	4	5
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Fostering a culture of transparency by openly sharing critical information in a psychologically safe way built upon active listening, unconditional positive regard, and humility.

1	2	3	4	5
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Resources: 3, 4, 7, 8, 10, 12, 20, 21, 26, 33, 34, 40, 46, 50, 58, 59

Challenge Inequity

Models, proposes, designs, and/or implements equitable policies and practices to promote inclusion while proactively and courageously responding to non-inclusive behaviors by:

Sharing observations about perceived inequity, micro-aggressions, prejudice, and discrimination.	1	2	3	4	5
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Sharing feedback to individuals and groups about observed inequity, micro-aggressions, prejudice, and discrimination.	1	2	3	4	5
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Resources: 3, 12, 18, 22, 26, 31, 37, 40, 58, 59, 61, 64, 68

Collaborate Purposefully

Facilitates and inspires others to create alliances with individuals and different cultural groups leading to departmental, organizational, community, and/or systemic change.

1	2	3	4	5
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Resources: 5, 17, 30, 36, 39, 56, 57

	COMPETENCY LEVEL				
	Emerging	Developing	Skilled	Accomplished	Champion
<i>Foster Psychological Safety</i>					
Creates and sustains a work climate in which individuals and groups do not experience coercion, threats, insults, and micro-aggressions based on their role, level within the organization, or individuality.	1	2	3	4	5
Resources: 1, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 20, 26, 29, 31, 33, 37, 43, 58, 59, 61					

Professionalism

Adopt Adaptability/Agility

Understands how an organization must change considering internal and external trends. Focuses on demonstrating cultural competency/agility and human-centered design.

1	2	3	4	5
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Resources: 1, 2, 5, 11, 15, 19, 27, 34, 37, 39, 52, 58, 59, 62, 65, 67

Drive Learning and Capability Development

Continuously seeks out opportunities to educate:

Oneself on evidence, programs, policies, and practices related to inclusive leadership.

1	2	3	4	5
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Others (e.g., Board members, senior leadership, et al.) on evidence, programs, policies, and practices related to inclusive leadership.

1	2	3	4	5
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Resources: 3, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 24, 29, 31, 40, 41, 43, 45, 48, 53, 66

Nurture the Authentic Self

Interacts with others, especially colleagues, in a way that allows them to bring their full authentic selves to all that they do at work.

1	2	3	4	5
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Resources: 3, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 20, 26, 31, 33, 43, 58, 59, 61

Cultivate Self-Understanding and Accountability

Engages in self-reflection for personal and professional enhancement, becoming aware of implicit and explicit biases and striving to reduce implicit and explicit biases when interacting with others.

1	2	3	4	5
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Resources: 3, 12, 15, 37, 41, 42, 58, 61

	COMPETENCY LEVEL				
	Emerging	Developing	Skilled	Accomplished	Champion
<i>Promote Courageous Accountability for Impact/Results</i>					
Formulates a plan of action to remove the barriers and harm caused by biases, prejudices, and discriminatory/exclusive behaviors in interactions with others.	1	2	3	4	5
Leverages widely used monitoring, reporting, and accountability tools for inclusivity and equity.	1	2	3	4	5
Resources: 1, 2, 4, 6, 16, 19, 22, 25, 28, 32, 35, 38, 44, 47, 51, 52, 54, 60, 63, 69					

Harness Empathy

Thinks carefully about the likely effects on others of one's words, actions, appearance, and behavior. Selects the words or actions most likely to have the desired effect on the individual or group in question.

1	2	3	4	5
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Resources: 3, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 20, 26, 33, 58, 59, 62

Knowledge of the Healthcare Environment

Adopt Systems Thinking

Views an organization holistically and examines and connects the linking parts.

1	2	3	4	5
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Understands problems and opportunities at multiple levels: societal, community, organizational, departmental, group, and individual/patient.

1	2	3	4	5
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Understands the agendas and perspectives of others, recognizing and balancing the interests and needs of one's own group with those of the broader organization.

1	2	3	4	5
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Applies lessons learned from benchmarking leading organizations both inside and outside of healthcare.

1	2	3	4	5
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Resources: 2, 4, 16, 19, 45, 47, 51, 53, 55

Leverage Data Informed Decision-Making and Action

Gathers and analyzes data to inform decisions and actions while being attentive to the limits of the data and biases in interpreting the data.

1	2	3	4	5
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Resources: 2, 22, 23, 25, 28, 32, 47, 51, 52, 63, 69

	COMPETENCY LEVEL				
	Emerging	Developing	Skilled	Accomplished	Champion
Promote Universality					
Recognizes that inclusivity is a core competency and responsibility for all who work in healthcare, not just those who serve in positions directly tasked with this work.	1	2	3	4	5
Appreciates the growing inclusion of diversity, equity, and inclusion knowledge, skills, and actions by accrediting bodies, payers, and regulators.	1	2	3	4	5
Resources: 1, 2, 5, 16, 37, 40, 41, 47, 52, 65					

Business Skills and Knowledge

Foster Alignment

Makes the case for inclusion by aligning equity initiatives with the vision, mission, strategic goals, and objectives of the organization in the local context.	1	2	3	4	5
Designs both incentives and disincentives to facilitate inclusion at all levels of the organization, focusing on recruiting, retaining, developing, and advancing diverse talent.	1	2	3	4	5
Reimagines systems, structures, and processes that serve as barriers to fully executing efforts for advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion.	1	2	3	4	5
Resources: 2, 4, 5, 15, 18, 26, 30, 31, 33, 37, 40, 43, 48, 49, 51, 53, 59, 68					

Drive for Results

Demonstrates concern for achieving or surpassing results against an internal or external standard of excellence related to inclusive leadership.	1	2	3	4	5
Holds oneself and others accountable for driving results in a way that embraces the rigor of execution, high reliability, and excellence.	1	2	3	4	5
Resources: 1, 2, 5, 16, 22, 25, 30, 34, 36, 38, 44, 54, 56, 57, 60, 66					

Recognize the Links between Safety, Quality, and DEI

Promotes community resource acquisition and allocation.	1	2	3	4	5
Dedicates resources to support social impact efforts in communities served.	1	2	3	4	5
Resources: 2, 3, 17, 19, 22, 23, 25, 30, 35, 38, 44, 54, 56, 57					

	COMPETENCY LEVEL				
	Emerging	Developing	Skilled	Accomplished	Champion
Manage Risk Appropriately					
Ensures full organizational compliance with laws, policies, and regulations related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.	1	2	3	4	5
Views inclusion from a risk management lens where appropriate.	1	2	3	4	5
Resources: 1, 16, 26, 32, 38, 44, 53, 55					

RESOURCES

ACHE Resources

Seminars

1. A View of Health Care Ethics through the Lens of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
2. Aligning Quality Management and Health Equity to Improve Outcomes
3. Implicit Bias & Beyond: (Re)Learning to Connect with Self and Others
4. Leadership for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Strategic Change
5. More than Words: Leveraging Governance and Partnerships to Advance Health Equity

Panel Discussion Templates

6. Equity of Care
7. Fostering Inclusion of LGBTQ Patients and Employees
8. Fostering Inclusion of Patients and Employees with Disabilities
9. Gender Equity in Healthcare Leadership
10. Inclusive Leadership in Healthcare
11. Providing Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS)
12. Understanding Implicit Bias and Its Impact on Healthcare Leadership

On-Demand Learning

13. When the Going Gets Tough: Lessons from Diverse Healthcare Executives on How to Thrive in Challenging Times
14. You've Got This! How to Leverage Your Strengths as a Diverse Leader in Challenging Times
15. A CEO Dialogue on Empowerment and Equity
16. A Pragmatic and Inclusive Organizational Framework for Achieving Health Equity
17. Addressing Social Determinants of Health Through Community Hiring
18. Executive Health Equity Management
19. Achieving Health Equity: Integrating Social Care Into Health Care Delivery at an Integrated Academic Health System
20. Addressing Social Determinants of Health Through Community Hiring
21. Best Practices in LGBTQ+ Inclusion: Lessons Learned from Leaders in Healthcare Equality
22. Creating Fully Inclusive Gender Equity in Healthcare Leadership
23. Executive Health Equity Management

24. Leadership Insights: Strategies for Combating Health Disparities
25. Advancing Health Equity Through Analytics and Care Coordination
26. Now What? How to Succeed and Thrive in Healthcare Management for Diversity Candidates
27. Leadership Insights: Leveraging Data to Address Social Determinants of Health
28. Leadership Insights: Taking Inclusive Leadership From Words to Action
29. Hot Topic: A Global Approach to Health Equity
30. Leveraging Data-Driven Tools to Advance Health Equity at Northern Light
31. Accelerating Black and Brown Diversity in Healthcare Leadership
32. Pipeline to Empowerment: Advancing Health Equity through Community Involvement
33. Amplifying the Voices of Emerging and Diverse Healthcare Leaders

Healthcare Executive Magazine

34. Artificial Intelligence Meets DEI
35. Infusing Belonging Into DEI Work
36. Building Belonging Across Generations
37. Addressing Social Determinants of Health
38. Making Progress on Health Equity, One Community at a Time
39. Building Your House of Diversity
40. Equity Is Essential to Patient Safety
41. Coming Together on DEI
42. Leadership Engagement, Diversity, and Team Building
43. How DEI Contributes to Effective Leadership
44. Ensuring Equitable Age-Friendly Care
45. Harnessing Diverse Leadership Talent
46. Health Equity as a Patient Safety Imperative
47. The Governing Body's Role in Health Equity

Journal of Healthcare Management

48. Interview: Christopher J. King, PhD, FACHE, Dean of the School of Health, Georgetown University
Journal of Healthcare Management. 69(1):4–7, January/February 2024.
49. Advancing Equity in U.S. Hospital Systems: Employee Understandings of Health Equity and Steps for Improvement
Journal of Healthcare Management. 68(5):342–355, September/October 2023.

50. Interview: 2023 ACHE Hudgens Award Recipient: Baljeet S. Sangha, FACHE, COO, San Francisco Health Network
Journal of Healthcare Management. 68(3):146–150, May/June 2023.
51. A Seat at the Table: An Examination of Hospital Governing Board Diversity, 2011–2021
Journal of Healthcare Management. 68(2):132–142, March/April 2023.
52. Closing the Gender Gap in Healthcare Leadership: Can Administrative Fellowships Play a Role?
Journal of Healthcare Management. 67(6):436–445, November/December 2022.
53. Interview: Peggy D. Harris, FACHE, Regional Chief Diversity Officer, Atrium Health
Journal of Healthcare Management. 67(5):306–310, September/October 2022.
54. DEI in the Healthcare Workforce: Advancing Equity Systemwide to Improve Service, Care, and Innovation
Journal of Healthcare Management. 67(4):230–233, July/August 2022.
55. Hospital Cultural Competency Leadership and Training is Associated with Better Financial Performance
Journal of Healthcare Management. 67(3):149–161, May/June 2022.

Frontiers of Health Services Management

56. The Disparity Challenge: How Governance Can Lead the Way on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Frontiers of Health Services Management. 39(3):26–32, Spring 2023.
57. Equity Rx: Boston Medical Center's Work to Accelerate Racial Health Justice
Frontiers of Health Services Management. 39(2):4–16, Winter 2022.
58. An Effective Response to Healthcare Disparities Begins With a Strategic Plan
Frontiers of Health Services Management. 39(2):27–31, Winter 2022.
59. Reverse Ride-Alongs Connect Medical Caregivers With Their Community
Frontiers of Health Services Management. 39(2):37–42, Winter 2022.
60. Guadalupe County Hospital: Facing Unique Social Challenges
Frontiers of Health Services Management. 39(2):43–48, Winter 2022.

ACHE Blog

61. Ensuring Inclusion and Respect in Healthcare
62. Creating a Supportive Environment
63. Racism is Eating Away at Advancements in Healthcare
64. Being Authentic at Works Means Honoring Who I Am
65. Delivering Unbiased Healthcare
66. The Racial Differences Hidden in the Data
67. Why it's Important to Reflect on Our Heritage
68. What if We Were All Free to be Healthy
69. Rekindling Our Passion for Healthcare
70. Leading in Challenging Times
71. Gender Equity in Post-COVID Workplaces
72. Addressing Health Outcome Disparities

External Resources

- American Hospital Association Health Equity Roadmap: <https://equity.aha.org/>
- American Hospital Association Institute for Diversity and Health Equity: <https://ifdhe.aha.org/>
- Black Directors Health Equity Agenda Offerings: <https://bdhea.org/offerings/>
- Deloitte: <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/about-deloitte/articles/the-equity-imperative.html>
- National Association of Health Services Executives: <https://www.nahse.org/>
- National Association of Latino Healthcare Executives: <https://www.nalhe.org/>



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